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# REFLECTIONS ON THE MACAU MANIFESTO

## 《澳门宣言》的思考

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### ABSTRACT

The proclamation of the Macau Manifesto by the Macau Ricci Institute is a significant achievement by the Institute in the promotion of a new kind of economic paradigm which the world greatly needs.

The COVID-19 pandemic which is ongoing will probably continue to impact humanity in the coming few years, if not the whole decade. Not only has it become a global health disaster, but it has changed different aspects of human life, especially in the less developed and marginalised areas where people suffer immensely under threat of hunger and death.

It is time for the world to look for a new paradigm of living, connecting, and acting.

## REFLECTIONS FROM CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING – A NEW CONSOLIDATED APPROACH

As the Vatican established a new dicastery (the Dicastery for Promotion of Integral Human Development) in 2017, the Catholic Church has taken up the responsibility to further substantiate the vision of Vatican Council II to bring the Church closer into the modern world. At the International Conference “Integral Human Development: Challenges to Sustainability and Democracy” celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of Pope Paul VI’s landmark encyclical *Populorum progressio* (*On the Development of Peoples*) (1967), Cardinal Peter Turkson reminded the participants of the cornerstone concept that development cannot be restricted to economic growth alone. “To be authentic, development must be well rounded; it must foster the development of each person and of the whole person, of each human group, and the humanity as a whole (Paul VI, 1967, para 14). For this concept, integral human development is about ‘being’ or ‘becoming’, rather than about ‘having’. Development, therefore, must be promoted and measured according to all the dimensions of human existence, economic and political, cultural and ecological, historical and spiritual, etc.” (Turkson, 2019)

Pope Francis’ *Laudato si’* (Francis, 2015) has to be read as continuing this trend of papal efforts to realize the vision of Vatican II in bringing the Church closer to the modern world. It is also in this context that the Macau Manifesto may be comprehensively appreciated. Even on the surface, the Manifesto focuses on economics, business, governance and entrepreneurship, and it has clearly based its structural analysis on the values of Catholic social teaching, including concepts of subsidiarity, wellbeing for all and the common good. The Manifesto has provided a socio-economic structure for promoting integral human development which will facilitate a positive and constructive interaction between

different dimensions in human society, locally as well as globally.

The main thrust of the Manifesto may well be interpreted as an effort to contribute to the construction of a new paradigm of development which is the core to the Papal teaching of integral human development. Because of what happened since the 19th century, the concept of development has mainly if not solely been understood as economic development. Everything else in human living has been subordinated. This is also one of the challenges which the Church took up at Vatican II in viewing evangelization from a more holistic and integrated approach. In *Gaudium et spes* (1965) the direction for the Church’s mission to create a vision of the “New Earth and New Heaven” was set. (Vatican Council II, 1965a)

Pope Francis further expands on this vision by concretely interpreting the thoughts of his predecessors, especially Pope Benedict’s 2009 encyclical *Caritas in veritate* (*on Integral Human Development in Charity and Truth*). Integrality (wholeness) and authenticity are the key questions addressed. Therefore, in reading the Macau Manifesto, it is useful to keep in mind these fundamental concepts and values.

It is particularly rewarding to look deeper into the intercultural and interfaith dimensions of Papal teaching on integral human development. After all, Macau has inherited many aspects of Chinese and European (especially Portuguese) cultures which will provide both historical and spiritual resources for the realization of the contents advocated by the Manifesto. In the teaching of Pope Francis, from *Evangelii gaudium* (Francis, 2013), *Laudato si’* (Francis, 2015) to *Fratelli tutti* (Francis, 2020), the multiple levels of integral human development are clearly identified: integrating of different peoples of the earth, offering viable models of social integration, integration in development of all those elements of which it is truly constituted, integrating individual and community, and integrating the body and soul.

## REFLECTION ON ECONOMICS AND COMMON GOOD

From the perspective of Integral Development, the market is subject to the principles of so-called commutative justice, which regulates the relations of giving and receiving between parties to a transaction. But the social doctrine of the Church has unceasingly also highlighted the importance of distributive justice and social justice for the market economy, not only because it belongs within a broader social and political context, but also because of the wider network of relations within which it operates.

Economic activity cannot solve all social problems through the simple application of commercial logic. This needs to be directed towards the pursuit of the common good, for which the political community in particular must also take responsibility. The Church's social doctrine has always maintained that justice must be applied to every phase of economic activity, because this is always concerned with man and his needs. Locating resources, financing, production, consumption and all the other phases in the economic cycle inevitably have moral implications. Thus every economic decision has a moral consequence.

Even if the ethical considerations that currently inform debate on the social responsibility of the corporate world are not all acceptable from the perspective of the Church's social doctrine, there is nevertheless a growing conviction that business management cannot concern itself only with the interests of the proprietors, but must also assume responsibility for all the other stakeholders who contribute to the life of the business: the workers, the clients, the suppliers of various elements of production, and the community of reference.

As a human reality, the market is the product of diverse cultural tendencies, which need to be subjected to a process of discernment.

The truth of globalisation as a process and its fundamental ethical criterion are given by the unity of the human family and its development towards what is good. Hence a sustained commitment is needed so as to promote a person-based and community-oriented cultural process of world-wide integration that is open to transcendence.

Today humanity appears much more interactive than in the past: this shared sense of being close to one another must be transformed into true communion. The development of peoples depends, above all, on a recognition that the human race is a single family working together in true communion, not simply a group of subjects who happen to live side by side. The Christian revelation of the unity of the human race presupposes a metaphysical interpretation of the "*humanum*" in which relationality is an essential element. Other cultures and religions teach brotherhood and peace and are therefore of enormous importance for integral human development.

## REFLECTION FROM A CHINESE CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

The integration of different peoples of the earth is clearly an intercultural and interfaith approach set up in *Nostra aetate* (Vatican Council II, 1965b) in which the Church commits to "reject nothing that is true and holy" in different cultures and religions. Ethical systems in China under Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism have such true and holy elements which can be properly regarded as positive factors to be considered in the construction of the New Economic Paradigm advocated by the Manifesto. Self-formation and self-cultivation are essential to these Chinese ethical, philosophical and religious systems.

Values of interconnectedness which are important in Catholic integral human development are also highly respected in Chinese culture. Harmony is a common cornerstone to

these Chinese cultural legacies: harmony within oneself in body, mind and spirit, harmony in social relationships, from family to nation, from humanity to nature. Priorities are also clear in the measuring of values to life: physical and material are regarded as basic. But higher on the value ladder, cultural and spiritual values are placed at the top. Confucian and Daoist visions of harmony between heaven, earth and humanity can find similar values in the Buddhist inclination to preserving a loving heart for and not harming all creatures under heaven. The socio-ethical position of economic activities is respected as fundamental but has to be regarded holistically and integrally.

Looking at the Manifesto from an intercultural and interfaith perspective, by placing it in the context of integral human development, this proclamation will serve positively for the construction of a New Economic Paradigm for the future.



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