
CHAPTER II

Social Justice and its Direct Act

“The Encyclical on Social Justice”

The long-missing specific and direct act of Social Justice is used as the title of the Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*: “On the Reconstruction of Social Order.” This title occurs in the heading of the Letter; the words “Quadragesimo anno,” being simply the first two words of the Letter itself. This document is a truly masterly treatise on the whole virtue of Social Justice, though the applications of the theory are made mostly to the economic order, which is only one aspect, though a “most important” one, of social life.

The term “Social Justice” is used ten times in this encyclical, and there are many other passages where the same idea occurs, but without the technical name. Yet very few commentators seem to have realized that this is the subject, and the most important point, of the Papal teaching. They discuss the living wage, the family wage*, property, labor, capitalism, competition, monopoly, class war, Communism—all the details that are used for explanation and illustration—but miss the great subject of the whole Encyclical!

It would be a very salutary practice to refer always to the Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* as “The Encyclical on Social Justice.”

* Please refer to pages ix-xii in the Foreword for a discussion of how the following treatment of the concept of the living or family wage by Fr. Ferree differs significantly from his analysis of the Act of Social Justice. —ed.

Thus attention would be drawn to the central idea, instead of to the supporting details and illustrations.

A Common Misunderstanding

Let us give an example of how the Encyclical's great message can be misunderstood. In paragraph 71, the Holy Father says:

Every effort must therefore be made that fathers of families receive a wage large enough to meet common domestic needs adequately. But if this cannot always be done under existing circumstances, Social Justice demands that changes be introduced into the system as soon as possible, whereby such a wage will be assured to every adult workingman.

Now if we were to hand this quotation to a number of people, and ask each one of them what Social Justice *demand*s in it, almost every one of them would answer, "A family wage."

They would all be wrong! Look again at the syntax of the sentence: the direct object of the predicate "demands" is the clause "that changes be introduced into the system." The Pope's teaching on the family wage is that it is due in commutative or strict justice to the individual worker;—what *Social Justice* demands is something specifically *social*: the *reorganization of the system*. For it is the whole system which is badly organized ("socially unjust") when it withholds from the human beings whose lives are bound up in it, the power to "meet common domestic needs adequately."

Very Clear Teaching

The Holy Father later summarized the teaching of *Quadragesimo Anno* in several paragraphs of *Divini Redemptoris* ("On Atheistic Communism"). In Paragraph 53 of this latter document he gives a very clear example for his teachings:

It happens all too frequently, under the salary system, that individual employers are helpless to insure justice, unless, with a view to its practice, they organize institutions whose object is to prevent competition incompatible with fair treatment of the workers. Where this is true, it is the duty of contractors and employers to support such necessary organizations as normal instruments enabling them to fulfill their obligations of justice.

Here the two levels of justice are clearly distinguished. On the level of commutative or individual justice the employer is *helpless*, and note that this happens “all too frequently.” Now evidently, if he is really helpless to do full justice, he does not sin when out of sheer necessity he falls short of justice. In individual justice the case is closed, for the employer can do nothing about it; and the injustice must be allowed to continue out of sheer inability to stop it.

Above this field of individual justice, however, there is the whole field of Social Justice, and in this higher field the case is *never* closed. The “helplessness” of individuals comes from the fact that the *whole industry* is badly organized (“socially unjust”). Social Justice demands that it be *organized rightly* for the Common Good of all who depend upon it for their welfare and perfection. Therefore employers have the duty—the rigid duty of Social Justice which they cannot disregard without sin—to work *together* (socially) to reorganize their industry. Once this reorganization (act of Social Justice) has been accomplished by group (social) action, then the employers will no longer be helpless in the field of individual justice, and will be under obligation to meet their strict duties in this latter field.

Something Solid

From the example given by the Holy Father, it will be seen immediately that Social Justice is not at all the vague and fuzzy “blanket word” that gets into so many popular speeches. It is an absolutely clear and precise scientific concept, a special virtue with definite and rigid obligations of its own.

But there is no use looking to anyone earlier than Pope Pius XI for a definition and description of it complete enough to include the specific act (organizing) by which Social Justice is directly practiced. There are suggestions and partial glimpses, of course, in every work that ever dealt with social problems; but if anyone before Pope Pius XI ever put all the pieces together in one coherent theory, he has succeeded in keeping his secret remarkably well!

Appendix A to Chapter II **Quotations from *Quadragesimo Anno***

For the benefit of those who want to analyze more deeply the teachings of the Holy Father in his own words, some pertinent

passages of *Quadragesimo Anno* are here transcribed and commented upon. Each passage will be prefixed by its paragraph number in the complete text to permit ready reference to the latter:

For the Common Good

56...however the earth may be apportioned among private owners, it does not cease to serve the common good of all. This same doctrine We Ourselves also taught just above in declaring that the division of goods which results from private ownership was established by nature itself in order that created things may serve the needs of mankind in a fixed and stable order. Lest one wander from the right path of truth, this is something which must be continually kept in mind.

57. But not every distribution among human beings of property and wealth is of a character to attain either completely or with a satisfactory degree of perfection, the ends which God intended. Therefore the riches which socio-economic development constantly increase ought to be so distributed among individual persons and classes that the common advantage of all, which Leo XIII had praised, will be safeguarded; in other words, that the Common Good of all society will be kept inviolate. By this law of Social Justice, one man is forbidden to exclude the other from sharing in the benefits.

58. To each therefore must be given his own share of good, and the distribution of created goods, which, as every discerning person knows, is laboring today under the greatest evils, due to the few exceedingly rich and the unnumbered propertyless, must be effectively called back to, and brought into conformity with, the norm of the Common Good, *i.e.*, Social Justice.

Commentary

Notice in the above paragraphs that Social Justice is expressly directed towards the Common Good. This identifies it completely with the traditional "Legal Justice," and with no other virtue whatsoever. In the technical language of the philosophers, "actions are specified by their ends," and both the traditional Legal Justice and the modern Social Justice have identically the same end: the Common Good. The fact that so much of the above paragraphs is taken up with distributive justice, does not alter this conclusion in the least. It is Social Justice which *directs* the distribution in question *towards the Common Good*; exactly as we have seen, in a former example, that

it can direct fortitude towards the Common Good. That is why Social Justice is also called “General Justice”: it can demand an act of any other virtue whatsoever for the Common Good.

A Question of Structure

70. Conclusions of the greatest importance follow from this two-fold (individual and social) character which nature has impressed upon human work, and it is in accordance with these that wages ought to be regulated and established.

71. In the first place, the worker must be paid a wage sufficient to support him and his family. That the rest of the family should also contribute to the common support, according to the capacity of each, is certainly right, as can be observed especially in the families of farmers, and also in the families of many craftsmen and small shopkeepers. But to abuse the years of childhood and the limited strength of women is grossly wrong. Mothers, concentrating on household duties, should work primarily in the home or in its immediate vicinity. It is an intolerable abuse, and to be abolished at all costs, for mothers, on account of the father’s low wage, to be forced to engage in gainful occupations outside the home, to the neglect of their proper cares and duties, especially the training of children. Every effort must therefore be made that fathers of families receive a wage large enough to meet common domestic needs adequately, but if this cannot always be done under existing circumstances, Social Justice demands that changes be introduced into the system as soon as possible, whereby such a wage will be assured to every adult workingman.—And it will not be out of place here to render merited praise to all who, with a wise and beneficent purpose, have tried and tested various ways of adjusting the pay for work to family burdens.

Commentary

The amount of futile discussion which has raged around this passage on whether the family wage is due by social or commutative justice, or even by distributive justice, is a brilliant vindication of St. Thomas Aquinas’ name for the discursiveness of human reason: he called it *defectus intellectus*, which could be freely translated as “lack of vision” or “failure to see it whole.”

From the beginning of the above passage it is important to realize that the thing under discussion is what we call “the wage structure,”—not any given wage for this man or for that. All the

considerations on the individual aspects of family life, on the functions, so to say, of the various members, are introduced to show on what considerations one must establish the norm for that structure. Then if the “existing circumstances” (*i.e.*, the whole industrial set-up, the “going concern,” the present structure) fall short of that norm, Social Justice “demands that changes be introduced”—not, be it noted, in the individual pay envelope of each individual head of a family (for it is precisely that which “cannot be done under the existing circumstances”), but in the “going concern” itself, in the *organization* of the whole enterprise: the procurement, financing, management, production, distribution, *etc.*, so as to *accommodate a wage structure adequated to the norm* of Social Justice. Once this new structure is established, it will be possible to meet the demands of individual justice for all concerned.

In the little digression tacked on to the end of this paragraph (“It will not be out of place,” *etc.*), the question of structure is still further emphasized: the Pope would not “render merited praise” to those who had “tried and tested various ways” unless he were dealing with a complex problem of *reorganization* requiring great prudence and perseverance as well as “beneficent purpose.”

Eternal Vigilance

74. Lastly, the amount of pay must be adjusted to the public economic good... Another point...especially vital in our times, must not be overlooked: namely, that the opportunity to work be provided for those who are able and willing to work. This opportunity depends largely upon the wage and salary rate, which can help as long as it is kept within proper limits; but which can be, on the other hand, an obstacle if it exceeds those limits. For everyone knows that an excessive lowering of wages, or their increase beyond due measure, causes unemployment. This evil, indeed, especially as we see it prolonged and injuring so many during the years of Our Pontificate, has plunged workers into misery and temptation, ruined the prosperity of nations, and put in jeopardy the public order, peace, and tranquillity of the whole world. Hence it is contrary to Social Justice when, for the sake of personal gain, and without regard for the Common Good, wages and salaries are excessively lowered or raised; and this same Social Justice demands that wages and salaries be so managed, through agreement of purposes and wills, so far as can be done, so as to offer to the greatest pos-

sible number the opportunity of getting work and obtaining suitable means of livelihood.

Commentary

Note in the above passage that the term Social Justice is used twice, and that there is an interesting difference between the two cases. The first is what we might call an “open and shut case”—one completely disposed of once the solution is offered: “It is contrary to Social Justice when, for the sake of personal gain and without regard for the Common Good, wages are excessively lowered or raised.” This is evidently a case of what we call bad will or malice, and it is simply and always wrong.

But how about the men of good will—or, to put it more specifically, how about that famous “good intention for the Common Good” which was about all the philosophers of the past could demand in order that an act be termed legal or Social Justice?

That “good intention” is no more than a starting point for this Social Justice: What Social Justice demands—far beyond a mere act of the will—is “*management, through agreement of purposes and wills, insofar as can be done, to offer the greatest possible number... a suitable means of livelihood.*”

Evidently, we are here face to face with something that can never be a closed case in this world. If that is the nature of the demands of Social Justice in this one small field, then it doesn’t take much thinking to realize that a serious and constant preoccupation with social organization, in all its forms, and at all its levels, is the *duty*, according to his capacity, of every man living in society. This is a big order, especially when it is further realized that such a duty (allowing, of course, for the inescapable and all too evident limitations of discursive reason) binds him in *every exterior action of his life*. It will be interesting to see how it is done!

What Makes the Good Society— Conflict or Social Justice?

88. Attention must also be given to another matter.... Just as the unity of human society cannot be founded upon an opposition of classes, so also the right ordering of economic life cannot be left to a free competition of forces... a truth which the outcome of the practical application of the tenets of this evil individualistic spirit has more than sufficiently demonstrated. Therefore it is most necessary that economic life be again subjected to and governed by a true and effective directing prin-

ciple. This function is one that the economic dictatorship which has recently displaced free competition can still less perform, since it is a headstrong power and a violent energy that, to benefit people, needs to be strongly curbed and wisely ruled. But it cannot curb and rule itself. Loftier and nobler principles—Social Justice and Social Charity—must therefore be sought whereby this dictatorship may be governed firmly and fully. Hence the institutions of peoples, and particularly those of all social life, ought to be penetrated with this justice; and it is most necessary that it be truly effective, that is, establish a juridical and social order which will, as it were, give form and shape to all economic life. Social Charity, moreover, ought to be as the soul of this order, an order which public authority ought to be ever ready effectively to protect and defend.

Commentary

This passage, which has not been quoted here in its entirety, deserves careful study. First of all, the Holy Father refuses three alternatives to Social Justice as guides or norms of society. These alternative, but vicious, “norms” of society are the following: (1) class warfare, (2) free competition, and (3) economic dictatorship. The first, in parts of the Encyclical not quoted here, is utterly condemned; the second and third are admitted to have utility, but what is absolutely denied to them is that they can ever be a directive principle, either of themselves or of economic life in general. Both of these latter, especially the third one because of its extraordinary power, must be ruled by Social Justice and Social Charity. The first is entirely vicious because it is a direct negation of Social Justice and Social Charity.

All this can be summed up in a sentence: *Not conflict* in any form, but *only Social Justice* (organization for the Common Good) is the ultimate principle of society.

Here we can go a step further in considering the shortcomings of any theory of Social Justice which makes it a mere “intention for the Common Good.” The Holy Father is categorical in his statement that Social Justice must enter into the *practical* order before it can be said to exist. He says that *all* institutions, both those “of peoples” (governmental) and those “of all social life” (semi-public and private) must be penetrated with this justice. He insists further that “it is necessary that it be truly effective.” Then, to explain this effectiveness, he leads us back once more to the master-idea of *organized and institution-building* action, without which Social Justice

is a mere bandying about of words: "this Justice must *establish a juridical and social order* which will, as it were, *give form and shape* to all economic life."

This remarkable expression, "to give form and shape to life," recurs several times in Pope Pius XI's work, and will lead us later on in this pamphlet to an explanation of the institutions of life as "social habits."

Here also we might note the great breadth of Pope Pius XI's vision. The older "Legal Justice," both because of its imperfect beginnings in Aristotle and because of the suggestiveness of its name, always tended to be reduced to its narrowest possible meaning, for which we might invent the term "courtroom justice." There is evidence to support the belief that Pope Pius XI recognized this tendency, and its almost complete triumph in modern times, and deliberately decided to throw off this weight of tradition from his own teachings. At the beginning of his Pontificate, in the Encyclical *Studiorum Ducem*, occurs the phrase *in re sociali et in jure recta principia ponendo de justitia legali aut de sociali*:—"both in social life and in jurisprudence laying down correct principles for Legal Justice as well as for Social Justice."¹³ After this he abandoned "Legal Justice" entirely to the jurists and never used it in his social teachings. The older theory did not recognize the confusion in the term because, for it, Legal Justice *was* somehow bound up with law; but in the completed theory of Pius XI, Social Justice, far from playing any subordinate role to Law, actually *makes* the law itself: "It is most necessary that it *establish a juridical ... order*." The Law in all its majesty is simply one of the institutions which Social Justice creates for the Common Good!

Finally, this passage brings forcibly to our attention the concept of *Social Charity*. This concept of Social Charity is very likely, as we have already seen, original with Pius XI. The traditional virtue of "*pietas erga patriam*" certainly touches some of the same values; but even more certainly it is incomplete. The newer concept of Social Charity, is not developed in the Encyclical to the extent that Social Justice is developed; and thus a great field is opened up to the research of philosophers and moralists to delineate clearly the meaning of this Social Charity and its scope.

¹³ For the benefit of Latin scholars who may be troubled by the translation of *aut* by "as well as," the above phrase is immediately continued by: *Itemque de commutativa aut de distributiva*, where *aut* cannot possibly have any other meaning.

How to Fail Against Social Justice

101. With all his energy, Leo XIII sought to adjust this (capitalistic) economic system according to the norms of right order; hence it is evident that this system is not to be condemned in itself. And assuredly it is not of its own nature vicious. But it does violate right order when capital hires workers, that is the non-owning class, with a view to and under such terms that it directs business and even the whole economic system according to its own will and advantage, scorning the human dignity of the workers, the social character of economic activity, and Social Justice itself, and the Common Good.

Commentary

In this description of the social injustice of which Capitalism has made itself guilty, we may notice once more that the question at issue is one of *deliberate organization*: “with a view to and under such terms as to” capture the very system of economic life itself for private and selfish ends. The Pope then analyzes the evil of such an act: In the first place, it “scorns human dignity.” This is largely a failure against Charity as we will see in Chapter III. In the second place, it “scorns the social character of economic activity.” This is a failure against both Social Charity and Social Justice, in that it disregards the fact that the organization of the industry “takes so tight a grip on the human life” of the workers that it largely determines whether and to what degree “their share of human happiness will be even accessible to them.” Thirdly, it “scorns Social Justice itself”; that is, it formally denies that any obligation lies upon the industry *to be so organized* that each worker’s and the whole community’s “share of human happiness is accessible.” Finally, it “scorns the Common Good.” It plunges the workers into misery and temptations, ruins the prosperity of the community, and puts in jeopardy the public peace and welfare.

Two Levels and Many Divisions

110. So as to avoid the reefs of individualism and collectivism, the two-fold (*i.e.*, individual and social) character both of Capital and ownership, and of labor or work, must be given due and rightful weight. Relations of one to the other must be made to conform to the laws of strictest justice—commutative justice as it is called—with proper support, however, of Christian Charity. Then free competition, kept within definite and due limits,

and still more, economic dictatorship, must be effectively brought under public authority in those matters which pertain to the latter's function (*i.e.*, the Common Good). These same public institutions, moreover, ought to make all human society conform to the needs of the Common Good, that is, to the norm of Social Justice. If this is done, that most important division of social life, namely, economic activity, cannot fail likewise to return to right and sound order.

Commentary

Here we meet once more the two levels of justice: first, strictest ("narrowest") or commutative justice, which directly regulates the relationships of capital and labor to each other; and then, above them, Social Justice, which by a proper organization of the whole industry, of the whole going concern, makes the payment of just wages possible in it. Some writers have tried to explain this in a popular way by saying that when the business is in good shape and able to pay just wages, it owes such wages in commutative justice; but even if it is badly organized and in distress it still owes just wages, this time in Social Justice. This is inaccurate and highly misleading. *Even* when in distress, it still owes just wages in *commutative justice*—only it can't pay them! Social Justice does not give some sort of additional claim to "a just wage anyhow, regardless of circumstances"—what it gives is a direct and enforceable claim to have the business *so* organized that a just wage *is* possible; and even after Social Justice has brought about this happy state, it is still commutative justice which directly demands that the just wage be paid.

Note in the last part of this quotation how the vast concept of Social Justice goes far beyond the economic applications of the Encyclical:—to "all human society" and "all social life," of which economic activity is only "a most important division."

Notice finally, that the power to make all human society conform to the norms of Social Justice is vested in *institutions*, in *organizations of men*, not in men as isolated individuals. Social Justice is something *social*.

Appendix B to Chapter II Quotations from Divini Redemptoris

Since, as we have seen, "not conflict in any form, but only Social Justice can be the ultimate principle of society," it is easy to

understand why the Holy Father returned to his teachings on Social Justice in the Encyclical “On Atheistic Communism” (*Divini Redemptoris*). But he had another good reason for repeating and insisting on his former teachings: Six years had passed since he wrote *Quadragesimo Anno*, and most people hadn’t caught on! Though the passage in this second document is rather long, it deserves to be quoted in full.

Let’s Get This Straight!

51. In reality, besides commutative justice (which is strictly enjoined in the preceding two paragraphs, 49 and 50, of the Encyclical), there is also Social Justice with its own set obligations, from which neither employers nor workingmen can escape. Now it belongs to Social Justice to demand from each individual all that is necessary for the Common Good.

Commentary

This is evidently an attempt by the Holy Father to silence some of his fuzziest “Commentators,” who had been trying to “explain” Social Justice as somehow “straddling” various traditional virtues, especially distributive and commutative justice. Not only does he expressly rule out commutative justice, but also, by implication, any kind of combination or straddling of other virtues. What he says is that Social Justice has “*its own* set obligations.”

The Common Good and Individuals

51. But just as in the living organism it is impossible to provide for the good of the whole unless each individual member is given what it needs for the exercise of its proper functions, so it is impossible to care for the social organism and the good of society as a unit unless each single part and each individual member—that is to say, each individual man in the dignity of his human personality—is supplied with all that is necessary for the exercise of his social functions.

Commentary

Here the Holy Father shows how distributive justice does get into the picture: it is not Social Justice, but Social Justice *commands* that it (like all other virtues) be observed in so far as the Common Good needs it. He could have used commutative justice or any other virtue in this paragraph, because Social Justice can command

them all in the same way. That is why moral philosophers call all these other acts of virtue “commanded acts” of Social Justice.

The Proof of the Pudding ...

51. If Social Justice is satisfied, the result will be an intense activity in economic life as a whole, pursued in tranquillity and order. This activity will be proof of the health of the social body, just as the health of the human body is recognized in the undisturbed regularity and perfect efficiency of the whole organism.

Commentary

Here once more the Holy Father is careful to point out that a mere good intention for the Common Good is not enough. He makes it clear that the only criterion he will permit as to whether Social Justice is being observed is an *actually* good state of society.

This is a large order! What it amounts to, in the world as we know it, is simply a condemnation (if one insists on looking at it that way) to ceaseless effort. Whether this “proof” that “Social Justice is satisfied” ever was in fact realized, or will be in fact realized, is a problem for history or prophecy; the only problem for social philosophy is that as long as it is not in fact realized, there can be no excuse and no mercy for lack of effort!

Let’s Get Down to Cases

52. But Social Justice cannot be said to have been satisfied as long as workingmen are denied a salary that will enable them to secure proper sustenance for themselves and for their families; as long as they are denied the opportunity of acquiring a modest fortune and forestalling the plague of universal pauperism; as long as they cannot make suitable provision for public or private insurance for old age, for periods of illness, and unemployment.

Commentary

This paragraph adds nothing new. It simply applies the preceding principles to practical details to make sure their full import will be clear.

Thus far, in this passage from *Divini Redemptoris* the Holy Father has limited himself to what was clear in the traditional teaching on “Legal Justice”: that Social Justice has the Common Good as its object, and that it can “command” the observance of other

virtues for that Common Good. Then he links this teaching with that of *Quadragesimo Anno* by quoting from that Document:

To Sum Up

52. In a word, to repeat what has been said in our Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*: "Then only will the economic and social order be soundly established and attain its end, when it offers, to all and to each, all those goods which the wealth and resources of nature, technical science, and the social organization of economic life can furnish. And these goods ought indeed to be enough both to meet the demands of necessity and decent comforts, and to advance people to that fuller and happier condition of life which, when it is wisely cared for, is not only no hindrance to virtue, but helps it greatly."

Commentary

In the middle of this passage, it is interesting to note what might be called *the elements of economic life*:

First, the wealth and resources of nature, secondly, technical science, and thirdly, the social organization of economic life. The first of these elements is fixed and stable, God's gift about which man can do nothing whatsoever since it is not in his power to annihilate or to create. The second, which controls the first, is partly fixed, for there is such a thing as "natural capacity" for science, which is not uniform and not readily changed. Yet man enjoys a considerable control over it by that "social organization" known as education. The third element, social organization itself, is entirely under man's control. Hence it appears that the only fully controllable factor is this third, both in itself and in its influence on the two others. When this is clearly seen, it is easy to understand why the act of Social Justice is the act of organizing.

It is this element of organization that the Pontiff then goes on to deal with in the second part of the text, which will follow. It is in this part of the quotation that Pius XI goes beyond his predecessors to complete the theory of Social Justice.

Only Individualism Is Helpless: Social Justice Has An Answer

53. It happens all too frequently, however, under the salary system, that individual employers are helpless to insure justice unless, with a view to its practice, they organize institutions the

object of which is to prevent competition incompatible with fair treatment of the workers. Where this is true, it is the duty of contractors and employers to support and promote such necessary organizations as normal instruments enabling them to fulfill their obligations of justice. But the laborers too must be mindful of their duty to love and deal fairly with their employers, and persuade themselves that there is no better way of safeguarding their own interests.

Commentary

The two levels of justice as they are here outlined have already been commented upon in this pamphlet. Here it will be sufficient to warn the reader that the unjust competition mentioned in the paragraph is only an example of what difficulties a business might face. The same principles would apply if the difficulty came from outside pressure, as in a "colonial economy," or from lack of intelligence or energy within the industry. This is clear in Paragraphs 72 and 73 of *Quadragesimo Anno*; and the general law covering all possible cases is stated in Paragraph 69 of that Encyclical, as follows:

Man's productive effort cannot yield its fruits unless a truly social and organic body exists, unless a social and juridical order watches over the exercise of work, unless the various occupations, being interdependent, co-operate with and mutually complete one another. And, what is still more important, unless mind, material things, and work combine and form as it were a single whole. Therefore, where the social and individual nature of work is neglected, it will be impossible to evaluate work justly and pay it according to justice.

This paragraph deserves study for its implications as to how helpless an individual really is to secure his own perfection in an unjustly organized society.

Institutions Are the Key Idea

54. If, therefore, we consider the whole structure of economic life, as we have already pointed out in our Encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno*, the reign of mutual collaboration between justice and charity in social economic relations can only be achieved by a body of professional and inter-professional organizations, built on solid Christian foundations, working together

to effect, under forms adopted to different places and circumstances, what has been called the corporation.

Commentary

Thus, as this whole quotation which we have been examining clearly shows, *organizations* and *institutions* furnish the key for the understanding of Social Justice; and there will be no effective insight whatever into Social Justice without this key. The last paragraph shows how *profoundly* the idea of organization enters into this conception of justice, as does also paragraph 69 of *Quadragesimo Anno* which was quoted in the comments immediately preceding it. Both of these paragraphs make it absolutely clear that without right organization, without good social groups, without just institutions, there is no such thing as Social Justice, and in such a state the perfection of human life becomes impossible.

