

## SOLIDARITY AND SUBSIDIARITY AS PARTS OF JUSTICE AND AGAPE/CHARITY

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The vision of solidarity and subsidiarity to which the organisers of this meeting refer begins with the assumption that divine Providence wants mankind not only to live but to live well and, thus, that partnership based on love and justice is possible amongst men. The most acute social problem in recent decades has been the growing awareness – which has in part arisen with globalisation – by all peoples and nations, and in particular those of a non-Christian heritage, of a flagrant contrast between the equal *attribution* of rights and the unequal *distribution* of market and non-market goods. It is evident that social rights concern principally education for the good of individuals and peoples, but health care, the guarantee of a decent level of living and a certain economic security are the material means or indispensable conditions for the exercise of all the other rights. The globalised world, on the other hand, seems to open up new possibilities and challenges, new forms of knowledge, learning and communication which offer new modalities of human mutuality and reciprocity, and strengthen solidarity at regional and world levels beyond market and bureaucratic regulations. A rehabilitation of the concepts and practice of solidarity and subsidiarity (that imply each other reciprocally and in ever growing proportions) finds its justification in today's global world because it can contribute to the formulation of principles involving fairer participation and identify just practical models at a world level in non-egalitarian societies. As Benedict XVI said in his recent address from the important podium of the United Nations: 'questions of security, development goals, reduction of local and global inequalities, protection of the environment, of resources and of the climate, require all international leaders to act jointly and to show a readiness to work in good faith, respecting the law, and promoting solidarity with the weakest regions of the planet'. Human rights are an 'expression of justice' and the human person is 'the subject of those rights', whose promotion 'remains the most effective strategy for

eliminating inequalities between countries and social groups, and for increasing security'.<sup>1</sup> I would like to offer some schematic observations, stressing some points in Archbishop Minnerath's paper and raising others connected with the contemporary global situation. I would like to apologise for my rather philosophical approach but I am not a specialist in this area. I would also like to thank the organisers of this meeting for their patience, yet I fear it is because of our friendship rather than my merits that they have once again made the mistake of inviting me to offer some comments.

1. Man is first and foremost *capax Dei*. There is a sphere of being that man has inside and outside of himself from birth as a 'gift' that opens to him the pathway of his adventure in time and space so that he can achieve fulfilment as a human being before nature and society and above all else before God. Specifically because of this absolute relationship with the Absolute, namely with the Beginning and the End, man after a certain fashion constitutes an autonomous, albeit open, 'whole'. His nature as a 'part' in relation to the other totality, the universe, or to other particular totalities to be found in the universe, does not order him, essentially, to them.<sup>2</sup> In

<sup>1</sup> Benedict XVI, *Address to the United Nations Organisation*, New York, 18 April 2008.

<sup>2</sup> The Thomist doctrine maintains that society is an accidental totality and not a substantial whole. If it (society) had unity proper to a substance, it would not be possible for each man to be one of its parts since each person is an 'individual substance of rational nature', a whole in a certain complete way in relation to his being. A person's membership of society can only have a meaning that is analogical with the membership of the parts of the substance and, for that reason, the personal substantial entity remains even in interpersonal relationships. The unity of society is not the unity of its components but the common end of the components, which is not exclusive because each person has, in his turn, his own end. The human common good has a spiritual unity which is the unity that founds society. Unity or community in good is not unity in the genus or the species, which implies an essential unity, but a community finality: 'Actions are indeed concerned with particular matters: but those particular matters are referable to the common good, not as to a common genus or species, but as to a common final cause, according as the common good is said to be the common end'. i.e. '*operationes quidem sunt in particularibus, sed illa particularia referri possunt ad bonum commune, non quidem communitate generis vel speciei, sed communitate causae finalis, secundum quod bonum commune dicitur finis communis*' (S. Th., I-II, 90, 2 ad 2). In addition, 'the whole of political society or domestic society possesses only a unity of order which means that it is not an absolute unity. As a consequence, the parts of this whole can have their specific action but this is not the action of the whole, in the same way as a soldier in an army performs an action which is not the action of the army as a whole', i.e. '*totum, quod est civilis multitudo, vel domestica familia habet solam ordinis unitatem, secundum quam non est aliquid simpliciter unum; et ideo pars huius totius potest habere operationem, quae non est operatio totius, sicut miles in exercitu habet operationem quae non est totius exercitus*' (Sententia Ethic., lib. 1, l. 1 n. 5).

man not only is there a tendency to know and to love but also to be known and to be loved. Because of the great attraction and satisfaction of reciprocity in knowledge and love amongst humans, one might think that such reciprocity is the ultimate end of man. However, this reciprocity does not completely meet the desire for good and happiness in man. Man's aspirations cannot be satisfied by an individual or by a community of individuals. This is because their understanding of truth is not complete and their love is neither unfailing nor absolute. Indeed, in love and friendship between human persons one can always aspire to greater fullness. Human knowledge and love tend to the Infinite.<sup>3</sup> The human person as a person, that is to say having an absolute being for participation, and being intelligent and free, cannot be ordered in his ultimate end to a 'created whole', to a human person, or to global civil society. 'Man is not ordered to civil society because of all his being and all his goods'.<sup>4</sup>

2. Man, however, is not a whole that is closed up in itself, rather, in contrary fashion, he has a dynamism or capability that is open to the truth, the beautiful and the good; to other persons, first of all to God, the ultimate end; and then to the truth and to created goods, the intermediate ends of his natural tendency to God. Attraction to good, to perfection, and to justice, which is the origin of social life, has priority over all the other approaches of consciousness. St. Thomas read this in the *Eudemian Ethics* of Aristotle which speaks explicitly about a divine instinct or a 'starting point of motion ( $\delta\rho\mu\eta$ )' from God.<sup>5</sup> The inclination to good thus constitutes in man the absolute beginning in the ethical sphere: 'Man has an inclination to good, according to the nature of his reason, which nature is proper to him: thus man has a natural inclination to know the truth about God and

<sup>3</sup> 'Nobody in this life can complete his desires, nor can a created thing sate the desire of man: only God sates it and exceeds it infinitely and, for that reason, man finds rest only in God. As St. Augustine says: "You have made us, Lord, for you, and our heart is anxious until it rests in you", i.e., *'Nullus potest in vita ista implere desiderium suum, nec unquam aliquod creatum satiat desiderium hominis: Deus enim solus satiat, et in infinitum excedit: et inde est quod non quiescit nisi in Deo'*, Augustinus, in I Conf.: "*fecisti nos, domine, ad te, et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in te*" (St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Symbolum Apostolorum*, a. 12).

<sup>4</sup> *'Homo non ordinatur ad communitatem politicam secundum se totum, et secundum omnia sua'* (St. Thomas Aquinas, *S. Th.*, I-II, 21, 4 ad 3).

<sup>5</sup> *Eth. Eudem.*, VIII, 14, 1248 a 20 ff, ed. F. Susemihl (Leipzig, 1884). Available from the Internet at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0049:book=8:section=1248a>. Cf. C. Fabro, 'Le "liber" de bona fortuna chez Saint Thomas', *Revue Thomiste*, 1988, p. 356 ff.

to live in society'.<sup>6</sup> This dynamism constitutes a natural impetus to know the truth about God and is, at the same time, the primordial dynamic for the achievement of social life.

This dynamism towards man's individual and social fulfilment acts in different ways, and with different rhythms, with the body and with the spirit, but both are, at one and the same time, independent of, and connected with, freedom and social life. Thus man is conceived and develops as an organism because of the decision of those who have generated him and thus from his birth onwards he is social. In an analogous way, man awakes to the life of the spirit moving towards the gradual but irremovable apprehension of the truth of being and its principles, and equally necessarily aspires to happiness through the evident light of the truth and through an irresistible impulse to the finite good that the Creator instilled in his spirit. All this he achieves with the cooperation and help of others and thus he needs language and, in general, symbolic systems of communication which demonstrate his natural social character and characterise human society. He knows and wills by participation but his ultimate subject or object is the truth by essence – God.

3. In order to develop and enrich himself with created truth and good, every human person must relate to, and 'communicate' with, his fellows (as is required by the capabilities of man who cannot achieve many fundamental values in an isolated way in his singularity). The human being is by nature a social being because he cannot meet his own material needs, or fulfil himself at the level of his cultural and moral capabilities, without the cooperation and the solidarity of other people. As St. Thomas specifies, it is not only wealth but also, and above all, the requirements of the moral order, namely of living well, that lead the human being towards associated life: 'If abundance of riches were the ultimate end, an economist would be the ruler of the people...The purpose (*finis*) of the people having come together however seems to be to live according to virtue. For to this men come together; that they may live well together, which each one living by himself is not able to obtain; the good life however is according to virtue; the virtuous life therefore is the end of human society'.<sup>7</sup> Social relations do not replace the *agency* of which persons are the bearers.

<sup>6</sup> *'Homo habet naturalem inclinationem ad hoc quod veritatem cognoscat de Deo, et ad hoc quod in societate vivat'* (S. Th., I-II, q. 94, a. 2).

<sup>7</sup> *'Si autem ultimus finis esset divitiarum affluentia, oconomus rex quidam multitudinis esset... Videtur autem finis esse multitudinis congregatae vivere secundum virtutem.*

4. The 'good life' and 'shared values and ends' which men obtain through their associated activity create the configurations of social life. The first of the shared values is recognition of the human person himself, his dynamism, and the need for his perfect development. Here the social doctrine of the Church finds its authentic meaning and a solid basis of approaches by which to secure authentic social life. The reality of the person and his freedom are an achievement of Christian philosophy. The reciprocal relationships that bind people together with a view to achieving shared values leave persons their individuality, something that is independent and autonomous, as well as their original rights and freedom. The person is the totally incommunicable or that which is not shared, he is a singular existence, and, therefore, he is his own being.<sup>8</sup> The protagonist of personhood is the 'self', the human subject, the first incommunicable principle and the first communicant. As regards the origin and the destination of all interpersonal relations or communications, one should recognise a being who is able to have those faculties that make possible such relationships or communications. Relationships can be constitutive of subjects only because the latter are the foundation of those relationships themselves. Without subjects who are able to relate to each other, relationships do not exist: the metaphysical incommunicability of the person, rather than impeding communicability, makes them possible.<sup>9</sup>

5. In order to methodically achieve their goals, social groupings need cooperation but also the organisation of such cooperation. Some of these (family society, civil society, political community) are considered to be natural and absolutely necessary, whereas others (for example local communities and professional organisations) are highly useful to the good working of associated life, and others, lastly, simply arise from the free decisions of men. Society at all its levels should be subordinated to the virtuous interior life of persons and to institutions which assure this life, such as the fam-

Ad hoc enim homines congregantur ut simul bene vivant, quod consequi non posset unusquisque singulariter vivens; bona autem vita est secundum virtutem; virtuosa igitur vita est congregationis humanae finis' (St. Thomas Aquinas, *De regimine principum*, Bk. I, cap. 15, n. 817).

<sup>8</sup> *'Nomine personae non est natura absolute: quia sic idem significaretur nomine hominis et nomine personae humanae, quod patet esse falsum; sed nomine personae significatur formaliter incommunicabilitas, sive individualitas subsistentis in natura'* (St. Thomas Aquinas, *De potentia*, q. 9 a. 6 co).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. E. Forment, *Relaciones subsistentes y personas creadas*, in *Being and Person* (Vatican City, 2006), pp. 97-128.

ily, schools, universities, and the law. *Homo solidalis* appears to go back a long way and there is evidence of him engaging in cooperation, which is also to be found with *homo erectus* (1.2 million years ago). In the pre-history of man, cooperation was between family members (for reproduction, the raising of children, the acquisition of culture, language and symbols) and was implemented through subsistence strategies adopted by family groups in the search for resources.<sup>10</sup>

6. No social formation, when organised, can be indifferent to objective shared ends, values and goods, which, as we have seen, are those that create configurations within social life. This should be borne in mind, in particular, in relation to societies ordered from above, which, because they give themselves an external system, can easily be led to assign to themselves finalities and tasks which by the law of nature belong to subordinated social formations and individual persons. Within this doctrinal framework is to be found, as a fundamental rule, the principle which, in social Christian philosophy, is known as the 'principle of subsidiarity'.

7. Subsidiarity was proposed by Pius XI as the virtuous middle way between extreme individualism and extreme forms of collectivism. In discussing the question of the establishment of the social order in the modern world, Pius XI, after emphasising that in human history many results had been achieved only by large associations, affirmed the perennial validity of a 'most weighty principle, which cannot be set aside or changed, remains fixed and unshaken in social philosophy: just as it is gravely wrong to take from individuals what they can accomplish by their own initiative and industry and give it to the community, so also it is an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and disturbance of right order to assign to a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate organizations can do. For every social activity ought of its very nature to furnish help (*subsidium afferre*) to the members of the body social, and never destroy and absorb them'. As a result of this principle, 'The supreme authority of the State ought, therefore, to let subordinate groups handle matters and concerns of lesser importance, which would otherwise dissipate its efforts greatly. Thereby the State will more freely, powerfully, and effectively do all those things that belong to it alone because it alone can do them: directing, watching, urging, restraining, as occasion requires and necessity demands'.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Cf. F. Facchini, *Le sfide della evoluzione* (Milan, 2008), p. 161.

<sup>11</sup> Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*, nn. 79, 80.

8. Let us understand exactly what the term 'subsidiarity' means. The Latin word *subsidium* means 'help kept in reserve for those who do not manage to do something that they should do'. And thus it cannot express the idea of a 'surrogate' (where this term is understood in its negative sense) or of help seen as a 'necessary evil'. For that matter, it is obvious that 'help', to remain such, must not entail the absorption, elimination or subjugation of the persons or societies that are helped. This means that the society that helps must limit its action, forcing itself to act so as not to invade the space of the responsibilities of others or at least invading that space solely in exceptional cases of need where substitution is required (when, for example, individuals or subordinate societies are not able, for accidental reasons, or refuse, to perform what is their exclusive responsibility).

9. Only in the 1980s did the concept of 'subsidiarity' acquire a place of its own in the language of the European Community. We can thus speak, but only methodologically, of a second origin of the concept of subsidiarity. The principle of subsidiarity was introduced into the Maastricht Treaty (7 February 1992) and enjoyed growing strength before Protocol n. 30 on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality of the Amsterdam Treaty (2 October 1997). Incorporated in all the subsequent documents of the European Community, both the events connected with the construction of the European Union and the development of a new social sensitivity have led to a deeper understanding of the contents of the principle of subsidiarity. In this way, subsidiarity has become increasingly associated with the elucidation of the problems concerning common interests, democracy and federalisation. Or, to put it the other way round, what is discussed in terms of subsidiarity on the whole are the questions of the decentralisation of power and decision-making, federalism and even confederalism, and the concept of the common good.

10. In addition to the aspects of subsidiarity discussed above, a distinction is made today between *horizontal* subsidiarity, which can be seen as the original and founding core of the very concept of subsidiarity and which governs the relationships between public institutions, on the one hand, and the sphere of society, its organisations and persons, on the other, and *vertical* subsidiarity, which establishes the different levels of government. The documents of the European Union refer in large measure to the vertical aspect but it is the horizontal aspect that contains the greatest possibilities of development, which is what the organisers of this meeting are focusing on. This is because it fosters the full expression of the capabilities of persons and social subjects within the framework of a regulated and responsible

freedom. Where from a vertical perspective subsidiarity determines the subsidies that derive from the higher society, from a horizontal perspective it refers to the support supplied by other social partners. In both cases, the subject providing this subsidy does not create or constitute the end of other subjects – it must engage in services. In this sense, an initiative providing subsidiarity should not be seen as being extraordinary and to be practiced only in an emergency. These horizontal and vertical aspects, even though they have only been outlined recently in theoretical terms, belong to a long tradition. The debates of *The Federalist*, for example, which preceded the Constitution of the United States of America, revolved around vertical subsidiarity, whereas the debates conducted by Turgot and Condorcet, for example, on the role of the state in fixing grain prices, related to horizontal subsidiarity. It is evident that subsidiarity must co-exist with solidarity. Whereas solidarity involves a tendency towards the union and end of human society, subsidiarity implies a vertical or horizontal effectiveness capable of establishing the conditions and opportunities to achieve this union or purpose. We should identify in today's global society that rich fabric of non-utilitarian experiences from which emerge practical models and more generally lifestyles that are able to root a culture of reciprocity. To be convincing, models and values should be borne witness to, as well as explained.

11. At this point it may be advisable to refer to Honneth's reading of Hegel<sup>12</sup> with the concept of recognition (*Anerkennung*) as the category by which to reconstruct, at an inter-subjective level, the moral grammar of the good life capable of avoiding both the individualistic atomism of liberal thought of the Hobbesian approach and rationalistic communitarianism. What Honneth maintains from Hegel is the project of establishing a social theory of a *normative* kind. This theory seeks to respond to Hobbes because struggle (*Kampf*) moves forward for moral reasons that can occupy the site of the triad of rivalry, diffidence and glory in the description of the purported state of nature in *Leviathan*, which is opposed to the theses of the founders of natural law. We can say that this is a matter of looking for the source of the parallel enlargement of individual capabilities evoked in the notion that man is capable of realising his own identity and happiness in social life through the development of interactions that are in conflict. The strategy followed by Honneth lies in

<sup>12</sup> Axel Honneth, *Kampf um Anerkennung* (Frankfurt am Main, 1992; English edition, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*, Polity Press, 1996).

the combination of a number of procedures, supplemented in particular by George Herbert Mead's social psychology, Habermas's communicative ethics, and Winnicott's object relation theory. From G.H. Mead,<sup>13</sup> he takes the model of a social genesis of the identification of the 'self' which he manages to explain with Hegel's idea of recognition. Thus there is a kind of encounter between a speculative conception such as that of Hegel and one tested in experience such as that of Mead. Honneth's strategy involves another feature. He adds to the vigorous reconstruction of Hegel of Jena the idea of the chaining together of 'three models of inter-subjective recognition' which are then placed under the headings of love, law and solidarity. Thirdly, Honneth matches these three models, which are in part speculative and in part empirical (having verification in the social sciences), with three figures of the rejection of recognition, susceptible to providing on the negative side a moral motivation for social struggles. In the third model of recognition that Hegel offers under the heading of 'people', State and 'constituent act', this rejection of recognition requires, out of solidarity, that subjects feel that they are recognised as persons who are capable of responsibility. Thus the material, educational, cultural and symbolic conditions in which the processes of recognition take place become central. Here we have the discussion centred round the idea itself of Hegel's social struggle which can proceed to an attempt to deal with the question of struggle by employing the principle of subsidiarity. As Benedict XVI says: 'the victims of hardship and despair, whose human dignity is violated with impunity, become easy prey to the call to violence, and they can then become violators of peace'.<sup>14</sup> Thus one can evoke an experience of peace whose recognition, if it cannot achieve its pathway, at least allows a perception of the defeat of rejection of recognition itself.

12. One could say that in a global approach current societies have solved the question of the equal attribution of rights but not the question of the equal distribution of goods. The 'Document of Aparecida' by the Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean uses at least twenty times the notion of 'social exclusion', which relates to a form of alienation or disenfranchisement of certain people within a society. It is often connected to a person's social class, education-

<sup>13</sup> George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self and Society. From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist* (Chicago, 1934).

<sup>14</sup> Benedict XVI, *Address to the United Nations Organisation*, New York, 18 April 2008.

al status and living standards and how these might affect access to various opportunities.<sup>15</sup> In reality, in my view as an outsider and not as a specialist, the composite notion which could be one of the most remarkable here in solving the problem of the exclusion of social rights is that of 'rights to certain capabilities' (Amartya Sen) which transcends the usual dichotomy between prescriptive and descriptive norms. In his *On Ethics and Economics*,<sup>16</sup> and more specifically in an important article of 1985, 'Rights and Capabilities', Sen places at the centre of his argument in favour of the reintroduction of ethical considerations into economic theories the concept of 'capability' coupled with that of 'rights'. In criticising a purely utilitarian vision of the economy, he states that the 'capability for action of every person', his *agency*, lends itself to a non-utilitarian economic assessment since the dimension of utilitarian 'action' and the dimension of 'wellbeing' of an action are not the same. Man acts not only for utilitarian ends but also to have a good life. Here the concrete freedom of every individual comes into play, and with the exercise of freedom the question of abstract 'rights' is transformed into real and concrete opportunities. Within the context of the debate in the Anglo-Saxon world, an attempt is made to avoid the alternative of 'consequentialism' linked to the theory of utilitarian wellbeing and 'deontologism' based upon rights and duties that are outside the action itself. The composite concept 'rights to certain capabilities', instead, is, in Sen's view, an assessment of situations. Here what is at stake is nothing less than a new definition of social justice which centres around the idea of 'rights to certain capabilities'. It is within this 'evaluative' framework that the actual exercise of the freedom of each person calls on the responsibility of society or the international community. Sen's studies on famines in India confirm the validity of his approach. Famines took place not because of a shortage of food but because of bad government of the national community which involved an inability to acknowledge even to a small degree the individuals' capability for action.<sup>17</sup> It seems to me that this work by Sen strengthens the idea of the importance of thinking anew about solidarity and subsidiarity along the lines of subsidies for 'social rights' in relation to the 'concrete capabilities of persons'. Therefore, rights

<sup>15</sup> *Final Document of Aparecida*, §§ 62, 65, 75, 89, 96, 112, 401, 444 *et passim*, Aparecida, Brazil, May 2007 (CELAM, Bogotá, 2007).

<sup>16</sup> Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1987.

<sup>17</sup> Amartya Sen, *Poverty and Famine* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1981).

and capabilities are also in principle multi-dimensional and comprehensive models, and can account for the intrinsic and non-economic roles that education plays. However, depending on how one fills out the specific details of the rights and capability frameworks, they also have some drawbacks. I conclude by arguing that the intrinsic aim of educational policy should be to expand people's capabilities, whereas we should use the rights discourses strategically, that is, when they are likely to contribute to expanding people's moral and intellectual capabilities.

13. One of the positive aspects of the debate generated by the work of M. Mauss, *Essai sur le don*,<sup>18</sup> is that it covers a vast territory of human relationships that includes revenge, gifts and the market. A second positive aspect of the debate is that it likens reciprocity to a circle that can be virtuous or vicious. The question arises of how to pass from the vicious circle of revenge (offence for an offence) to the virtuous circle of giving (gift for a counter-gift) through sacrifice that opens up the pathway to positive reciprocity. The principle of 'killing those who kill' is overcome by the law of giving and offering: 'You have heard it was said: Eye for eye and tooth for tooth. But I say this, to you...Give to anyone who asks you, and if anyone wants to borrow, do not turn away' (Mt 5:38,42). Virgil observed '*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*' ('I fear the Greeks even when they bring gifts'),<sup>19</sup> which is a warning that entering into gifts, at the level of effective action, is not without risks. The giver and the receiver, at the level of action, have the risky and aleatory task of negotiating and following the exchange through a gift. But it is in the difference between a gift and the market that the importance of a gift emerges. In the market there is no obligation of a return because there is no need for it: a payment ends the mutual obligations of the agents of the exchange. One could say that the market is reciprocity without mutuality or personal bilaterality. Thus the market refers back *per oppositam viam* to the original reality of the mutual ties specific to the exchange of gifts within the whole sphere of reciprocity. Differently from the market, mutuality places emphasis on the generosity of the first giver more than on the need for a return for the gift provided by the person who has received it.

<sup>18</sup> Marcel Mauss, *Essai sur le don. Forme et raison de l'échange dans les sociétés archaïques*, in *L'Année sociologique*, seconde série, 1923-24, t. I, reprinted in *Sociologie et Anthropologie* (Paris, PUF, 1950).

<sup>19</sup> Publius Vergilius Maro (Virgil), *Aeneid*, II, 49.

It is clear that the sphere of the market has its limits, as Godbout clearly points out. Here we encounter the category of goods without a price. If one makes a distinction between the practices of giving and the practices of the economic sphere, a gift does not appear to be an archaic form of exchange within a market regime. One could say that this difference takes place at the intersection between two questions with different origins: the question of gifts and the question of goods without a price. The question of goods without a price is found in our culture in the relationship between truth – or at least the search for truth – and education, on the one hand, and money, on the other.<sup>20</sup> It was Socrates who began this debate. Socrates wanted to teach without asking for a salary in exchange whereas the Sophists sought a payment for their teaching. He only accepted gifts that honoured him in the same way that they honoured the gods. Socrates also thought that unlike the possession of material goods, spiritual goods (especially knowledge and education), when shared, grow and develop.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, this debate spurred a long enmity between the intellectual world and the commercial world. The victory of the commercial world, which was the victory of the market, did not eliminate the testimony that Socrates offered through his death. Equally, it did not remove the question of whether there are goods without a price. Thus the question of goods without a price encounters the question of gifts but from a different approach to that of the ethnology of archaic societies. The two questions encounter each other on the terrain of non-material (symbolic) values or spiritual values. A gift is neither an ancestor of, a competitor for, nor a replacement for, the archaic exchange of gifts. In other words, it is neither an archaic form of the market, as a certain purely economic interpretation would argue, nor a festive and sumptuary reality, as a moralistic interpretation would argue. It is at another level – that of goods without a price.

History narrates the constant loss of goods without a price to the advantage of commercial goods. For example, even those teachers who admire Socrates no longer reject payment, without which they could not live in today's society. However, after a certain fashion the spirit of gifts provokes a fracture within the category of goods within the context of the interpretation of sociability as a vast system of participation and distribution animated by

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Marcel Henaff, *Le Prix de la vérité. Le don, l'argent, la philosophie*; deuxième partie: 'L'univers du don' (Paris, Le Seuil, 2002).

<sup>21</sup> This idea of Socrates is still present in the Medieval philosophers: '*Spiritualia bona sunt specialiter non ritenenda per se, quia comunicata non minuuntur sed crescunt*' (St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Malo*, q. 13, 1 pret. 8).

solidarity. If one refers to non-market goods, such as security, human capital, the functions of authority, appointments and honours, goods without a price become the sign of recognition of the existence of non-market goods or non-negotiable goods. Equally, one can find gifts of all forms of goods without price, for example moral dignity (which has a value but not a price), the air that one breathes, sunlight, moonlight, birdsong, the company of pets, the integrity of the human body, not buying and selling organs, certain forms of volunteer work, and certain forms of cooperation in research and education (a form of intellectual voluntary work), without counting the beauty of the human body, of parks, wildflowers and the countryside.

14. The most important difference between market goods and goods without a price is the sentiment of gratitude that lies behind a gift. Some forms of cooperation are defined as altruistic when they arise from free giving and have beneficial effects on other people, with or without sacrifices on the part of those who engage in them. As is known, the concept of altruism is extended by ethnologists to the animal kingdom, but what characterises the altruism of man is specifically free giving which is possible because of human consciousness and freedom. Therefore, the extension of the term to the animal kingdom appears to be improper. In man, forms of altruism, understood as absolute free giving, are separate from all reciprocity and constitute an individual choice, albeit of great social relevance.<sup>22</sup> In addition, the ethics of magnanimity and liberality inherited from the Greeks and dear to the humanists place giver and receiver on equal footing with a circle of gratitude represented by the group of the three graces holding hands (which you can see in the Casina Pio IV). To protect the integrity, or rather the successful functioning, of this effective experience of mutual recognition and gratitude through gifts, one should adopt the critical approach of making a distinction between good and bad reciprocity. Indeed, Aristotle declares that true friendship is one thing only: it takes place under the control of the predicate 'good' applied both to agents and to actions.<sup>23</sup> One can thus note that the establishment of the ethical plane

<sup>22</sup> Cf. M.A. Novak, 'Five Rules for the Evolution of Cooperation', *Sciences*, 314, 2006, 1560-1563.

<sup>23</sup> 'Perfect friendship is the friendship of men who are good, and alike in virtue; for these wish well alike to each other *qua* good, and they are good in themselves (*kath'hautous*)' (*Ethic. Nic.* VIII, 3, 1156 b 7-9). And later: 'And in loving a friend men love what is good for themselves (*hautois*); for the good man in becoming a friend becomes a good to his friends' (*Ethic. Nic.* VIII, 5, 1157 b 33-34).

as the critical criterion of reciprocity emerges when violence or the bad reciprocity of revenge, utility or exploitation, or pleasure for pleasure's sake, require the 'golden rule' cited by Benedict XVI recently at the United Nations,<sup>24</sup> or the categorical imperative.<sup>25</sup> It is this critical approach that we have to turn to, using the normative sources of analysis from the axiological and ethical point of view represented by the 'golden rule', human rights and natural law. For example, when we think of the new forms of free giving devoid of material benefits or control such as those that are emerging thanks to the Internet, with its new forms of distribution of knowledge and communication (blogs, Internet chat rooms, Facebook, MySpace, Second Life, YouTube, Wikipedia, etc.), we must take into account at the same time normative and ethical criteria in order to avoid good reciprocity turning into bad reciprocity (selfishness, anonymity, addiction, lack of a hierarchy in knowledge, lack of a distinction between the virtual world/s and the real one, the spread of pornography, etc.). The same can be said for the third sector, that is, those entities which are non-profit making and are not agencies of the state, e.g. charities and volunteer community centres. These, too, must be subjected to a form of axiological and ethical verification of their transparency at the level of funding and purpose in order to ensure that they are in conformity with good reciprocity. But above all, with respect to a critical approach to reciprocity, we should not tolerate the existence of a knowledge divide which is also a 'digital divide'.<sup>26</sup>

15. The generosity of a gift does not specifically generate a gift in return, much less a payment, which would, indeed, cancel the meaning of the first gift, but something akin to a response to an offering that is freely given, a grace. Ideally, one should perceive the first gift as a model for the second and perhaps see the second gift as a form of second first gift, a sort of new grace. In giving through a gift a person gives something of himself, and sim-

<sup>24</sup> "This intuition was expressed as early as the fifth century by Augustine of Hippo, one of the masters of our intellectual heritage. He taught that the saying: *Do not do to others what you would not want done to you* "cannot in any way vary according to the different understandings that have arisen in the world" (*De Doctrina Christiana*, III, 14) (Benedict XVI, *Address to the United Nations*, New York, 18 April 2008).

<sup>25</sup> The Kantian formulation reads: 'Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end' (*Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. H.J. Paton (New York 1964), 4, 429, p. 96).

<sup>26</sup> Cf. *Statement on Education*, The Pontifical Academy of Sciences, *Education for the Twenty-First Century*, Vatican City, 2002, p. 291 s.

ilarly he gives something of himself in matching the gift, in conformity with the model of *agape*, as will be discussed below. Gifts without a price have thus always had something that cannot be paid for and something superior to market goods, which nonetheless follow the rule of justice. For this reason, Aristotle placed a 'heroic' or 'divine' (*arete heroike kai theia*) virtue above the common virtues underpinned by justice, as a result of which some men are described as 'divine men'.<sup>27</sup>

In the context of the globalised world's unsolved and growing problem of the theoretical equal attribution of rights opposed to the actual unequal distribution of (market and freely-given) goods, one may observe that actions of gifts and matching gifts, reinvigorated by the true motivation of reciprocal generosity and love, can infuse a new intensity and depth into the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity which will be able to transform contemporary society. In this sense, the hope of subsidiary transcendent love is already a reason for joy and comfort: 'The consideration [of one's own failings] is of a nature to cause sorrow, but also joy, namely, through hope of divine subsidiarity'.<sup>28</sup>

16. The Christian faith recognises that for the human person complete fulfilment does not lie in the Kantian 'kingdom of ends',<sup>29</sup> the goods and values (the common good) of temporal societies. But he can be fulfilled by the supernatural good (grace, gifts and values) of spiritual community and eternal blessedness. In the natural order, too, there exists a network of spirits who interact through the treasure of human capital, thought, culture, science, morality, art, but they are not able to create a society in the full sense. Only when Jesus Christ, through participation in the nature of God and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, becomes the founder of a new sociability is a new authentic society achieved.

17. In this way for Christians a man is a citizen of two kingdoms. Not only does he as a cosmopolitan citizen belong to the earthly city but he is also a citizen of the celestial city whose king is Christ and whose fellow citizens are the angels and the righteous, those who dwell in heaven and those who are still pilgrims on the earth. As St. Paul says in his Letter to the Ephesians: 'you are fellow-citizens with the holy people of God and part of

<sup>27</sup> *Ethic. Nic.*, VII, 1.

<sup>28</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, *S. Th.*, II-II, 82, 4.

<sup>29</sup> Kant calls the 'kingdom of ends': 'the union of different rational beings in a system by common laws' (*The Foundation of the Metaphysics of Morals*, English translation by Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, available on the internet at <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/5682>).

God's household' (2:19). For a human being to belong to the celestial city, his human nature is not sufficient – he must be participate in the divine nature, the grace of Christ.<sup>30</sup>

The gifts of grace are thereby connected to human nature taking nothing from it, indeed healing and elevating it.<sup>31</sup> The participation of human beings in the heavenly city, those who are on their journey and those who have fully completed it, generates a refusion of the energies of grace, love and forgiveness into the earthly city of the global world of the human family.

Here it is necessary to refer to the different dialectics of *agape* and grace characterised by their overabundance and of friendship and justice sustained by the criterion of fairness. A difference must be noted between the grace and love of God and the grace and love of man: since the creature's good springs from the divine will, some good in the creature flows from God's love, whereby He wills the good of the creature. On the other hand, the will of man is moved by the good and gifts pre-existing in things; and hence man's love does not wholly cause the good of the thing but pre-supposes it either in part or wholly. And because of this difference of good, the love of God for His creature should be seen differently. There is a first love which is common whereby God loves 'all things that are' (Wis 11:25) and thereby gives things their natural being. But there is a second and very special love whereby God raises the human person above the condition of his nature to a participation in the divine good; and because of this love He loves human persons since it is by this love that God simply wishes the eternal good, which is Himself, for His human creatures.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> *'Homo autem non solum est civis terrenae civitatis, sed est particeps civitatis caelestis Ierusalem, cuius rector est dominus, et cives Angeli et sancti omnes, sive regnent in gloria et quiescant in patria, sive adhuc peregrinentur in terris, secundum illud apostoli, Ephes. II, 19: estis cives sanctorum, et domestici Dei, et cetera. Ad hoc autem quod homo huius civitatis sit particeps, non sufficit sua natura, sed ad hoc elevatur per gratiam Dei. Nam manifestum est quod virtutes illae quae sunt hominis in quantum est huius civitatis particeps, non possunt ab eo acquiri per sua naturalia; unde non causantur ab actibus nostris, sed ex divino munere nobis infunduntur'* (St. Thomas Aquinas, *De virtutibus in communi*, q. un., a. 5).

<sup>31</sup> *In Trin.*, 2, 3. Also: 'Fides praesupponit cognitionem naturales, sicut gratia naturam et ut perfectio perfectibile', i.e., 'faith presupposes natural knowledge, even as grace presupposes nature, and perfection supposes something that can be perfected' (*S. Th.*, I, q. 2, a. 2 ad 1).

<sup>32</sup> For a study of grace as participation in the divine nature cf. Marcelo Sánchez Sorondo, 'La necesidad de la gracia', in *L'umanesimo cristiano nel III Millennio* (Vatican City, 2004), pp. 79-91.

This participation in divine nature, which is the foundation of charity or *agape*, emphasises that gift that expects nothing in exchange. This gift derives from the abundance of the love of God, as was recognised by the axiom derived from Pseudo-Dionysius, *bonum est diffusivum sui*, to which classic theology refers to combat monism and clarify the event of *creatio ex nihilo* and the second creation worked by the grace of Christ. Once man has participated in the grace and love of Christ, he can also in his turn communicate this grace and love to others. Thus the communication of gifts with *agape* has as its salient feature that of not aspiring to a matching gift. A consequence emerges, namely the absence of reference in *agape* to any idea of correspondence. It is not the case that *agape* is not directed towards the other, as is attested to by concern about one's neighbour and one's enemy. Indeed, the invitation to love one's enemies and to forgive trespasses against us that *agape* generates is a clear elevation of the reciprocity that animates justice or friendship itself. However, *agape* is not at all inoperative. Kierkegaard manages to explain how 'acts of love' are 'edifying' with reference to St. Paul: 'love is what builds' (1 Cor 8:1).<sup>33</sup> God is always the author of *agape* and this necessarily involves abnegation, whereas what the world means by love is for this Danish philosopher in reality selfishness. A Christian understands love of himself and his neighbour with reference to God, and thus natural love, friendship and marriage (*Elskov, Venskab*), where God does not intervene as an 'intermediate category', remain outside the circuit of *agape*. Human love can be elevated when the subject (a husband, a wife, a friend...) raises himself/herself to the level of 'neighbour' in line with the fundamental requirement that 'no love and no expression of love must in a purely earthly way withdraw from the relationship with God'.<sup>34</sup>

The 'infinite' character of *agape* that derives from the grace of God makes 'reciprocity infinite on both sides'. And above all else – and this is the central lesson of the parable of the Good Samaritan – everyone must 'pre-

<sup>33</sup> S. Kierkegaard, *Kjerlighedens Gjerninger* (Copenhagen, 1847; Italian edition, *Atti dell'amore*, Milan, 2003).

<sup>34</sup> St. Thomas is of the same opinion: 'the love of one's friends is not meritorious in God's sight when we love them merely because they are our friends: and this would seem to be the case when we love our friends in such a way that we love not our enemies. On the other hand the love of our friends is meritorious, if we love them for God's sake, and not merely because they are our friends' i.e. '*dilectio amicorum apud Deum mercedem non habet, quando propter hoc solum amantur quia amici sunt, et hoc videtur accidere quando sic amantur amici quod inimici non diliguntur. Est tamen meritoria amicorum dilectio si propter Deum diliguntur, et non solum quia amici sunt*' (S. Th., II-II, 27, 7 ad 1).

suppose' that there is love in their neighbour, and more precisely that the essence of Christian love lies in this. An authentic Christian life must be a participation in the divine nature, a holy gift and a service not to the mere other but to he who is *my neighbour*, towards whom – even if he is an enemy or sinner – I always have a 'debt of love'.

Solidarity and subsidiarity brought to the citizens of the kingdom of God with these flows and reflows of grace and *agape* can infuse new energy into the human family and make it more fraternal, just and peaceful. In the Gospel according to St. Matthew we read: 'So always treat others as you would like them to treat you; that is the Law and the Prophets' (Mt 7:12). Furthermore, the Apostle says (1 Tim 1:5), 'the end of the commandment is charity'; since every social principle can only aim at establishing friendship, either between man and man or between man and God. Therefore all social principles are captured in the one commandment, 'You must love your neighbour as yourself,' which expresses the end of all the commandments because love for neighbour includes love of God when we love our neighbour for God's sake.