GOOD BUSINESS

Catholic Social Teaching at Work in the Marketplace

Revised Edition

Thomas O'Brien
Elizabeth W. Collier
Patrick Flanagan

ANSELM ACADEMIC

Contents

Preface 9

Introduction 11

Thomas O'Brien

The Tradition of Applied Ethics 11
Catholic Interpretations of Applied Ethical Reasoning 21
The Catholic Social Tradition 28

1. **Human Dignity in a Technological Age** 33

Thomas O'Brien

Introduction 33
The Historical Roots of the Human Dignity Tradition 34
Modern Applications to the Business Setting: Emerging Technological Challenges to Human Dignity 39
Conclusion 52
Case Study: Designer Babies: The Fertility Institutes 53
Case Study: The EV Revolution 57

2. **The Common Good and Corporate Governance** 61

Thomas O'Brien

Introduction 61
The Common Good 62
Some Problems and Reservations 73
Conclusion 77
Case Study: Executive Pay and Economic Crisis 80
Case Study: A. G. Parfett & Sons Ltd.—Employee Ownership 83

3. **Stewardship and the Educated Consumer** 87

Elizabeth W. Collier

Introduction 87
Biblical and Theological Roots of Stewardship 88
Historical Development of the Concept of Stewardship 95
Developments in Catholic Social Teaching 99
Business Application 107
Conclusion 109
Case Study: E-Waste 109
Case Study: Do You Know What You Are Eating? 111

4. **In Search of a Capitalist Option for the Poor** 115

Thomas O'Brien

Introduction 115
Preferential Option for the Poor: A Primer 116
Catholic vs. Capitalist Social Praxis 120
The Quest for a Capitalist Option for the Poor 127
Conclusion 135
Case Study: TOMS Shoes 136
Case Study: Farmville 138

5. **Justice for All** 141

Patrick Flanagan

Introduction 141
Defining Justice 143
Historical Appreciations of Justice 145
Biblical Roots of Justice 150
Roman Catholic Social Teaching 155
Applications to Contemporary Business Settings 162
Conclusion 165
Case Study: Day Laboring 167
Case Study: Sweet Justice or Sour Dough? 170

6. **Subsidiarity in the Midst of Globalization** 175

Elizabeth W. Collier

Introduction 175
The Local Gets Lost in the Global 175
Roots of Subsidiarity in Catholic Social Teaching 177
Subsidiarity in Catholic Social Teaching 183
Application of Subsidiarity in a Contemporary Business Setting . . . 191
Conclusion 195
Case Study: Toyota Motor Corporation and Employee "Suggestion" System 195
Case Study: Homeboy Industries 198

7. **The Challenge of Solidarity in a Competitive Business Environment** 203

Thomas O'Brien

Introduction 203
History and Development of the Idea of Solidarity 205
Solidarity in a Business Context 219
Conclusion 224
Case Study: One Acre Fund 225
Case Study: The Solar Suitcase 228

8. **Weighing Rights against Responsibilities** 231

Thomas O'Brien

Introduction 231
Human Rights: Philosophical, Biblical, and Theological Foundations . 233
Catholic Social Teaching on Rights and Responsibilities 243
Rights and Responsibilities in a Contemporary Business Setting . . 250
Conclusion 252
Case Study: No Hershey's Kisses for Children of Africa 252
Case Study: The Bitter Internal Drive of Apple 256

Conclusion: A Catholic Understanding of the Nature of Business 260

Thomas O'Brien

Index 269

Preface

When the topic of business ethics is raised, someone is sure to make the joke that business ethics is an oxymoron. After everyone nods and has a good laugh, the discussion turns to a litany of moral offenses perpetrated by businesses. Usually, a long list of negative case studies is offered as proof that modern business leaders treat ethics as irrelevant. These interactions often conclude with the refrain that modern businesses somehow must behave immorally and antisocially in order to exist in the dog-eat-dog world of competitive capitalist markets. The most disconcerting part of the scenario is that many business leaders and business school students are among the first to make this joke and among those who laugh the loudest at its telling.

This cultural bias treats the marketplace like some kind of lawless moral dystopia that is entirely irredeemable. In other words, it considers the modern capitalist marketplace as an utter failure—an utter moral failure—and a kind of curse on human society. It implies that society would be much better off without it. Not surprisingly, when presented with this argument, the same business leaders and students who laughed the loudest and proved the most adept at conjuring examples of the sins of capitalist businesses, in the next moment, sober up and sing the unbridled praises of the marketplace. They recast the capitalist marketplace as an abundant provider, a lab for human creativity, the last bastion of genuine freedom, and the best of all possible commercial worlds.

The authors of this book consider both extreme cynicism and unquestioning esteem misguided and dangerous attitudes when evaluating the moral worth of the capitalist marketplace. Many business ethics textbooks unconsciously play into the hands of both the cynics and the sycophants by focusing too much on case studies that highlight evils in the marketplace and not enough on those that highlight outstanding moral leadership. One could easily finish reading a standard business ethics textbook and conclude that business is an amoral enterprise at best and that the only reasonable attitude is either to give in to the culture and become amoral oneself or to abandon any hopes of becoming a business leader for fear of becoming ethically bankrupt.

To combat the impression that the business context is rife with bad behavior that can barely be kept in check, this book uses predominantly positive case studies that highlight many wonderful things that businesses do around the

world. The text assumes readers are aware that capitalist businesses can behave badly and sometimes engage in very destructive behavior and certainly does not shy away from bringing up some of these examples as it discusses the principles and theories of Catholic social thought. However, a primary aim of this book is to spark the moral imagination of students by demonstrating the ethical impulse behind many capitalist enterprises around the world today. In this way, the book aims to serve as an instructional and inspirational volume that motivates future business leaders to pursue enterprises that are successful both morally and financially.

This book expounds on the major themes that arise from the substantial and august body of work known as Catholic social teaching. Each chapter examines one of the central theoretical themes of Catholic social thought and applies it to contemporary business practices and critical issues that arise in the global economy today. Each then presents two actual business cases and encourages readers to insert themselves into these situations to explore solutions that make sense in the light of the high moral standards set by the Catholic social tradition. It is the hope of the authors that this approach will inspire readers and broaden their moral imagination regarding what a business should be and how it should operate within the novel conditions of global markets.

Introduction

Thomas O'Brien

The Tradition of Applied Ethics

Before applying Catholic social teaching (CST) to business enterprises and the marketplace, it is important to survey the field of applied ethics and to review how Catholicism has informed that tradition from its own perspective. Ethicists evaluate human activity to determine the relative goodness or evil (right or wrong) of an action that has either taken place or is being proposed. Applied ethics is a subset of ethics that focuses on applying ethical principles and theories to a specific set of circumstances. So, for instance, medical ethics is a type of applied ethics that applies established ethical principles and theories to circumstances and dilemmas that arise in hospitals, clinics, and medical research facilities. Business ethics, also a type of applied ethics, applies established ethical principles and theories to the circumstances and dilemmas that arise in the marketplace.

Undoubtedly, applied ethics has been around since the beginning of human society. People seem to naturally assess the fairness of their interactions with others, and they normally do so by using common sense and practical measures to determine who was helped or harmed, and by how much, in various controversial situations. Over time, people became more sophisticated at evaluating and categorizing ethical offenses and this refinement developed into the discipline of ethics. The first section of the introduction will introduce the basic outlines of that discipline and some important technical terms that will appear throughout the book. It will be followed by a discussion of the way Catholics have interpreted these standard ethical perspectives. Finally, the introduction will offer a brief overview of the history and development of CST, relating this more specific tradition to the broader discipline of ethical analysis.

The Basics of Applied Ethical Reasoning

Systems of applied ethics fall into two general categories: decision-making systems and character-based systems. Decision-making systems answer the

question, "What should I do?" Those using these systems aim to make the right decision when faced with a moral dilemma by applying a guiding principle and choosing the best option. They tend to focus on the task at hand and, therefore, do not address longer-range goals of moral development and perfection. Because these systems emphasize achieving the right or good in a single moment in time, the principles must be applied again and again as moral dilemmas arise. A number of the theories described in greater detail in the following pages, such as consequentialism and Kant's categorical imperative, fall under the decision-making category.

In contrast to decision-making systems, character-based systems answer the question, "Who should I be?" or "Who should I become?" Although often used to resolve moral dilemmas and guide practical action in a current situation, the real value of character-based systems lies in their capacity to foster moral growth and promote character development. These systems tend to lead people to focus on longer-range goals associated with the moral improvement of individuals or societies. Normally, people who use these systems employ a scale of increasing moral achievement as a map that points one toward a final goal of ethical perfection.

Consequentialism

Consequentialism is a decision-making ethical theory that focuses on the results, or consequences, when evaluating the moral worth of a particular course of action. Consequentialists ask questions such as, "What happened?" or "What is likely to happen?" when they approach an ethical dilemma. They are most interested in maximizing the beneficial outcomes and minimizing the harm done to everyone involved in a particular circumstance. Consequentialists tend to be relatively indifferent to abstractions such as principles, virtues, or moral imperatives. Instead, they have a more practical interest in assuring that the outcomes of a particular case will increase the overall welfare of those impacted by the consequences.

In its application, consequentialist logic is very similar to the logic of comparison shopping, in which the shopper chooses between various products by comparing their features. Ultimately, comparison shoppers choose the product that they believe will maximize their happiness after weighing and comparing the options available. In a similar way, consequentialists face moral dilemmas by comparing various courses of action and choosing the one they think will produce the greatest satisfaction, happiness, or utility. This weighing of consequential options is especially effective and convincing when one has reliable information about what actually did happen or what is likely to happen in a given case. It proves much less useful in novel or unprecedented situations or when the outcomes of actions are otherwise not easily predicted.

The term *consequentialism* describes a category of ethical approaches that can be further broken down according to how broadly one defines the group of people affected by a moral dilemma. If the group consists of only oneself, then this kind of consequentialism is called egoism. This standpoint focuses solely on whether the expected outcomes are going to be good for a person or a group of people to whom the primary decision-maker is closely associated. It is not so much an ethical theory as a description of self-interested behavior. Some confuse *egoism* with *egotism*, an exaggerated conception of one's own importance. While egoists might have a big ego, they might just as easily have poor self-esteem. Sometimes *egoism* is also confused with *selfishness*. While egoists might behave in very selfish ways, it should be noted that some of the most generous corporate actions, i.e., philanthropic gifts to the arts and social welfare, are motivated by egoistic concerns—promoting the company in the eyes of the public.

An egoist chooses the options with the best results for oneself and one's close associates, which is a fairly good description of the way most people make decisions in their daily lives. Most individuals do not normally make choices based on how an action will impact other people outside their own identity group, or for that matter, the entire global family. Think, for example, of college students who choose a major because of how it will promote their personal career aspirations and improve the lot of their family rather than because of its benefit to the wider community. Egoism becomes an ethically problematic stance only when the pursuit of one's own interests conflicts with the welfare of others.

Egoism itself is not an ethical theory with a developed logic and a loyal following among scholars. It is really just a descriptive term pointing to behavior that is essentially self-interested. On the other hand, consequentialism describes a category of ethical analysis that tries to take into account the good of all those being influenced by a decision. One ethical theory within the consequentialist family is known as utilitarianism. This doctrine demands that people choose the option that will result in the greatest possible balance of good over evil for everyone affected by it. Utilitarians want to maximize the overall utility of decisions so that human society flourishes as a result. They evaluate both the number of those affected as well as the quality or intensity of the goodness and harm experienced.

In this way, utilitarianism consists of more than mere majoritarianism, which is based on a simple exercise of counting heads and claiming that the interests of the majority always trump those of the minority. Nevertheless, utilitarians sometimes find themselves at a loss to condemn cases in which a minority is being oppressed in a way that significantly benefits a much larger majority. Therefore, the classic ethical dilemma presented to stump utilitarians is one in which the enslavement of a relatively small minority results in a much higher standard of living for a much larger majority. Utilitarians would acknowledge that slavery is a bad situation; however, because only a relatively small number of people

experience it and because the good is so generally distributed, they have difficulty condemning it without going outside of their normal logic, which usually considers only results as legitimate in making an ethical evaluation.[1]

Deontology

The word *deontology* comes from the Greek root *deon,* which means, "duty or obligation." Deontologists focus on evaluating individual cases based on certain expectations about the principles people should apply when making decisions about what to do in a given dilemma. These expectations can take the form of universal moral principles, such as the principle to avoid harming others, which can be found in virtually every major moral system. However, deontological moral expectations can also be tied to more specific and local roles that people play in a certain society. So, for instance, soldiers may still be held to the universal moral duty to avoid gratuitously harming others, while at the same time, may be duty bound to follow orders that require them to maim and kill an enemy of the nation so as to maintain the good order of the state.

In its application, deontological logic resembles the logic of the job description in the business world, in which the supervisor evaluates the performance of workers by comparing their actual work record to the expectations in the job description. If employee performance does not measure up to the expectations in the job description, the employee is deemed deficient. Similarly, if the behaviors of those acting within an ethical dilemma do not measure up to the various principles that the deontologist deems critical in that situation, then those behaviors are judged morally suspect.

A critical difference between consequentialists and deontologists is that most deontological systems emphasize the application of principles and the examination of intentions. While consequentialists look exclusively at the concrete results of actions, deontologists often view these results as distractions because of their unpredictability. For this reason, results cannot be considered the sole criteria in the moral equation.[2] Consequentialism takes an inductive approach, much like the experimental sciences. Something is good or bad depending on the results or data that come from practical applications of an idea. Conversely, deontology takes a deductive approach, much like the theoretical sciences. The

1. It should be noted that utilitarians have responded to this "slavery objection" in a variety of ways. Most often, they simply claim that only fictitious idealistic versions of slavery could ever be justified in a utilitarian analysis. These authors assert that situations in which people were actually enslaved would result in a society that was much worse off than one in which people were justly remunerated for their labor. See R. M. Hare, "What Is Wrong with Slavery," *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 8.2 (1979): 103–21.

2. Consequentialists respond to this criticism by claiming intentions themselves are the truly unpredictable part of the moral equation.

goodness or evil in any given circumstance can be inferred from a set of universal principles shown to be true in all circumstances.

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) was one such deontologist. He believed that the moral worth of an action could be assessed only by considering the intentions of the actors in a case. He maintained that the only acceptable action in any given circumstance was one that yielded a maxim, or principle, that could be universalized—one that would be endorsed by any and all reasonable observers.[3] This first formulation of what Kant called the categorical imperative eventually yielded a second formulation that seems very close to the Golden Rule that schoolchildren have learned for generations: "so act as to treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of any other, in every case at the same time as an end, never as a means only."[4]

Virtue Ethics

Virtue is an ancient ethical concept that assigns moral value to both behavior and character traits that conform to notions of "the good." A virtue is a trait of either a person or an action that makes that person or action stand out as morally good. Virtue ethics determines the morality of an action by assessing how well people's behavior and character conform to these standards of perfection. Virtues can be applied to behavior—in which case, they function as a kind of practical moral wisdom. So, for instance, one particular course of action might be honest, courageous, and forthright while another might be cowardly, deceptive, and cunning. The ancient Greek philosophers referred to this as *phronesis*, an application of virtue as a practical guide to behavior.

In a similar way, virtues can also be applied as character traits to describe a person and assign that person a standing in the moral universe. Therefore, people who regularly boast excessively about their own meager achievements might be branded arrogant, while those who do not seek excessive attention despite their outstanding achievements might be seen as exhibiting the virtues of modesty and humility. The ancient Greeks knew this as *arête*, using virtues to analyze the character of individuals.

According to virtue ethicists, the ultimate purpose of all this virtuous behavior is *eudaimonia*, or human happiness. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle (384–322 BCE) used the term *eudaimonia* to describe the deep satisfaction that someone ought to feel at the end of a life well lived—that is, a life lived according to the virtues. For Aristotle, a life lived according to ethical

3. Kant's First Formulation of the Categorical Imperative: "Act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law." Immanuel Kant, *The Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (Broadview Press, 2005), 81.

4. Ibid., 88.

principles was equivalent to living the happy life. Happiness was not achieved through the accumulation of wealth, the exercise of power, or the gaining of recognition and fame. Rather, Aristotle observed that happiness seemed almost entirely dependent on the moral worth of the decisions one made throughout one's life. Conversely, those whose lives lacked *eudaimonia* almost always had vices such as greed, avarice, selfishness, cowardice, and pride. Therefore, happiness was achieved through moral discipline, and the pursuit of happiness was, at the same time, the pursuit of the good.

Western religious traditions take up ancient Greek notions of virtue and appropriate them for use within their moral systems. For this reason, virtue ethics exists in Judaism, Christianity and, to a lesser extent, Islam in ways that closely resemble the original formulations. For example, the Catholic Church lists four cardinal virtues as essential to the Christian life: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance.[5] In addition to the Abrahamic traditions, the notion of virtue survives in almost every major religious tradition as well as in the smaller, local ones. For instance, the *sanatana dharma* in Hinduism is one example of virtue in a major non-Western religion. According to the *sanatana dharma*, all Hindus have a duty to adhere to the following virtues:

- Altruism: Selfless service to all humanity
- Restraint and Moderation: Sexual relations, eating, and other pleasurable activities should be kept in moderation.
- Honesty: One is required to be honest with self; honest with family, friends, and all of humanity.
- Cleanliness: Outer cleanliness is to be cultivated for good health and hygiene; inner cleanliness is cultivated through devotion to god, selflessness, nonviolence, and all the other virtues.
- Protection and reverence for the earth
- Universality: One shows tolerance and respect for everyone, everything, and the way of the universe.
- Peace: One must cultivate a peaceful manner in order to benefit oneself and others.
- Reverence for elders and teachers

Justice

Morally evaluating economic relationships almost always raises issues associated with fairness and equity, and therefore, a discussion of justice ensues. In modern

5. *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* no. 1805, *www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s1c1a7.htm.*

philosophical discourse, justice is understood from many different perspectives, but the one most applicable to business ethics is *distributive justice*. Theories of distributive justice guide the allocation of the benefits and burdens of economic activity in order to achieve some acceptable level of fairness and equity. The mode of reasoning for the principles of allocation is analogous to a "lifeboat" exercise that encourages participants to imagine themselves adrift on an ocean with insufficient resources for everyone's survival. The participants must decide who gets the resources and what standards should guide the decision-making. Such exercises, like theories of distributive justice, shed light on the values and moral priorities of a group and how they get implemented in ways that privilege some and disadvantage others.

Generally speaking, there are six schools of distributive justice: strict egalitarianism, resource egalitarianism, desert-based justice, libertarianism, utilitarianism, and Rawlsian justice. Egalitarian principles stress equality and the need to establish structures that ensure impartiality.

Strict Egalitarianism

Strict egalitarians demand that everyone in a society receive exactly the same income and resources. Although a very simple and straightforward requirement, such a demand has never proven practically realizable in actual circumstances. It is very difficult to enforce absolute equality in circumstances in which individual strengths and weaknesses are diverse and in environments in which the constant introduction of novel elements throws the equilibrium off kilter.

Resource Egalitarianism

For that reason, most egalitarians are limited-resource egalitarians, demanding equal distribution of only certain resources in a society. For example, many resource egalitarians believe that in a truly just society, all people would begin life with essentially the same set of basic resources, such as nutrition, housing, clothing, education, and so on. What one did with that initial set of basic resources supplied gratis by the state would determine one's fate in that society.

Desert-Based Justice

In this way, resource egalitarians are similar in spirit to certain other schools of justice that believe people should be rewarded for their activities in accordance with their contribution to the social product. These desert-based principles focus on effort, ingenuity, and productivity, recognizing that some members of society deserve a larger share of society's benefits because of their more substantial role in building and maintaining the social order. In other words, if someone works hard at something society values, then that person should be richly rewarded. On the other hand, if someone contributes little, or contributes only in ways

that are not valuable to that society, then that person should languish in poverty. Desert-based principles like these, however, do not account for the randomness, chaos, messiness, and unpredictability of human life and society. Some people who work very hard and contribute a great deal to society still fail due to unforeseen circumstances such as illness, accidents, or the collateral damage inflicted by family members who need their assistance.

Desert-based principles also do not have a developed notion of social value and social utility. They assume that societies always value things that are beneficial and useful, when clearly this is not the case. Societies frequently reward wasteful, useless, and even counterproductive activities. One only needs to look at the economic meltdown of 2008 to identify banking executives who were richly rewarded for contributing to this disaster. From the perspective of justice, do people who contribute to waste, destruction, and frivolity still deserve outsized compensation? Furthermore, societies often undercompensate for activities they claim to value highly. For instance, aspects of US society tell its military personnel that they are held in the highest esteem; however, soldiers earn little more than most service-sector workers, and many veterans struggle to get basic health care needs met. Does US society value the destructive "contributions" of bankers more than the self-sacrificing service of military personnel?

Libertarian Justice

Libertarian notions of justice place greater emphasis on freedom and less on the capacity of a society to engineer equality through law, policy, and regulation. In fact, libertarians are skeptical that equality can be achieved through the imposition of laws, regulations, and other restrictions on otherwise free commerce. Therefore, from a libertarian perspective, justice is achieved only within a society that guarantees the state will not interfere with individual pursuits, assuming those pursuits are themselves not interfering with the rights of others to pursue their own goals. The state should protect individual rights to acquire, control, and transfer property but, otherwise, should play no proactive role in ensuring, supplementing, or regulating the use of property.

Libertarianism, sometimes called empirical negative liberty, is based on the notion of radical self-ownership, which tends to run counter to more generally accepted ideas of mutual rights and responsibilities that members of a society owe one another. On a practical level, the concept of radical self-ownership denies the obvious social construction of the self and of one's role in the larger context of society. In truth, people don't own themselves. Selfhood is beholden to a myriad of human relationships that teach, influence, assist, resist, challenge, counsel, and so forth. These human relationships include known relationships with family, teachers, friends, doctors, lawyers, counselors, and others. However, a fuller accounting of our socially constructed selves would reveal a vast hidden

world of unseen and unknown actors who have had some kind of influence on our lives and who together comprise an incalculable impact on people.

Utilitarian Justice

One theory of justice that takes the larger web of social relationships very seriously is utilitarianism, an ethical idea briefly introduced earlier. Utilitarianism is a consequentialist system that seeks the best and most useful results for everyone concerned. This basic ethical ideal of general welfare can easily be scaled to include entire societies or even the global community. Therefore, justice for a utilitarian consists of choosing the policy alternatives that will result in the greatest good for society as a whole. Taken at face value, utilitarianism seems laudable; however, sometimes utilitarianism has difficulty condemning alternatives that clearly sacrifice individual rights and liberty, when it judges those alternatives as resulting in the greatest overall good for the majority of the members of society. In the lifeboat exercise, someone following a strict utilitarian analysis might justify throwing someone (or even a small group) overboard if that meant the rest would be more likely to survive and even thrive while awaiting a rescue.

Rawlsian Justice

Finally, without going into too much detail, there is the *difference principle* and John Rawls's theory of justice, which is based on the welfare of the least well-off in society. John Rawls (1921–2002) was a philosopher who spent most of his career at Harvard teaching and writing about the principles that would inform a genuinely just society. According to Rawls, the relative justice of a society can be determined by the fate of its poorest and most marginalized members. The more just a society is, the better off the poor in that society will be, relatively speaking. This theory led some to accuse Rawls of being a strict egalitarian in disguise and his system of justice mere window dressing over a core of utopian socialism. Rawls responded that a strictly egalitarian system might be the most just, but the real test consisted of comparing the lots of the least well-off in different systems. It might be the case that a society that tolerated some disparity in income could actually result in a more productive economy overall and, therefore, end up distributing more wealth to the poorest members of that society. Rawls asserted that differences in income and wealth were only tolerable when it benefited the poor in some way. Hence, capitalism might be more just than socialism but only if it could be shown that the poor fared better in that system than in the collectivist egalitarian ideal. The main weakness of Rawls's theory of justice is that it is a thought experiment rather than a practical theory. While some have attempted to use his theory in concrete situations, its real purpose is to draw attention to the meaning of justice and the demands that it places on society.

Teleology

An introduction to common approaches to applied ethics would not be complete without discussing the family of theories known as teleology. Like many other ethical terms, this one has its etymological roots in ancient Greece. *Telos* is a Greek word meaning "final purpose, goal, or end." Therefore, this ethical perspective concentrates on the ultimate purpose of human striving. It asks the question, "What is the ultimate goal of human life and how does one arrange intermediate goals, purposes, and ends so that they align with that ultimate purpose?" Many confuse teleology with consequentialism because both focus on "ends" and "goals," but these systems are distinct in that they seek entirely different goals. Consequentialism is concerned with the immediate results of an action, sometimes referred to in philosophical circles as the *efficient cause*. Teleology is concerned about only the immediate results to the extent that they are properly ordered toward a larger purpose, sometimes referred to as the *final cause* by medieval philosophers.

Teleological systems demand that humans order their actions toward a long-term, transcendent purpose or goal, and frequently, that goal takes the form of an exemplar or a model of perfection. One can find many examples of exemplars in the religions of the world. In Christianity, Jesus is the model of perfection, and Christians are frequently referred to as followers of Christ. Christians are encouraged to model their behavior after the example of Jesus, and this becomes a type of shorthand method of determining the moral path for Christians. One can see teleology at play in the Christian phrase "What would Jesus do?" and its acronym, WWJD, which has appeared on a wide variety of T-shirts and bracelets in recent decades. More precisely, teleology is concerned with who Jesus was and how one can become more Christ-like through a more mindful approach to everyday behavior. Christian discipleship, therefore, serves as one of many examples of teleology in a major world religion.

Not all teleological systems are religious. In fact, one of the most popular psychological theories of ethical development has teleological elements. Lawrence Kohlberg, a psychologist at Harvard University in the 1970s, claimed that every person who progresses toward moral maturity does so by moving through a series of predictable stages. Kohlberg derived this theory of moral development, in part, from the work of his mentor, Jean Piaget, who used stages to describe human cognitive development. Kohlberg's system as a whole assumes the existence of such a thing as moral maturity and the highest standard against which all other stages can be compared and judged. The highest stage in Kohlberg's theory, stage 6, is a level of moral perfection that few have achieved.

Catholic Interpretations of Applied Ethical Reasoning

The ethical theories outlined previously constitute the foundation of most conversations about business ethics today. Although almost every Catholic university in North America teaches some form of business ethics, few resources specifically analyze this field from the perspective of the Catholic moral tradition. This section of the introduction will give a brief overview of the Catholic moral tradition, pointing out the areas of agreement and divergence from those theories discussed in the previous section, "The Tradition of Applied Ethics." Before the book addresses the Catholic social tradition and how it applies to businesses and the economy, it is important for the reader to understand how Catholics analyze the behavior of individuals acting in commercial markets. The social tradition is, in part, an outgrowth of the broader moral tradition, and it frequently references elements of the moral tradition when making its arguments for certain policies and practices.

Divine Command

An obvious way that the Catholic moral tradition differs from secular traditions has to do with the belief in God and the conviction that God is concerned about human behavior and the consequences of that behavior. Catholics believe that God even demands certain types of behavior and that believers face divine approbation and punishment, depending on the quality of choices they make when faced with moral dilemmas. In many circumstances, the reason a Catholic may deem something right or wrong may depend on whether something is approved or rejected by God.

The belief in divine command raises the question of how one determines the will of a God who is believed to be above and beyond human understanding. The answer, in short, is revelation. Catholics believe that, while God is beyond the normal confines of human comprehension, aspects of the divine will and mind have been revealed so that humans might better know what is expected of them. Catholics believe that God has pulled back a part of the veil of human ignorance that conceals the otherwise overwhelming presence of the divine so that they might catch a glimpse of those things required for their salvation.

One way God is revealed is through Scripture, and the portion of Scripture that first comes to the mind of many Christians when they think of morality is the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1–17).[6] Christians and Jews share the story of the giving of the Ten Commandments, and it offers a good example

6. A more complete discussion of the Ten Commandments can be found in James F. Keenan, *Moral Wisdom: Lessons and Texts from the Catholic Tradition* (Sheed & Ward, 2010), 99–116.

of one type of moral revelation, in which God made the divine will abundantly clear by etching ten moral proscriptions on the relatively permanent medium of stone tablets. Moral direction for Christians is drawn from the New Testament as well as the Old Testament and can be found in nearly all of the various literary forms found in the Bible—poems, song lyrics, myth, history, chronicles, letters, proverbs, parables, prophecies, and gospels.

For Christian ethics, the most compelling Scriptures recount the life, ministry, death, and Resurrection of Jesus. The four Gospels retell similar, though not identical, versions of his life. As mentioned previously in the section on teleology, Jesus provides the primary Christian model of moral perfection, and observant Christians try to conform their lives to the example he set. Catholics expand on the teleological thrust of their moral universe by including saints, who also serve as models of exceptional virtue. In addition to Christ's ethically archetypal behavior, the Gospels preserve many important moral sayings that help guide the character and behavior of Christians. Followers of Christ are regularly admonished to love one another, show forgiveness to offenders, demonstrate mercy toward the poor and marginalized, abandon lust for power, and serve one another. Christian ethicist Joseph Fletcher, in his book *Situation Ethics,* went so far as to say that all of Christian morality could be reduced to the simple command to love.[7]

Magisterium and Tradition

Although divine command constitutes an important element of the Catholic ethical tradition, it is not the only source of moral authority. Catholics believe that God's will is also revealed in the ongoing tradition of the Christian community reflecting on moral duty and acting in inspirational ways to improve the lives of others and establish institutions that serve the poor and vulnerable. The term *magisterium* comes from the Latin root for teacher, *magister,* and refers to the teaching *charism*, or vocation, of the church.[8] The Catholic tradition believes that God confers the teaching vocation in special ways to theologians and members of the hierarchy. Therefore, when Catholics refer to "the teaching church" they refer to these groups of clergy and theologians who have been gifted and tasked with the vocation to teach the divine truths. Moral theology is one of the important subdivisions of the magisterial office in Roman Catholicism.

Given the importance of magisterial tradition in the Catholic Church, many of the moral beliefs and practices espoused by Catholics have their source in the

7. Joseph Fletcher, *Situation Ethics: The New Morality* (John Knox Press, 1966), 69.

8. A more complete discussion of *magisterial* authority in the Catholic Church can be found in Francis A. Sullivan, *Magisterium: Teaching Authority in the Catholic Church* (Paulist Press, 1983), 24–51.

Church's recorded history, laws, policies, doctrines, and documents. In fact, the Catholic social tradition had its origins in book-length documents issued by the Church known as encyclicals. Applying the broader moral tradition to individuals and groups dates back to the beginning of the church in the first century of the Common Era. Documents such as *The Shepherd of Hermas, The Didache, The Epistle of Diognetas,* and the countless sermons of the earliest Christians offer documentary evidence of the centrality of the moral life for these first believers.[9] In these texts, one discovers recurring moral directives to care for the poor, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, avoid avarice, renounce power and wealth, share property, and treat even the lowliest with honor.

Over the course of almost two millennia, the church has continued to reflect on the moral duties of its members and eventually an impressive body of work emerged with relatively consistent principles, theories, and practices that have become the distinctive timber of a uniquely Catholic ethical voice. Catholic moral thought stresses the need for actions to be consistent with the natural purpose laid out by God the Creator. Therefore, the Catholic moral tradition has a strong natural law tradition that judges actions based on the degree to which they conform to a divine will that can be discerned from nature itself. Catholic ethics also demonstrates profound respect for individual conscience and the formation of a virtuous character. Conscience introduces the idea that God directs the thoughts and actions of believers and that each person has access to this divine guidance, which is referred to as conscience. As stated before, Christian ethics can have a teleological focus, for it demands that followers conform their lives and actions to the perfect model of Christ. Catholics have taken up this teleological impulse and expanded on it by introducing saints—people who were outstanding Christ-like examples in their lifetime. Eventually, all of this reflection on the moral life was written down and codified in practical manuals and church laws. Catholic moral thought, therefore, is not only theoretical, but also practical and pastorally focused. In the rest of this section, three key aspects of the Catholic moral tradition will be reviewed more closely.

The Natural Law

The natural law in Catholic moral theology is the belief that a moral order exists independent of human creative intervention. Natural law theologians do not view ethics as a product of human culture but rather as something humans discover in the same way that they discern the laws of other preexisting orders like those in the physical universe. In this way, the best analogies for the logic of the natural law are the physical sciences. The natural law infers what is right and wrong from observable evidence in the world of human society, which natural

9. All of these texts and more can be found at the Early Christian Writings website, *www.earlychristianwritings.com/index.html*.

lawyers treat as a given of nature itself.[10] This may seem counterintuitive to most modern readers, who have been brought up in an age of ethical relativism. Popular media generally treat ethics as a merely personal bias: what one person deems right or wrong is grounded solely in personal choice. While many recognize that society may influence personal moral choices, those social influences themselves are conditioned only by history, habit, and human psychology and are not in some way necessary or built into the "nature" of human society. The natural law, therefore, is an entirely different perspective on the purpose of human behavior and the development of particular character traits.[11]

Natural law theology claims that everything that exists has a specific purpose within the natural order and that the entire natural order itself is purposeful and ordered toward achieving a certain end. In the case of Catholic natural law, that purpose is union with the divine. Natural law morality claims that there is a moral order ordained by God and that humans have access to and can understand this order by observing how humans behave in community—inferring right and wrong from the behaviors and character traits they witness. This ethical worldview deems things "natural" because they lead to the general welfare of the group and contribute to overall human flourishing. Likewise, "unnatural" acts frustrate welfare and human flourishing, thus obstructing the beneficent divine will. What is good is—at the same time—natural, because it fulfills its intended purpose of being in harmony with the will of the divine. As a matter of course, those things considered unnatural are evil because they frustrate their intended design or purpose.[12]

Therefore, in addition to Scripture and tradition, Catholic moral theology also has been informed by the notion that all personal, interpersonal, and social behaviors are structured according to a divinely created natural order, which is governed by natural laws that set parameters on human behavior. The natural law, like all other ethical systems, suffers from limitations and flaws in both the construction and implementation of the theory. One of the main sticking points for natural law theologians is demonstrating how their particular rendition of what constitutes "natural" and "unnatural" is not simply a sophisticated veneer over what ultimately amounts to personal biases for or against certain character traits or behaviors. So, for instance, in the past, natural law has been invoked to condemn homosexual behavior, a position that was generally accepted as doctrine before Vatican II. However, during the latter half of the twentieth century,

10. Richard M. Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith: Foundations of Catholic Morality* (Paulist Press, 1989), 222.

11. For a more in-depth overview of how the natural law is distinct from relativistic notions of post-modernity, see Steven Brust, "Ancient and Modern: Natural Law and Universal Moral Principles," *Catholic Social Science Review*, 14 (2009): 65.

12. For a more extensive treatment of this theology, see Charles E. Curran and Richard A. McCormick, *Natural Law and Theology: Issue 7 of Readings in Moral Theology,* (Paulist Press, 1991).

a significant constituency within the Catholic Church began to raise questions about this categorization and assert the goodness of human sexuality in general, calling for the tolerance of many sexual expressions that had been heretofore declared anathema. Those listening to these voices had to either reject the natural law in its entirety or redefine what is and is not "natural." This led many to rightfully accuse the natural law of being philosophical window dressing on relativistic personal prejudice.[13]

In spite of these challenges to its credibility and authority, the natural law remains an important element of the Catholic moral imagination. Even many Catholic theologians who reject the particulars of the natural law still hold fast to the idea that humans and their societies are governed by a kind of moral order—one that has consequences not only for physical life in this world but also for eternal life in a heavenly realm.

Conscience

Whether in a Catholic context or not, references to conscience abound in contemporary culture, but when pressed to define or describe this concept, many struggle to come up with an adequate response. Generally speaking, conscience describes that internal voice possessed by each individual that serves to guide and correct behavior and form one's moral character. It is a person's moral compass or, to use a more contemporary illustration, a moral GPS.

For Catholics, conscience is God's way of speaking to individuals at the deepest level of their being during times of duress and especially when confronted with choices of good versus evil. It is inviolable and must be respected, even when the choices that ensue are not endorsed by the official teachings of the Catholic Church.[14] Although an autonomous function of an individual's authority within the moral sphere, conscience is not entirely alienated from external authority. For Catholics, the external authority of official Church teaching can and should play a positive role in forming and guiding conscience.[15]

The act of conscience has three distinct steps: *synderesis,* moral science, and conscience.[16] The Greek term *synderesis* highlights the innate, or instinctual, moral impulse of the human person.[17] It directs attention to that moment in the

13. John J. McNeill, *The Church and the Homosexual* (Beacon Press, 1993), 89–108.

14. See Charles Curran, *Faithful Dissent* (Sheed and Ward, 1986), for an extended case study on the inviolability of conscience.

15. For a more complete discussion of conscience in the Catholic tradition, see Jayne Hoose, "Conscience in the Roman Catholic Tradition," in Jayne Hoose, ed. *Conscience in World Religions* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1999). See also Keenan, 27–44.

16. This three-part structure is taken from Gula, 131.

17. For more about the meaning and development of the idea of *synderesis*, see Robert A. Greene, "Synderesis, the Spark of Conscience, in the English Renaissance," *Journal of the History of Ideas,* 52, no. 2 (Apr.–Jun. 1991): 195–219.

moral dilemma when a person first senses something is wrong. *Synderesis* is a visceral moment before any reflection or reasoning has come to the fore to analyze the situation and synthesize a response. It is an awareness, an emotion, a reaction, a feeling of suddenly being thrust into a situation in which the stakes are high, someone is intending to harm another, and that person has the means to carry out that intention. *Synderesis* is followed by moral science, the step during which a person takes the time to question the situation at hand, make sure that their initial reactions were on target, evaluate the situation more thoroughly, and deliberate on what is right and wrong in that given situation. Finally, after one has felt strongly that something is wrong and has thoroughly deliberated about the moral response, one confronts the choice of whether to follow through with the right course of action or not. It is this moment of judgment—a moment always informed by the virtues—that is rightfully labeled *conscience*.

Catholics believe that over the course of a lifetime of difficult choices, conscience has a formative influence on a person's character. Eventually, moral choices become matters of integrity—a person either acts in character or out of character.[18] *Character* identifies the responsive orientation of a person. It becomes a way of seeing and responding to the world. A person's character determines whether that person sees the world as a hostile or friendly place, whether that person acts in a way that is loving and helpful or fearful and selfish. Character is a predisposition but not the sole determinant of behavior in any given situation. Character functions as a personal hermeneutic—a way of seeing, interpreting, and valuing the world. The theology of conscience reminds Catholics that most of what people see does not lie before their eyes but behind them where they interpret these images to fit into a framework of meaning. Conscience influences an individual's choices, while at the same time is formed by them. Catholicism is very conscious of the need to take care in forming a person's conscience so as to direct it toward the divine will.

Practical Moral Reasoning

Although Catholic moral theology has its roots in the life and ministry of Jesus and his earliest followers, it becomes an actual discipline under the more practical circumstances of the penitential rites that developed in Christian communities in the fourth century and beyond. Penance is the sacrament of reconciliation in which individuals seek forgiveness for transgressions against others or against God. This process was made into a ritual practice over the course of the first few centuries of Christianity. The first documents recording the practice were the Irish Penitentials, which were created by missionary monks who had gone to Ireland to convert and minister to the Druids but

18. Gula, 139.

who found themselves instead thrust into social roles for which they had not been fully prepared. When the Romans drove out the Druid shamans, they unknowingly also drove away those who adjudicated conflicts within these communities. The shamans were also the judges who heard cases, discerned who was at fault, and meted out fair and just consequences. With the disappearance of the shamans, the communities frequently fell into chaos, and many began turning to the monks to fill the vacuum in law enforcement and justice. The penitentials were records of the "trials" held by the monks, listing the offenses and the punishments imposed.[19]

Eventually, the Catholic Church used the Irish Penitentials in other contexts, and they became more complex and sophisticated over time. They were ultimately incorporated into the sacramental practice of reconciliation, in which Catholics attempt to sacramentally right wrongs they have committed. The majority of these wrongs, or sins, are moral in nature or have moral elements. For this reason, a good deal of moral theology in the Catholic tradition has a practical thrust: it is meant to be used as a guide in the confessional where the priest meets in confidence with the believer and helps that individual understand right and wrong, good and evil, as they exist in that context. In order to perform this important task, priests need training in moral reasoning and, more importantly, in practical moral reasoning—the type they can readily apply and explain to people who may have little background in philosophy or metaphysics.

Over the course of centuries of development, the Catholic Church established a practical method for approaching moral cases and eventually employed a kind of casuistry, or case-method approach, in which the case at hand could be compared to paradigm cases that had already been resolved. This moral method has similarities to the casuistry used in legal practice today in which settled cases serve as precedents to help argue a solution to a legal dilemma. While not as commonly taught in seminaries as it once was, casuistry is still used by pastoral theologians to help prospective Catholic ministers understand how to approach common moral quandaries they are likely to encounter in their specific context. So, for instance, ministers training to work in a hospital will take courses that deal specifically with issues arising from that context, and students will be exposed to countless actual cases in which doctors, nurses, patients, and their families have been confronted with perplexing ethical quandaries. For this reason, Catholic moral theology is, in many respects, a kind of professional ethic; it is practically oriented toward pastoral application in the professions. Likewise, this book addresses practical and applied issues within the context of the business environment.

19. Timothy E. O'Connell, *Principles for a Catholic Morality* (Seabury Press, 1978), 12–13.

The Catholic Social Tradition

Just as the Catholic moral tradition provides an ethical vision for the human person in relation to others, so the Catholic social tradition gives an ethical vision for society. It acknowledges that the structure of a society has an impact on the welfare of those within it. A poorly structured society can do great harm; while one built on sound principles can help members flourish and advance. The principles that undergird CST are rooted in Scripture and the writings of the earliest followers of Jesus. The chapters of this book will go into greater detail about the development of the individual principles and their ancient roots in Scripture and tradition. This introduction will examine the more recent history when these previously disparate principles were collected into a thoroughgoing social theory.

Historical Development of Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic social teaching as a systematic social theory has its roots in the Catholic transition from a mindset wedded to the medieval economic, social, and political establishment to one that embraced, at least in part, the liberal, industrial, and democratic structures that were replacing the *ancien régime.* Since the Protestant Reformation beginning in 1521, the Catholic Church had progressively lost its grip on the levers of political, social, and economic power across the Western European landscape. Feudal systems were giving way to modernity in virtually all of the major urban centers of Europe. Only small towns and rural areas persisted in the old ways of life, and even these areas were showing signs of the impact of the new social, political, and economic order.

When the French Revolution in 1789 overthrew the last major citadel of the old order, the Catholic Church's last significant ally among the old European aristocracy disappeared almost overnight. Throughout most of the ensuing nineteenth century, the Church experienced a split between those who nostalgically attempted to maintain allegiances with the old, dying aristocratic class—along with the social principles that upheld that order—and those who tried to demonstrate that a harmony existed between the best principles of the new democratic order and those of the Gospels. This second faction within Catholicism would eventually prevail and become the progenitors of the emerging CST.

A number of notable individuals and movements within Catholicism had an enormous influence on the Catholic Church as it made this difficult transition to more modern notions of proper social order. Among these early voices were the Social Catholics, and one of the first proponents of a more open approach to new social, political, and economic ideas was Frederick Ozanam, a literature professor at the Sorbonne in Paris. In his years as a student, he founded the

Society of St. Vincent de Paul, an outreach to the urban poor who were predominantly industrial workers. He stressed the need for the Church to have a voice of its own and, therefore, an existence independent of the modern state. At the time, this was a radical departure from the Church's traditional position that the only legitimate state was the confessional state—one that embraced Catholicism and gave the Church a place in the halls of power. Ozanam was among the first to assert that one could be both a loyal Catholic and a believer in the efficacy of modern liberal democratic institutions.[20]

Unfortunately for Ozanam, he would die before ever seeing this vision of a modern Catholic Church realized. Pius IX, who had become pope just a few years before Ozanam's death, would lead the Church in a reactionary direction, working against all things modern and progressive during the three decades of his reign. While the rest of Europe shed the last remnants of feudalism and monarchy, Catholicism would remain a bastion of conservatism, attempting to convince its followers that a return to the medieval church-state union was still possible. During this same period, from the middle of the nineteenth century to the end of Pius IX's reign in 1878, others in the Church continued to work diligently to realize a Catholic Church that challenged, rather than merely rejected, the modern state.[21]

Under the leadership of the Bishop of Mainz, Wilhelm Emmanuel Von Ketteler, the Social Catholics began to develop a more theologically complete vision of the issues the Church needed to address and the principles it should espouse in order to challenge the emerging liberal states. Von Ketteler and his cohorts fought for the prohibition of child labor, the limitation of working hours, the separation of the sexes in the workplace, the closing of unsanitary workshops, Sunday rest, care for disabled workers, and state inspection of factories. They also maintained that charity was not sufficient to meet the needs of modern society and was conceived of too individualistically in a modern context. They did not believe that private property was an absolute value and argued that the state needed to rein in laissez-faire capitalism through regulations and taxes. They rejected both individualism and collectivism as solutions to the role the state should play in society, stressing instead the *via media*, or "middle way," to balance these conflicting visions of the ideal society. They emphasized that citizens had duties as well as rights in relation to the state, and they promoted the traditional theological notion of the common good as the guiding principle of the state.[22]

---

20. Thomas O'Brien, "Pioneer and Prophet: Frederick Ozanam's Influence on Modern Catholic Social Teaching," *Vincentian Heritage Journal* 31, no. 1 (2012): 29–46.

21. For a concise overview of this era, see Owen Chadwick, *Oxford History of the Christian Church: A History of the Popes, 1830–1914* (Oxford University Press, 1998), 93.

22. Marvin L. Mich, *Catholic Social Teaching and Movements* (Twenty-Third Publications, 1998), 5–28.

A Documentary History

Eventually, these ideas would be incorporated into the inaugural official document of modern CST, *Rerum novarum* (On the Condition of Labor), issued by Pope Leo XIII in 1891. The first in the long series of Catholic social encyclicals, it was concerned with the harsh conditions industrial laborers were forced to endure, both at work and in their squalid homes. It was critical of capitalism, while at the same time, fearful of socialism. Like his Social Catholic predecessors, Leo XIII imagined the ideal state would steer a middle way between the extremes of socialist collective control and capitalist laissez-faire. He believed that peace and harmony could be achieved between the rival social classes in society if the rich owners would only reach out generously to the poor workers. He advocated self-help organizations for the workers through the establishment of unions, or as he termed it, "associations." *Rerum novarum* insists that these unions or associations have a religious as well as a social purpose. In the end, Leo XIII laments the passing of the medieval guild system, which comes across as somewhat nostalgic to a contemporary reader. Subsequent encyclicals will, for the most part, abandon the idea of a proper medieval order to society.

It is hard to overestimate the impact *Rerum novarum* had on Western society and its notions of church, state, and economic organization. Most Catholics did not expect the pope to espouse such ideas. The grand majority of Catholics believed that a papal encyclical would continue the tradition of condemning all modern developments in social structures and maintaining their old, aristocratic alliances through carefully worded praise of the feudal order. Instead of siding with the old elites of the landed aristocracy or the new elites of the captains of industry, the Catholic Church chose to align itself with the concerns of the poorest in nineteenth-century European society—the urban industrial worker. After shedding their disbelief, people of the world, both Catholic and non-Catholic alike, found themselves surprisingly edified by an official document of the Church. *Rerum novarum* quickly became a rallying cry for labor organization, outreach to the poor, and opposition to the abuses of capitalism. Over the ensuing decades, it would become the catalyst for positive social, political, and economic change in Europe and around the world.

However, in time, *Rerum novarum* began to show its age. It had addressed issues and promoted solutions that most developed countries incorporated into their customs and laws during the first couple of decades of the twentieth century. In the meantime, new, equally critical issues had emerged that had not existed at the end of the nineteenth century. Innovations and new social ideals had also come to the fore, and these needed to be analyzed and challenged. By the time of the Great Depression, the world was ripe for an update of this seminal document, and Pope Pius XI delivered with *Quadragesimo anno* (The Reconstruction of Social Order) in 1931. Despite being the second document, it set the stage for

the Catholic social tradition to continually update the insights of the Church on social, political, and economic issues. Had it not been for *Quadragesimo anno, Rerum novarum* might have gone down in the annals of Catholic theology as a wonderful, yet singular, moment of inspiration. Since *Quadragesimo anno,* the popes have considered it a duty of their office to regularly evaluate and comment on the major events and movements of the era and to offer a moral perspective on these developments. The following is a list of some of the Catholic Church's major social teaching documents[23]:

1891—*Rerum novarum, RN* (On the Condition of Labor), Pope Leo XIII

1931—*Quadragesimo anno, QA* (The Reconstruction of Social Order), Pope Pius XI

1937—*Divini redemptoris, DR* (On Atheistic Communism), Pope Pius XI

1937—*Mit brennender Sorge, MBS* (On the Church and the German Reich), Pope Pius XI

1961—*Mater et magistra, MM* (Christianity and Social Progress), Pope John XXIII

1963—*Pacem in terris, PT* (Peace on Earth), Pope John XXIII

1965—*Gaudium et spes, GS* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World), Second Vatican Council

1967—*Populorum progressio, PP* (The Development of Peoples), Pope Paul VI

1971—*Octagesimo adveniens, OA* (A Call to Action), Pope Paul VI

1971—*Justice in the World*, Synod of Bishops

1981—*Laborem exercens, LE* (On Human Work), Pope John Paul II

1987—*Sollicitudo rei socialis, SRS* (On Social Concern), Pope John Paul II

1991—*Centesimus annus, CA* (One Hundred Years after *Rerum novarum*), Pope John Paul II

2009—*Caritas in veritate, CR* (Charity in Truth), Pope Benedict XVI

2015—*Laudato si': On Care of Our Common Home (LS)*, Pope Francis

The rest of this book will unpack the Church's social teaching by examining recurring themes and applying these to the marketplace, using specific examples from various levels of business structures. The text focuses on eight key themes in this tradition. CST can be adequately understood through a careful analysis of these themes and the organic connection and interdependence that exists among them. The eight themes, reflected in the titles of the eight chapters in this book, are human dignity, common good, stewardship,

23. These documents are available at the Vatican's website: *www.vatican.va*.

option for the poor, economic justice, subsidiarity, solidarity, and rights and responsibilities.

Like many business ethics texts, this text not only engages decision-making at the level of the board of directors and the CEO, but also analyzes the experience of employees in the warehouse, in the workshop, and behind the cash register. The marketplace is the responsibility of all participants, even if some play more elite and privileged roles than others. Many inspiring stories about business practices exist, and this is reflected in the case studies featured in the chapters. Most business ethics textbooks use cases to show how businesses have failed to meet the basic standards of morality. While this text does refer to cases like these, it also includes many cases that are meant to spark the moral imaginations of readers and possibly inspire them to emulate instances of moral business practice as they prepare themselves for business-related careers in corporations, nonprofit organizations, and government.