

Bitter Harvest: How Marxist “Progressives” Have Infiltrated the American Catholic Church

By William Mayer



Cardinal Donald Wuerl on Fox News Sunday with Host Chris Wallace

Introduction

By Cliff Kincaid, President, America's Survival, Inc.

It has become apparent to many observers, Catholics and non-Catholics alike, that there is something seriously wrong in the Catholic Church. This report by William Mayer identifies and analyzes the problem.

Consider some moral problems that have been in the news.

The U.S. Catholic bishops failed to issue a press release opposing the repeal of the Pentagon's homosexual exclusion policy, even though the church is supposed to teach that such behavior is immoral. On the other hand, it encouraged passage of a bill, the DREAM Act, supporting illegal immigration. Michael Voris, the senior executive producer of RealCatholicTV.com, put it this way:

When it comes to promoting illegal immigration...bet on many of the bishops cheering it on. But when it comes to standing up against an immoral law...well...not so much.

Indeed, asked about repeal of the Pentagon's homosexual exclusion policy on Fox News Sunday on December 26, 2010, Cardinal Donald Wuerl, the Archbishop of Washington, refused to condemn the repeal and state categorically that homosexuality was wrong.

Host Chris Wallace asked, "Cardinal, even during the Christmas season, this is still a Sunday morning talk show, so I'm going to ask you about a political issue which has a strong moral component. How do you feel about the repeal of "Don't Ask/Don't Tell," the ban on gays serving openly in the military?" Wuerl refused to answer directly. He said, in part: "You have to put that in context of what the church would be concerned about. When we're dealing with the question of military readiness or morale, those are issues that we have to really hear from others on..."

The answer frustrated Wallace, who said, "So are you in favor or against the repeal of 'Don't Ask/Don't Tell'?" He answered, "That is a question that has to be worked out politically. And there isn't a specific Catholic Church position, but whatever happens, it has to be seen in terms of the church's teaching position. And that is, human sexuality is something that is supposed to be exercised responsibly and within the context of marriage."

Notice that there was no reiteration of Catholic teaching that homosexuality is immoral and a disordered lifestyle.

Yet, the Bishops have been enthusiastic about passing a new immigration bill that extends amnesty to illegal aliens. A December 12, 2010, message from "Justice for Immigrants," a project of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), declared:

“DREAM Act wins in House, focus is now on Senate. Thanks to your great effort, the House of Representatives passed the DREAM Act on Wednesday night with a 216-198 vote. It has been a tough battle, but we cannot let up now. We need to keep the momentum going.”

When the DREAM Act failed to pass in the Senate, Sister Simone Campbell, the Executive Director of NETWORK, a National Catholic Social Justice Lobby, issued a statement saying:

“The Senate’s vote to block passage of the DREAM Act raised bullying behavior to a new level in our nation. By targeting children who were brought to the U.S. by their undocumented immigrant parents and by denying those children the opportunity to earn citizenship through hard work and sacrifice, legislators have embarrassed themselves and our nation. Worse than that, legislators who voted against DREAM yielded to pressure from nativist, bigoted people who find no shame in going after children during this Christmas season by spreading lies about the content and intent of the bill. Shame on all those senators who chose politics over justice and compassion. At NETWORK, we will press the new Congress to finally reform our immigration system so that justice triumphs over bigotry.”

The USCCB also called for ratification of the New START treaty, despite criticism that it would inhibit deployment of anti-missile defenses and gives the Russians a strategic advantage. A release from the USCCB declared:

Bishop [Howard J.] Hubbard [chairman of the USCCB Committee on International Justice and Peace] cited the support of the former president of the USCCB, Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, as well as the bishops’ new president, Archbishop Timothy Dolan of New York, for ratification of the treaty. He also said the treaty has global importance. “Strong and timely ratification of the new treaty will communicate our nation’s moral commitment to continue down a road that reduces the nuclear threat,” Bishop Hubbard said. “It will encourage other nations to adhere to their responsibilities under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The new treaty will make our nation and world safer by reducing nuclear weapons in a verifiable way. For the safety of our nation and world, we urge the Senate to take up the New START Treaty without delay.”

At the same time, there are individual Catholic Priests and some Bishops who have been speaking out on the right side of the moral and foreign policy issues facing the United States.

On August 15, 2010, for example, Father Charles Becker, a priest of the Archdiocese of Chicago, was visiting Jesus the Divine Word in Huntingtown, Maryland, and delivered a powerful homily, in which he talked about how, in the Book of Revelation, Mary the

Mother of God battled the dragon, a representation of what is evil in the world. He gave his thoughts on many current events and problems, saying that Communism was designed to weaken and deny traditional religious faith and is doing so today through the philosophy of atheism. He said there are “real evil, negative dark elements” in the world and that even the Priests of the church “are away from a faithful witness” and have been “pulled into the culture.”

Then, however, Father Becker gave his view on a vitally important international issue -- the threat posed by Islam -- and asked, “When are we going to stand up for our Judeo-Christian culture” and oppose the proposed mosque at Ground Zero (the site of the 9/11 attacks)? “We should protest against false religions,” he said, adding that Islam is a “false religion.”

But how often do Catholics hear this message in their churches?

In terms of how priests have been co-opted by the culture, Cardinal Wuerl’s failure to oppose -- on national television -- repeal of the Pentagon’s homosexual exclusion policy was a shocker to traditional Catholics. But the shock turned to dismay when the liberal Washington Post ran a February 24, 2011, article, “Md.’s top leaders cross Catholic hierarchy on gay marriage,” suggesting “a waning of Catholic influence in this heavily Catholic state.” This was during a time when the state legislature was considering a bill redefining marriage and allowing homosexuals to marry one another.

The Post, a supporter of homosexual rights, could not disguise its pleasure at the prospect of Maryland politicians turning their backs on Cardinal Wuerl and supporting the homosexual marriage bill. As noted by the Post, these politicians included:

- Maryland Gov. Martin O’Malley, who regularly attends a weekday Mass and has sent his four children to Catholic schools.
- House Speaker Michael E. Busch (D-Anne Arundel), who used to teach and coach at his old Catholic high school in Annapolis.
- Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller Jr. (D-Calvert), who grew up serving as an altar boy in the idyllic wood-frame Catholic church his family helped build in Clinton. (The Post noted that although Miller had voted against the bill in the Senate on Thursday, he had moved to head off a filibuster attempt by opponents so that it could move forward.)

In response to complaints that the church wasn’t doing enough to stop the homosexual marriage bill, Wuerl wrote a column for the local Catholic newspaper, *The Catholic Standard*, saying that a pastor had called him saying that parishioners were asking:

“Why doesn’t the Church do more?” Why isn’t the Church more involved?” Wuerl said the real question implied in these concerns was: “Why aren’t priests and bishops speaking up more?”

Wuerl said, "The question 'Why isn't the Church doing more?' is a legitimate one, but to answer it correctly we have to recognize that when we enter the political arena, the voice of the Church must include our lay people - not just the ordained." Hence, Wuerl was blaming the anticipated passage of the homosexual marriage bill on the parishioners.

He went on to say:

"It is not enough to rely on the hierarchy alone to address serious social and moral problems in our society. Everyone has to be involved and take an active role. Politicians tell us that they hear often from bishops and priests but rarely from the Catholic laity. If that is true, we must change it."

The laity, of course, depend on the bishops and priests for leadership on an issue as important as this. Yet, when it came to the need for testimony against the bill, Mary Ellen Russell, executive director of the Maryland Catholic Conference, was assigned to do the job. Wuerl's personal testimony against the bill would have obviously carried more weight.

Black Churches Defeat Homosexual Marriage Bill

In the end, the homosexual marriage bill failed in the Maryland House of Delegates. And it's true that Wuerl issued a statement to Maryland's more than 1.2 million Catholics saying that the Maryland House of Delegates could still stop the bill. But the opposition was coming primarily from black churches. "The bill had been a tough sell among African American lawmakers from Prince George's County, who cited religious opposition in their districts, as well as conservative Democrats in Southern Maryland and the Baltimore suburbs," noted the Post. Veteran journalist Bruce DePuyt quoted Delegate Cheryl Glenn, an African-American Democrat from Baltimore, as saying, "The black churches have never asked us for anything, and they are asking us now, 'Don't do this.'" Delegate Jay Walker, a black Democrat from Prince George's, said that his constituents and the churches in his district were against homosexual marriage. "I cannot vote against my base," he said.

DePuyt noted that, "The demise of the gay marriage bill in Maryland will, for some, be reminiscent of what happened in California, where, many believe, the black Democrats who came out in droves to support Barack Obama in 2008 helped defeat Proposition 8, a gay marriage measure."

The failure of the Catholic bishops and priests to speak out forcefully on this and other matters brings us to the subject of William Mayer's report. What he documents is how the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has been largely absorbed into what is called these days the Marxist-oriented "progressive movement" aligned with President Barack Obama, especially on economic issues. It is a problem that must be addressed.

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www.religiousleftexposed.com

Perhaps, however, some things are beginning to change. Archbishop Timothy Dolan of New York, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, sent a letter to Obama himself on March 3, 2011, expressing his "deep disappointment and alarm" at the decision by Obama's Department of Justice "to stop defending" the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). In a statement, he said the decision was "an alarming and grave injustice" and that:

"The Administration's current position is not only a grave threat to marriage, but to religious liberty and the integrity of our democracy as well."

Executive Summary

By William Mayer*

For some, to behold the American Catholic Church, via its governing body, the USCCB, enthusiastically supporting government controlled health care, Obamacare - with the single objection that the legislation lacks dedication to the life issue - constituted a jarring return to reality, suggesting that the Church and Catholic orthodoxy might be headed in opposite directions.

Those paying attention, however, to Church matters, simply noted the ongoing turmoil still being generated from Vatican II. Health care advocacy was seen as just the next phase in the transformation of a religion from one in which freedom of choice was elemental, to one in which the limits of personal choice are demarked by government decree and justified by faith.

This question of course turns upon the simple logic of Christianity; if one cannot choose good over evil freely, then how could punishment reasonably accrue to the offender? For this orthodox subset of Catholicism, the disjunct, while painful, was not that unexpected. For over 100 years the Catholic Church has developed, then pursued with great zeal a theory of outreach to the world's poor - based upon engaging in a partisan political process. It has been labeled "social justice."

Since the Reformation the Church has made great efforts - not always successful - in limiting its involvement in secular matters, but given the turmoil attending the process of industrialization and upon the publishing of the *Communist Manifesto* and *Das Kapital* in the mid nineteenth century, the Church felt compelled to make itself a relevant source of teaching regarding the manner in which this change could best be integrated into daily life and thereby managed.

Taking up the mantle of this challenge was Pope Leo XIII, who authored what has become central in defining the components of social justice theory and how they should be applied to the greater society. To that end Leo issued an Encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, in 1891. In this document the Church proclaimed itself competent to speak on economic matters, establishing a justification for governmental control, to a greater or lesser degree, of the marketplace and by extension, players within the economy, including everyday citizens and businesses. The stated purpose of this economic meddling was to establish some rough equity between social classes, thought to be seriously out of balance.

Though Leo criticized socialism and supported the concept of private property - in form - in practice he did much the opposite, establishing a supposed theologically sound logic that countenanced the very type of heavy handed social intervention that the supposed critique of socialism represented.

Succeeding Church documents built upon this foundation expanding it in a classic example of a willing mission creep

The spirit of these pronouncements - built one upon the other - was amplified and emboldened by the revisionism of the Second Vatican Council, Vatican II. When the decision was made in the late 1960s to apply the wholesale and arguably radical changes recommended by the Council, it was thought that new Catholic institutions would be necessary in some cases to actually formulate the rule book of the new ecumenism and in others to merely act as combined legislative/quasi-judicial bodies of enforcement for the yet to be written edicts.

In the United States, the National Council of Catholic Bishops [NCCB] was formed, along the lines of previous but less fully realized Catholic organizations such as the Catholic War Council [1919] and the National Catholic Welfare Council [1922] of Catholic Bishops in 2001] was dominated by political progressives, some of whom had important roles in Vatican II, thus providing continuity and an imputed ideological direction. The shadow these progressives have cast is substantial, tainting nearly every activity in which the Bishops are involved.

The NCCB in short order [1969] created an specialized activist arm, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development [CCHD], which for the first time provided wide-scale American Catholic funding for political activism, underwriting groups many of which were not faith based - though some of them adopted the appropriate language, talking-the-talk so as to appear to be more theologically relevant.

But even before these official actions, elements within the Church had already established working relationships with the likes of Saul Alinsky, himself a brilliant manipulator and organizer whose activism coalesced around his opposition to capitalism.

Alinsky's power base was Chicago and he did yeoman's work in ingratiating himself into the Catholic fold in that area, realizing that without major backing he could never pursue his grandiose plan. This activist wasn't at all reticent to admit that without Church aid it wouldn't have been possible for him to realize his dreams, allowing him to put his long-lived imprint on society.

This wedding of Alinsky's methods and extreme views with the Church's authority and funding ability has served to transform American Catholicism into a far more secularized entity, immersed in boiler-plate political involvement. Though the CCHD's activities and policies are by right the primary focus here, as the directly responsible authority for all of this activity, it is only an arm of the USCCB and it is there that responsibility must ultimately lie.

Using its grant making authority, the USCCB's CCHD has bestowed approximately \$300 million worth of funding to organizations which it has deemed consistent with alleviating what it terms the "institutional causes" of poverty. However when these

actual awards are investigated one quickly finds that those receiving the Church's backing tend to be left-leaning, social activist in nature and crassly political. Sometimes it seems that the entire effort might be an appendage of the Democratic National Committee.

The philosophy which imbues these programs is almost reflexively anti-capitalist, anti-free choice and dismissive of tradition. The effect has been to define the Church's poverty fighting efforts within a sugar coated, but nonetheless socialist methodology. The activism being promoted is of one brand - a furious assault waged against a system which, at its core, has been judged incompatible with Christianity - a very serious indictment.

Many of these organizations are linked together, incorporated into the larger political agenda of the hard left which has been engaged in trench warfare for 150 years with the foundational principles of Western liberal [small "L"] democracy.

This report is intended to sketch the intellectual flow of ideas, and accompanying institutions, which now constitute the American Catholic Church's outreach to the nation's disadvantaged. It is far beyond this writing's scope and intent to suggest specific reforms, though calling for a temporary but complete halt to these suspect ministries would seem a thoughtful place to commence.

If this overdue examination fails to materialize, the American Church will emerge as a wounded but redefined entity - no longer authentically Catholic. It will, in that case, solidify around a center that is far more secular and less faith-affirming an entity than orthodoxy would seem to require.

This review must also regrettably but inevitably turn to the leadership of the USCCB itself, examining why it and its various bodies seem to be imbued with such a doctrinaire antipathy against a system which has not only granted the Church the opportunity to thrive organizationally and financially but guarantees the very religious freedom which has made it possible for Catholicism to flourish in this country.

Without dealing with this threat - which is existential in nature - the present trend of falling Church membership will continue and a tragic process that might be irreversible will take hold.

*William Mayer has served since 1999 as the Editor & Publisher of PipeLineNews.org LLC - <http://www.pipelinenews.org>. The website is devoted to covering national security issues, especially the threat posed to Western liberal democracies by Islamism and the incursion of Shari'a into its culture. He is a Cum Laude graduate in Political Science from Cal-State University and a frequent commentator on talk radio and a powerful public speaker. Mr. Mayer was previously employed in the newspaper and magazine publishing industry in a variety of capacities.

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However, those paying close attention to Church matters noted the ongoing turmoil still being generated by Vatican II, viewing health care advocacy as just the next phase in the transformation of a religion from one in which freedom of choice was elemental, to one in which the limits of personal choice are demarked by government decree and justified by faith.

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Since the Reformation the Church has made great efforts - not always successful - in limiting its involvement in secular matters, but given the turmoil attending the process of industrialization and upon the publishing of the Communist Manifesto and Das Kapital in the mid nineteenth century, the Church felt compelled to make itself a relevant source of teaching regarding the manner in which this change could best be integrated into daily life and thereby managed. In short, Marxism has infiltrated the Church.

Taking up the mantle of this challenge was Pope Leo XIII, who authored what has become central in defining the components of social justice theory and how they should be applied to the greater society. To that end Leo issued an Encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, on labor and capital, in 1891.

In this document the Church proclaimed itself competent to speak on economic matters, establishing a justification for governmental control, to a greater or lesser degree, of the marketplace and by extension, players within the economy, everyday citizens and businesses.

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Though Leo criticized socialism and supported the concept of private property, in practice he did much the opposite, establishing a supposed theologically sound logic that countenanced the very type of heavy handed social intervention that he supposedly was criticizing. Succeeding Church documents built upon this foundation, expanding it in a classic example of a willing mission creep.

The spirit of these pronouncements - built one upon the other - was amplified and emboldened by the revisionism of the Second Vatican Council, Vatican II. When the decision was made in the late 1960s to apply the wholesale and arguably radical changes recommended by the Council, it was thought that new Catholic institutions would be necessary, in some cases to actually formulate the rule book of the new ecumenism and in others to merely act as combined legislative/quasi-judicial bodies of enforcement for the yet to be written edicts.

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The leadership of the NCCB [which became the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2001] was dominated by political progressives, some of whom had important roles in Vatican II, thus providing continuity and an imputed ideological direction. The shadow these progressives have cast is substantial, tainting nearly every activity in which the Bishops are involved.

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The year 2010 has in many ways already been indelibly stamped by extraordinary and consequential developments.

Of primary concern - the continuing economic troubles, environmental threats and other, hopefully passing things aside - is the manner in which President Obama, backed by a near super-majority in both houses of Congress, so rapidly expanded the scope, depth and reach of the federal government.

Front and center here - exhibit "A"- is the legislation which has become widely and colloquially known as "Obamacare," though the basic proposals have been floating around in serious form domestically for decades.

There is no need to revisit the epic battle in Washington, and around the country really, which resulted in this massive multi-thousand page legislative mandate. Suffice it to say that should the measure pass judicial scrutiny, it will constitute a turning point in American history, for the foreseeable future asserting the primacy of the government over what was formerly a sovereign and free people.

As evidence of this, one only need consider the degree of change brought about by forcing Americans to purchase a product - healthcare insurance in this case - as a fundamental requirement of citizenship. If the logic underlying this legislation continues unchecked, there would arguably be no limitation on what federal authorities could demand of the populace.

During the many months in which this protracted conflict was being waged, the looming figure of the American Catholic Church was writ large, supporting the most radical of the two government run healthcare proposals - that offered by the House of Representatives - with the Church's only substantive objection being the legislation's lack of specific language banning federal funding of abortion.

The extent of the Church's endorsement of government run and funded healthcare can't be fully grasped until it's understood that it strongly urged that the plan be extended - as a matter of equity - to cover the approximately 12-15 million illegal aliens which presently reside in the United States.

The remarkable lack of any serious objection by the USCCB over the core element of Obamacare, essentially a nationalization of a substantial portion of the nation's economy, though shocking for some, was altogether expected by observers of the long-term leftward drift of the Catholic hierarchy in America.

Even with this understanding, surveying the implications of the "social justice" positions and actions being taken by the Catholic Church can be a dismaying experience. While those familiar with history might start their explanation with Pope Leo XIII's late nineteenth century Encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* [on the responsibilities of capital and labor], in order to gain some perspective regarding the developments which motivated

him to act, one would have to turn the clock back to the 19th century's tumultuous middle period, stamped indelibly by the hand of Karl Marx.

The seminal German philosopher entered the scene in 1848 with the publication of *The Communist Manifesto* ["Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win."] which was followed in 1867 by what has come to represent the bible of the left, *Das Kapital*, co-authored by Friedrich Engels.

Nineteenth century Europe was mired in social turmoil, much of it the result of the rapid onset of the Industrial Revolution [especially the impact of steam powered machinery] and the dislocation that it caused. Where in the recent past, Europeans had worked with their hands, aided by the power of draft animals, the mechanization of the workplace represented a genuine paradigmatic change, which mandated a commensurate alteration in the way the populace looked at work. People were fearful and angry over the loss of their previous lifestyle; many were resentful at the very presence of machines in the work place, culminating in riots by "Luddites," bent on smashing these new creations.

In the light of and taking advantage of these development's, Marx put forth a complex proposition, at once a critique of capitalism as well as a deterministic theory of history. Marxism predicted that capitalism contained the seeds of its own destruction and that the state would pass through various stages of development, eventually withering away to be replaced by a dictatorship of the proletariat - the oppressed working class. Having been named and honored as the central player in Marx's theory and destined to eventually lead society, had obvious appeal to the working class. Similarly Marxism had the ability to also draw in those who appointed themselves to guide the proletariat to this promised land.

Faced with such a monumental challenge to nearly everything upon which Western society stood, Pope Leo XIII took it upon the Church to mount a response, adopting the form of an Encyclical, an alternative treatise on the responsibilities of labor and capital, *Rerum Novarum*, issued in 1891.

Pope Leo's analysis was groundbreaking for two primary reasons:

- For the first time the Church felt the need to directly and comprehensively take on the set of issues which today are loosely gathered under the heading of "social justice."
- In retrospect the teachings put forth in this document served as seminal in the ongoing debate over the role of the Church in secular political matters which only inferentially [not to suggest unimportantly] bear on the elements of faith.

Rerum Novarum, consisting of over 14,000 words, can be interpreted in various ways, largely dependent on the political skew of the reader and manner in which one section might be emphasized or diminished as being more or less critical than another.

What seems beyond conjecture, however, was by the very act of publishing this document, the Church boldly declared its competence [providing little evidence for such a claim] to teach in this realm, putting the world on notice that henceforth, this would be an area in which it would continue to assert itself.

In retrospect, then, *Rerum Novarum* has become the fountainhead from which all Catholic social teaching devolves.

Though analyzing the Encyclical in detail is beyond intent of this writing, a less rigorous overview can't be avoided.

KEY ASPECTS OF THE DOCUMENT

A. THE CHURCH ASSERTS ITS AUTHORITY AND EXPRESSES CONFIDENCE IN ITS ABILITY TO DEAL WITH THE ISSUES CONTAINED IN THE ENCYCLICAL:

"16. We approach the subject with confidence, and in the exercise of the rights which manifestly appertain to Us, for no practical solution of this question will be found apart from the intervention of religion and of the Church...It is the Church that insists, on the authority of the Gospel, upon those teachings whereby the conflict can be brought to an end, or rendered, at least, far less bitter; the Church uses her efforts not only to enlighten the mind, but to direct by her precepts the life and conduct of each and all; the Church improves and betters the condition of the working man by means of numerous organizations; does her best to enlist the services of all classes in discussing and endeavoring to further in the most practical way, the interests of the working classes; and considers that for this purpose recourse should be had, in due measure and degree, to the intervention of the law and of State authority."

B. SOCIALISM IS REJECTED:

"15. ...it is clear that the main tenet of socialism, community of goods, must be utterly rejected, since it only injures those whom it would seem meant to benefit, is directly contrary to the natural rights of mankind, and would introduce confusion and disorder into the commonweal..."

B. PRIVATE PROPERTY IS VIGOROUSLY DEFENDED:

"15. ...The first and most fundamental principle, therefore, if one would undertake to alleviate the condition of the masses, must be the inviolability of private property..."

C. IT'S NOT THE DUTY OF MAN TO ESTABLISH A DEMI-HEAVEN ON EARTH, SEEMINGLY A REJECTION OF UTOPIANISM:

"18. ...In like manner, the other pains and hardships of life will have no end or cessation on earth; for the consequences of sin are bitter and hard to bear, and they must accompany man so long as life lasts. To suffer and to endure, therefore, is the lot of humanity; let them strive as they may, no strength and no artifice will ever succeed in banishing from human life the ills and troubles which beset it. If any there are who pretend differently - who hold out to a hard-pressed people the boon of freedom from pain and trouble, an undisturbed repose, and constant enjoyment - they delude the people and impose upon them, and their lying promises will only one day bring forth evils worse than the present..."

D. THE ENCYCLICAL DEFINES INDIVIDUALITY IN A MANNER WHICH PLACES LIMITS OF FREEDOM OF CHOICE, SUBORDINATING IT TO THE NOXIOUS DOCTRINE OF "THE COMMON GOOD":

"35. ...We have said that the State must not absorb the individual or the family; both should be allowed free and untrammelled action so far as is consistent with the common good and the interest of others..."

E. IT STRONGLY INTIMATES THE VALIDITY OF ONE OF MARX'S CENTRAL CLAIMS, THAT THE RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUALS ARE NOT SUPREME, THAT THEY MUST BE SUBLIMATED TO THOSE OF GROUPS OR ESPECIALLY, CLASSES. THERE ARE NUMEROUS REFERENCES TO THE WORD CLASS OR CLASSES IN THE DOCUMENT. THESE ARE GROUPS OF INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN LARGELY STRIPPED OF THEIR INDIVIDUALITY AND UNIQUE IDENTITY:

"16. ...of the working classes themselves, for whom We are pleading...does her best to enlist the services of all classes in discussing and endeavoring to further in the most practical way, the interests of the working classes; and considers that for this purpose recourse should be had, in due measure and degree, to the intervention of the law and of State authority."

"19.... is it ordained by nature that these two classes should dwell in harmony and agreement..."

"25. the respective classes will..."

F. WAGES REDEFINED, INTERVENTION IN THE MECHANISM WHEREBY THEY ARE SET, JUSTIFIED:

"3. ...some opportune remedy must be found quickly for the misery and wretchedness pressing so unjustly on the majority of the working class...Hence, by degrees it has come to pass that working men have been surrendered, isolated and helpless, to the hardheartedness of employers and the greed of unchecked competition. The mischief has been increased by rapacious usury...To this must be added that the hiring of labor and the conduct of trade are concentrated in the hands of comparatively few; so that a small number of very rich men have been able to lay upon the teeming masses of the laboring poor a yoke little better than that of slavery itself."

"7. Still, when there is question of defending the rights of individuals, the poor and badly off have a claim to especial consideration. The richer class have many ways of shielding themselves, and stand less in need of help from the State...And it is for this reason that wage-earners, since they mostly belong in the mass of the needy, should be specially cared for and protected by the government."

"8. ...by the labor of working men that States grow rich. Justice, therefore, demands that the interests of the working classes should be carefully watched over by the administration, so that they who contribute so largely to the advantage of the community may themselves share in the benefits which they create-that being housed, clothed, and bodily fit, they may find their life less hard and more endurable. It follows that whatever shall appear to prove conducive to the well-being of those who work should obtain favorable consideration. There is no fear that solicitude of this kind will be harmful to any interest; on the contrary, it will be to the advantage of all, for it cannot but be good for the commonwealth to shield from misery those on whom it so largely depends for the things that it needs.

"45. Let the working man and the employer make free agreements, and in particular let them agree freely as to the wages; nevertheless, there underlies a dictate of natural justice more imperious and ancient than any bargain between man and man, namely, that wages ought not to be insufficient to support a frugal and well-behaved wage-earner. If through necessity or fear of a worse evil the workman accept harder conditions because an employer or contractor will afford him no better, he is made the victim of force and injustice."

"46. If a workman's wages be sufficient to enable him comfortably to support himself, his wife, and his children, he will find it easy, if he be a sensible man, to practice thrift, and he will not fail, by cutting down

expenses, to put by some little savings and thus secure a modest source of income."

In shorter form, *Rerum Novarum* asserts both the competence of the Church in economic matters and appoints itself as guardian of what is in its judgment, a working class [proletariat] that is oppressed by the greedy rich. In order to make sure that the interests of this class are guaranteed, the Church mandates that a "just" wage [in later constructions this becomes a "living" wage] be paid, regulation towards which is deemed to be desirable and within the legitimate purview of the state.

While Pope Leo's greater message is couched within much that is laudable, there can be no doubt that his dissertation has served as a point of departure for succeeding efforts, which constantly expanded the territory within which the state is authorized to intervene.

Leo matriculated during the 1830s. A gifted scholar, he earned his Ph.D at a young age in both cannon and civil law. He lived - in Italy - at time when there was no separation between church and state. The Catholic Church freely meddled in public affairs as a matter of right, involving itself in nearly every aspect of governance in some areas. As primarily a legal scholar, it must be assumed that any technical understanding of economics by him was limited. The state of economic science was also not well advanced at this early date.

Rerum Novarum could not rely of course on anything approaching modern economic theory, certainly a defect in a document arguing for morality-based economic regulation. Where justification is provided, it's invariably - as would be expected in a religious document - theological. Even in that area the arguments are by no mean robust enough to establish a reasonably basis for this level of economic intervention.

The justification expressed by the Pope deviates from the Gospel tradition regarding the right of individuals [and by extension, we must assume, corporations] to dispose of their income in whatever manner they see fit. The unambiguous text of Matthew 20: 13-15 shows just how far modern Catholic theology has strayed from its roots:

"The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out at dawn to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with them for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard...When it was evening the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Summon the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and ending with the first. When those who had started about five o'clock came, each received the usual daily wage. So when the first came, they thought that they would receive more, but each of them also got the usual wage. And on receiving it they grumbled against the landowner, saying, 'These last ones worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who bore the day's burden and the heat. He said to one of them in reply, 'My friend, I am not cheating you. Did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take

what is yours and go. What if I wish to give this last one the same as you?
(Or) am I not free to do as I wish with my own money?"

Leo's Encyclical, though on the surface giving deference to private property and rejecting outright socialism, still strays from orthodoxy in a fundamental way which is injurious to both concepts. In doing so, it grants government the moral authority to impose its views on the marketplace in pursuit of what can only be described as a utopian outcome - full employment at a whatever level of compensation might be required for a good but frugal lifestyle in a workplace environment which is supportive of the worker's faith.

Though there is no evidence that it was an intended consequence, the intellectual flow of Leo's reasoning degraded the moral imperative that Christians are expected to personally minister to those who are less fortunate, making this burden a responsibility of the state.

Absent from the document [and its successors] is any attempt to prove that the suggested interventions in the marketplace are reasonably possible within our understanding of how capital and labor actually interact. Unfortunately this leaves those asserting this doctrine haplessly twisting in the wind, relying upon simplistic and fancifully incorrect constructions absent any evidence to indicate their prescriptions have any applicability in the real world.

Disturbingly, this writing reasserts a practice that is new to modern Catholicism but quite familiar to those conversant with previous historical periods in which misshapen faith concepts were used to justify cruelties which to this day continue to mar the Church's reputation.

Leo's assertions can only be justified on theological grounds via a narrowly selective, revisionist reading of scripture devised to provide a defense for large scale meddling in areas heretofore outside the purview of the Church, at least the Faith as understood since the Reformation.

These worldly concerns are all grouped now under the heading of "social justice" which has become a central focus - almost to the point of obsession - in the Church. This emphasis on the temporal as opposed to the spiritual world is really a thinly disguised effort to substitute mankind in place of the Almighty in creation, what some might consider to be a classic example of inappropriate means being used to justify unattainable ends.

Since Leo's time the Church has - over five generations - been emboldened, presenting its social justice case in ever more stridently leftist terms as set forth in key Encyclicals: Quadragesimo - Anno Pope Pius XI, Mater et Magistra and Pacem en Terris - John XXIII, Populorum Progressio - Paul VI and other teachings.

In *Mater et Magistra*, for example, a huge document far more densely reasoned than *Rerum Novarum*, Pope John XVIII asserts total authority in defining what constitutes a "just wage" which in his interpretation, has such moral force as to necessitate intervention by the state:

"71. We therefore consider it Our duty to reaffirm that the remuneration of work is not something that can be left to the laws of the marketplace; nor should it be a decision left to the will of the more powerful. It must be determined in accordance with justice and equity; which means that workers must be paid a wage which allows them to live a truly human life and to fulfill their family obligations in a worthy manner. Other factors too enter into the assessment of a just wage: namely, the effective contribution which each individual makes to the economic effort, the financial state of the company for which he works, the requirements of the general good of the particular country—having regard especially to the repercussions on the overall employment of the working force in the country as a whole—and finally the requirements of the common good of the universal family of nations of every kind, both large and small."

The logic of *Mater et Magistra* is prototypical of the Church's newly operative position on capitalism, treating it much like an incurable disease which at best should be managed in a mechanical manner, from the top down.

This is a vexatious proposition to traditional [small "l" in the classical sense] liberal Catholics [shared by non-Catholics as well] whose ethical and political viewpoint is based upon the concept of natural rights endowed by a Creator [and only protected and/or guaranteed by the state] from which liberty, individualism, freedom and the sacrosanct nature of private property flow of their own accord.

Pointing out that this was not always the case with the Church, that its current stance is a historical anomaly, does not obviate its extant position.

Mater et Magistra is therefore important as is the time frame from which it came, immediately prior the Second Vatican Council, aka Vatican II which convened in 1962. Vatican II is seen by many Church traditionalist in almost schismatic terms, an effort to secularize the faith in an attempt to somehow reconcile itself with Christianity's disparate elements and a much changed world.

Though a mini-library of books have been written about every aspect of the Council, some of them outlandish and in some cases alleging dark conspiracies, there can be no doubt that Catholicism had remanufactured itself.

The Church did this in an attempt to remain "relevant," to the imagined needs of a newly ordered world which was on full display during the cultural revolution of the 60s.

Out was the Latin rite, communion taken on your knees at a properly clothed rail, elaborate ceremonies as well as the emphasis on pure worship during Mass. In was multiculturalism, treatment of the transubstantiated body of Christ as merely an oddly bland-tasting cracker to be grabbed at and handled, non-liturgical music, dancing and the indignity of the congregation serving as the centerpiece of worship.

Most fundamentally, as a pure matter of theology, Catholicism no longer saw itself as the sole source of salvific wisdom, as other faith traditions were presumed to have similarly important insights.

It's difficult to not see this break with the preponderant weight of Christian theology as being parallel to a similar, post-modernist loss of faith and/or cultural confidence which manifested itself throughout the West.

That is fully understandable, in that they have nourished each other, having originated in the same general historical period.

So complete was the transformation of the Church into one which increasingly became concerned with secular matters that it inspired the creation only a few years after its last session, December 1965, of new bodies intended to fulfill this new political role.

THE ALINSKY-CATHOLIC CONNECTION

One must not underestimate the effect of Leo's broadside. It reverberated throughout the Church in the twentieth century, and continues to do so, influencing clergy and laity alike to build on his newly poured foundation. Pope John Paul II described the effect of *Rerum Novarum* as giving "the church citizenship status."

Many within the Church concurred, including Pope Pius XI who stated:

"The rich fruits which the Church of Christ and the whole human race have, by God's favor, reaped therefrom unto salvation prove that some of this good seed, so lavishly sown forty years ago, fell on good ground. On the basis of the long period of experience, it cannot be rash to say that Leo's Encyclical has proved itself the Magna Charta upon which all Christian activity in the social field ought to be based, as on a foundation."

One of those heavily influenced by the new social teaching was Monsignor John Augustine Ryan, who in 1916 published, "Distributive Justice, the Right and Wrong of Our Present Distribution of Wealth."

About Ryan, the University of St. Thomas website contains the following:

"John Ryan's position as an economist and Catholic leader emerged more strongly after moving back to Washington, DC, and becoming a professor at CUA in 1915. He published another major monograph, *Distributive*

Justice: The Right and Wrong of Our Present Distribution of Wealth, in 1916. Based on his interpretation and understanding of *Rerum Novarum* and extensive study of several plans for the reconstruction of post war societies Ryan wrote the critically important Bishop's Program of Social Reconstruction, issued by the National Catholic War Council in the name of American Bishops in 1919. The Bishop's Program became the guiding force for the National Catholic Welfare Council's Social Action Department and Catholic progressives in the 1920s and 1930s. Many of the recommendations in the Bishop's Program were enacted 15 years later during Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal."

Previous to "Distributive Justice," Ryan had written, "A Programme of Social Reform By Legislation," which was characterized as "a kind of wish list of reform aimed at the worst abuses caused by economic changes..."

In this work Ryan outlined a set of prescriptive actions which included a large scale program of building public housing, public ownership of utilities, mines and forests, as well as government control of monopolies.

Ryan's concept, distributive justice, is really "socialism-lite." And though he vehemently denied the linkage between the two, even debating contemporary socialists over that ideology, his writings prove otherwise. Even Ryan's fans acknowledged his basic acceptance of the key tenets of socialism.

The Monsignor's distributive approach centers on classifying products and services which are useful to the public, "goods" in his parlance, into one of three classes. The goods necessary for life comprise the first class, those which foster a comfortable lifestyle, the second, and those which were in his judgment unnecessarily ostentatious, the third. Each of these categories also equate to specific levels of wealth, one that which necessary for basic subsistence, one which allows a comfortable quasi-middle class lifestyle and finally wealth that was in his view, superfluous.

It's this third class upon which he focuses, establishing a theory of maximum allowable income based upon his skew of Christian morality:

"Somewhere between five and ten thousand dollars a year lies the maximum expenditure that any family can reasonably devote to its material wants...The interests of health, intellect, spirit, or morals would be better promoted if the outlay for material things were kept below the specified limit."

One can immediately grasp the simplistic nature of the approach, unbound by either the complexities of economics or the realities of human nature.

Despite this approaches lack of vigor - intellectual and theological - Ryan's writings served as an inspirational model for the new Catholic social activism, which found great acceptance inside the Church.

What was lacking however, were enforcement mechanisms whereby these freshly minted moral truths could be put into action.

Sensing that, led by the spirit of Ryan's proselytizing, especially his stint at the American Catholic University, in 1917 the U.S. Bishops created its first national organization devoted to dealing with political issues, the National Catholic War Council, establishing a model which eventually brought forth the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The Church was not alone in seeing that aspects of the Marxist critique of capitalism held great potential political power domestically, all sorts of social activism spread during the early years of the twentieth century.

Arguably the most well known - and certainly the most effective - secular practitioner of this new polemic of greed was Saul David Alinsky, whose insinuation into and influence upon the American Catholic Church was profound, a fact which will prove revelatory to more than a few cradle Catholics.

Alinsky was born early in the 20th century and displayed at a young age an ability to bring together seemingly disparate forces to wage political war against an existing power structure that he found offensive and unacceptable.

Though he never officially joined the Communist Party, his admiration for their politics, tactics and toughness was obvious:

"PLAYBOY: What was your own relationship with the Communist Party?

ALINSKY: I knew plenty of Communists in those days, and I worked with them on a number of projects. Back in the Thirties, the Communists did a hell of a lot of good work; they were in the vanguard of the labor movement and they played an important role in aiding blacks and Okies and Southern sharecroppers. Anybody who tells you he was active in progressive causes in those days and never worked with the Reds is a goddamn liar. Their platform stood for all the right things, and unlike many liberals, they were willing to put their bodies on the line."

Alinsky was exceedingly clever not to publicly align himself with political parties - avoiding the entanglement of declared ideologies. This gave him the freedom to represent himself in whatever manner he deemed helpful to defeat the enemy which to him was clearly capitalism and its practitioners:

"And I'm convinced that once the middle class recognizes its real enemy -- the megacorporations that control the country and pull the strings on

puppets like Nixon and Connally -- it will mobilize as one of the most effective instruments for social change this country has ever known. And once mobilized, it will be natural for it to seek out allies among the other disenfranchised -- blacks, chicanos, poor whites."

Alinsky believed that capitalism was a fraudulent concept, that it was impossible and foolish for citizens to think that they could in any way participate, even through personal ownership of common stock:

"No, despite all the crap about "people's capitalism," the dominant controlling stock in all major corporations is vested in the hands of a few people we could never get to. We're not even concerned about electing four or five board members to a 25-member board, which in certain cases would be theoretically feasible. They'd only be outvoted by management right down the line. We want to use the proxies as a means of social and political pressure against the megacorporations, and as a vehicle for exposing their hypocrisy and deceit."

On this basis it's appropriate to think of Alinsky as a "fellow traveler" with the communists, not a party man, but one who is fundamentally committed to similar goals of revolutionary change and the eventual destruction of capitalism.

Because Alinsky's politics were always near the surface, understanding what he and his strategy was all about didn't require digging very deep. It's hard to believe that anyone could agree to work with or fund such undertakings, without having an inkling of what they would be getting for their money or countenancing by way of their participation. This is important to keep in mind when assessing individuals like Alinsky who artfully cloak the true nature of their political beliefs.

David Horowitz, a former Marxist turned conservative, provides a keen insight into the mindset of the radical activist and thus his bent for tactics. He quotes a former member of the SDS [Students for a Democratic Society, a Marxist revolutionary group] as saying something that is accepted wisdom among members of the hard left - "the issue itself is never the issue. The issue is always the revolution." This is the reason why there is never an end to the demands of this manner of agitator/activist; once a controversy is dealt with, another always springs up [invented, manufactured or otherwise] because the revolutionary's contempt for the system is total and compromise is at best a tactical move on their part, made only to secure political advantage on the road to the next encounter.

Alinsky was candid, however, about his inability - unaided - to rock the establishment, and he knew that he needed to gain powerful allies. According to his own account, without the Catholic Church his efforts might have failed:

"ALINSKY: In the case of Back of the Yards, the area was 95 percent Roman Catholic, and I recognized that if I could win the support of the

Church, we'd be off and running. Conversely, without the Church, or at least some elements of it, it was unlikely that we'd be able to make much of a dent in the community.

PLAYBOY: Wasn't the Catholic Church quite conservative in those days?

ALINSKY: Nationally it certainly was, which was why a little two-bit Hitler like Coughlin was never censured or silenced until the war. But Chicago in those days was a peculiar exception; under Cardinal Mundelein and Bishop Bernard Sheil, it was the most socially progressive archdiocese in the country..."

He gained key allies first in the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago, craftily aligning himself with young idealistic priests. Through them he gained access to elder members of the clergy, such as Cardinal Samuel Alphonsius Stritch, who served as Archbishop of Chicago from 1940-1958:

Alinsky created a blizzard of organizations, all with essentially the same purpose, as front operations, individual instruments - cogs in a machine - working in common purpose to create social unrest.

At the core of explaining how American Catholic social policy became synonymous with leftism one must understand why and how the Church came to fund Alinsky, his Industrial Areas Foundation, and related groups.

As previously noted, since the turn of the twentieth century, the U.S. Church had, starting with the National Catholic Welfare Council in 1919, created institutions specifically intended to lobby politically for that malleable entity, social change.

The National Catholic Welfare Conference grew out of the single issue War Council, "In 1919 Pope Benedict XV urged the hierarchy to join him in working for peace and social justice... the National Catholic Welfare Conference was created to address such concerns..."

By the mid 1960s that model was also found wanting - lacking in sufficient reach - and two new arms, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops [for clergy] and the United States Catholic Conference [for laity] were created [1966].

The two were merged [2001] into today's U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB] which has become the de-facto governing body of the Catholic Church in America, comprised of all Bishops and Archbishops in the United States, active as well as retired or inactive.

What expanded role were these organizations expected to fill?

The changes coming out of the Second Vatican Council [Vatican II] were so fundamental and grandiose that much of their development and implementation was delegated to newly envisioned national conferences or councils of Bishops. It became the duty of each country then to develop these organizations as legislative/governing bodies so that the spirit of Vatican II could be enacted on a worldwide basis. These national councils, created at the behest of the Holy See, had the secondary and not inconsequential effect of extending the hand of the Papacy in a much more direct and effective manner.

In large part, then, the USCCB's origin can be attributed to the directives issued by Vatican II, whose scope reflected a desire to micromanage the Church in an unprecedented manner.

Another motivating factor according to knowledgeable commentators was the general ferment of the 1960s, which introduced unprecedented and rapid cultural change into this society. An organization like the NCCB/USCCB was seen as being potentially helpful in dealing with and managing the stresses and dislocations caused by this transformation.

In the same vein, since the Church was already heavily engaged - in a less global and focused manner - in the areas of social activism and politics, it was thought that national leadership might be helpful in coordinating these activities more comprehensively. The first president of the NCCB [1966] was Archbishop John Francis Dearden [elevated to Cardinal in 1969]. He seemed uniquely suited to fulfill this latter role.

Dearden had distinguished himself as a trusted insider, a key player in Vatican II. He was very liberal, a "progressive" in today's political usage, earning him the enmity of many orthodox Catholics and a few lay commentators as well.

One publication he ran afoul of was the influential and combative *Wanderer* magazine which had major objections to his brand of ecumenism.

The spirit with which Dearden imbued the organization gave rise in three short years to the Catholic Campaign for Human Development [CCHD], envisioned as the face of American Catholic social activism.

THE ACORN CONNECTION

Just looking at the CCHD's published grant material, for example in 2006, 2007 and 2008, one is struck by the overwhelming presence of social activist groups - many of whose claims to faith connections seem tenuous. USCCB's 2006 list features over 20 grants totaling nearly \$600,000 going to the disgraced and now defunct Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now [ACORN].

In the USCCB's 2007 grant list we find 39 awards - totaling over \$1,000,000 - going to the same organization.

By what manner of construction could the Church be convinced to support a group which was founded by Wade Rathke, a member of the Marxist revolutionary organization Students for a Democratic Society in the 1960's?

ACORN had always been devoted to advancing a collectivist agenda, though highly lauded in some circles for empowering the poor - a claimed goal of CCHD - it was in reality an appendage of the far left-wing of the Democratic party, merely using the clap-trap of faith-based language as a guise.

ACORN, true to its Alinsky roots, was in your face, confrontational and thought nothing of using thuggish intimidation verging on possible violence.

Though the Church has vowed to no longer fund ACORN, that decision was forced on the USCCB from the outside and not a product of internal review. It's important to realize that the organization was delisted because of a long history of financial and other improprieties, but that rejection doesn't mean that the Bishops have rejected ACORN's goals or even its methodology. It simply doesn't pass the smell test to assume that given the amount of funding which has been provided over such a long period of time, those countenancing these grants didn't know precisely what they were engaged in underwriting.

By this point it was clear that the Church had long since crossed the line into political advocacy of an extremist nature, working with entities which had a history of being anti-democratic and religiously intolerant. This same tradition supports a social agenda which is liberal on issues such as abortion and homosexual rights.

CCHD's other favored organizations include the Gamaliel Foundation and its "affiliates," long known for their similarly camouflaged activism. In 2009, the national CCHD awarded grants to 13 Gamaliel affiliates, allocating them a total of \$375,000.

Gamaliel is also a hard left group modeled after Alinsky's Industrial Areas Foundation, operating under the cover of being "faith-based." It's run by an ex-Jesuit Gregory Galluzzo, about whom the admittedly left-leaning journal New Republic writes approvingly:

Kellman, Kruglik, and Galluzzo weren't schooled in civil rights-era organizing, but in the teachings of Alinsky...Alinsky had been dead for more than a decade when Obama arrived in Chicago, but his legacy was still very much alive. Kruglik, Kellman, and Galluzzo had all studied his teachings through the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), the organizing school Alinsky founded....Galluzzo shared with me the manual he uses to train new organizers, which is little different from the version he used to train Obama in the '80s. It is filled with workshops and chapter headings on understanding power: "power analysis," "elements of a power organization," "the path to power." Galluzzo told me that many new

trainees have an aversion to Alinsky's gritty approach because they come to organizing as idealists rather than realists.

Here is the Gospel according to Gamaliel:

With the prophet Martin Luther King, Jr., we cry out, "Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane. Hear our cry, oh God! From health care systems and industries that place profit over people, Deliver us, oh God!

From lobbying efforts that block access to quality health care for all, Deliver us, oh God! From greed and fear that replace the reality of God's abundance and the power of community with the myths of scarcity and isolation, Deliver us, oh God! From scapegoatism of immigrants, from blaming the poor, from all sinful attitudes, which deem health care as a right of the privileged rather than as a basic human right, Deliver us, oh God!

The ideological cant of Gamaliel's political advocacy isn't hidden. It supports illegal alien amnesty, government controlled healthcare, public spending to generate jobs and government forced social engineering, including the resettling of heavily subsidized urban poor throughout the entire community, calling it "opportunity housing."

There are a few brave voices, however, bucking the trend of the American Church's subsidization of the political left. One of these is Green Bay, Wisconsin's Bishop David L. Ricken. "After prayer, study, and reflection, it is clear to me that principles of the Gamaliel Foundation are inconsistent with the tenets of our Catholic Social Teaching," the bishop wrote. "It is not fitting for a Catholic entity to enter into a formal association with another organization when there is such a conflict of principles."

Leaving these examples aside, even the mundane-sounding organizations which CCHD funds are not what they seem upon first examination. Culled at random from the 2008 list of CCHD grantees is the Oakland, California based Genesis, which bills itself as, "A Regional Community Interfaith Organization in the Bay Area." It's another affiliate of the Chicago based Gamaliel Foundation. The group has recently been involved in political activity, lobbying to preserve funding for AC Transit, a poorly run, constantly in the red public transit provider, in Alameda County.

How can this brand of activism, at best an effort to preserve another failed big-city program, the main purpose of which seems to be distributing over 300 million public dollars a year to workers represented by the Amalgamated Transit Union, be justified as "faith based?"

When asking who within the Church are the theater commanders for this effort, just turn to the staff which the USCCB has chosen to run its programs. For instance the CCHD's Director, Ralph McCloud. What expertise does Mr. McCloud bring to CCHD? Is he a

learned theologian or maybe adept at providing direct aid to the poor ala Mother Teresa? Of course not, what the Bishops think they need is machine politician; who else could provide for the poor in an authentically Catholic manner?

A partial bio of Mr. McCloud:

"McCloud was elected to four two-year terms to the Fort Worth City Council, in 1997, 1999, 2001, and 2003. He served as Fort Worth's mayor pro-tem from 1999 to 2005. He currently chairs the Mayor's Commission on Homelessness in Fort Worth. In other civic activities, he was president of the Fort Worth Local Housing Development Council and served four terms on the National League of Cities' Human Development Steering Committee."

McCloud was a loud proponent of Barack Obama's candidacy, appearing at rallies and cheering his election despite Mr. Obama's record [while an Illinois legislator] of voting for the most extreme form of abortion - infanticide.

Another key player at the USCCB is John Carr, the Executive Director for its Department of Justice, Peace, and Human Development. He once sat on the board of the Center for Community Change (CCC), supported by hundreds of thousands of dollars from the Open Society Institute of atheist George Soros. The CCC has also been supported by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development.

These people are not setting policies based on their personal agendas; rather, their lengthy employment is testament to their ability to advance the ideology which the organization has come to represent.

Unfortunately, therefore, CCHD's funding patterns and the USCCB's support of it are not isolated instances of misplaced Catholic social activism - they are the rule, judged by its political positions.

In short, the American Catholic Church has been taken over by the left. It has been systematically conquered from within ala the methodology of the little known but highly influential Italian Communist theorist Antonio Gramsci - marching through the institutions.

This institutionalized leftism is strewn across nearly all of the American Church's social justice positions, with the single exception being the issue of abortion and we see in that matter the CCHD has consistently funded dozens of activist groups which have a pro-abortion agenda.

The fact is that the USCCB/CCHD has failed to at the most basic level to defend the Church's pro-life position, actively funding organizations whose work is antithetical to its teachings. Perhaps even more troubling, when called on the carpet for this outrageous

behavior, it has at best only grudgingly and in a non-comprehensive manner responded to these legitimate criticisms.

In broader form, the USCCB, under a "Social Justice," designation involves itself in at least 27 policy areas, most of which are unabashedly secular and political in nature:

Arms Control, Debt, Death Penalty, Domestic Issues, Economic Justice, Environment, Faithful Citizenship, Health, Housing, Government Liaison, Immigration, International Issues, Iraq, Justice, Peace & Human Dev., Labor Issues, Middle East, Migrants & Refugees, Poverty, Social Development & World Peace and Social Security and Welfare.

The Church does this with full knowledge that its political activity, which is invariably slanted left, is intended to be understood by Catholic laity as a necessary component of faith, that you can't be a good Catholic and not support the invasive federal colossus which is necessary to implement these policies.

The leftism of the USCCB's positions in these policy areas becomes all too clear upon a more in-depth look. We examine five of these components, which we believe to be representative of the whole:

1. IMMIGRATION

On May 1, 2010 - May Day, traditionally International Workers Day, a celebration rooted in Marxist ideology - Los Angeles Bishop, Roger Mahony worked his way through a very large crowd of illegal immigration supporters, offering official Catholic support for the rally while along the way "comparing Arizona to Nazi Germany" referring to that state's recent passage of tough immigration measures.

As if to further telegraph his politics, Mahony offered support in Spanish to the protesters in the manner made popular by the Obama campaign, "Sí se puede," he told one. "Yes, we can."

Mahony, like McCloud and Mr. Carr is not atypical in his views. He represents what passes for Catholic orthodoxy today.

John C. Wester, Bishop of Salt Lake City, Utah, is the former Chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration [now a consultant for the same body]. Bishop Wester is a supporter of amnesty for the 12-15 million illegal Mexican aliens currently residing in this country - though he adamantly denies it. In order to do so, Wester engages in the type of dissimulation which has now become de rigueur among Catholic prelates, hiding his hard left politics behind the sophistry of a religious veneer.

Secure the borders? Don't even go there with this bunch. In holding this position the Church defies the understanding - a matter of international law since the 1648 Treaty of

Westphalia - that the requirement of having inviolable borders is implicit in the very concept of the modern nation state.

Not content to simply fan the flames spread by the amnesty radicals, the Catholic Church has been an active participant in some of their rallies.

As America's Survival, Inc. (ASI) President Cliff Kincaid noted:

A group organizing a May 1 "May Day" rally in favor of "immigrant rights" in Lafayette Park in front of the White House is financially supported by the Catholic Church, Big Business, the federal government, and various Maryland governmental entities...CASA de Maryland, an illegal alien support group, is sponsoring the buses that will take hundreds of protesters to the event in the nation's capital. CASA is considered the biggest promoter and facilitator of illegal aliens in Maryland. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and its Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD), which got caught funding the radical group ACORN, are listed on the CASA website as being among its many financial donors and supporters.

Kincaid also notes the presence of radical material, including Spanish versions of the Communist Manifesto, Che Guevara T-shirts etc., at this Catholic-supported demonstration.

2. CLIMATE CHANGE/GLOBAL WARMING

On the topic of climate change/global warming the Church is also in bed with the left, promoting the fraudulent thesis that the activity of mankind is responsible for a catastrophic warming of the environment.

In light of this viewpoint, the USCCB fundamentally supports the principles of the Cap and Trade legislation, aka Cap and Tax, a ruinous proposal that would hobble the U.S. economy for the foreseeable future, causing massive increases in an already unacceptable level of unemployment and a huge increase in energy costs.

The Bishops do this disingenuously, pretending to oppose the proposal with a single caveat - eerily mimicking the organization's tongue-in-cheek opposition to Obamacare, as mentioned at the beginning of this study - that the legislation does not devote enough funding to poor countries so that they could participate in this dystopian program.

3. GLOBAL DEBT RELIEF/FOREIGN AID

The USCCB is actively working with international bodies, lobbying for debt incurred by the "poorer" foreign countries to be paid off by the wealthier nations, primarily the United States. The USCCB proposes that America and other industrialized nations pay off the

bills incurred by incompetent often brutally dictatorial governments whose leaders frequently siphon off billions into Swiss bank accounts.

4. HOUSING

The USCCB declares, "We begin with the recognition that decent housing is a right. Our Catholic tradition, eloquently expressed by Pope John XXIII and Pope Paul VI insists that shelter is one of the basic rights of the human person. The Second Vatican Council has said with great directness: 'There must be made available to all men everything necessary for leading a life truly human, such as food, clothing and shelter...'"

Since we are giving away the store here, why not further stipulate that said housing must include a big screen television, central vacuuming and a moderate [but not ostentatious] pool?

This policy has been in place for a long time, well over a quarter of a century, and is still the official position of the American Church.

5. POLICY ON ISRAEL

Another area in which Catholic doctrine has been hijacked by the leftist element within USCCB is the issue of Israel vis a vis the "Palestinians."

For a Church which has only recently made significant moves to repair strained relations with those of the Jewish faith, the position of the American Catholic Church regarding Israel would be inexplicable were it not for the leftist influence which predominates official political considerations. The Church places blame for the conflict squarely on the shoulders of Israel. There is no mention that "hostilities" [aka warfare which has in fact never ended] were commenced by Israel's neighbors, a religious war - Islamic jihad - intending to destroy the Jews forever.

It is often under-reported that the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini, actively worked with Adolf Hitler in carrying out jihad against Jews. He led this effort in the Holy Lands, instigating wherever he could attacks on Jewish settlers. Despite the contrary claims of the USCCB, Arabs had been fighting Great Britain and the Jews in the Holy Land since at least the 1920s, thirty years before the creation of the Israeli state.

That the USCCB should tilt towards the "Palestinians" [there are no Palestinian people and never has been a state of Palestine. Those currently there are predominantly of Jordanian descent] is even more difficult to fathom, given that Judaism is the foundation of Christianity.

The only explanation in the Church not supporting the long suffering Jews of Israel against the neighboring Arab Muslim aggressors is that such a position squares

completely with the position taken by the left along with its Islamist allies. Nothing else reasonably explains it.

WORKING DIRECTLY WITH THE FAR-LEFT

Consider Fr. J. Bryan Hehir, a long-time mover and shaker in the superstructure of the American Church.

From his bio:

"J. Bryan Hehir is the Parker Gilbert Montgomery Professor of the Practice of Religion and Public Life at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He is also the Secretary for Social Services in the Archdiocese of Boston. Prior to assuming these positions, Father Hehir served as President and CEO of Catholic Charities USA, the national network of Charities in the United States, from 2001-2003. From 1973-1992, he served on the staff of the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops in Washington, D.C., addressing issues of both foreign and domestic policy for the church in the United States."

From this career highlight it's clear that Hehir is a heavy hitter in high level Catholic circles. He had a long and intimate relationship with the Washington, D.C.- based Institute for Policy Studies (IPS), a Marxist think tank.

As documented by ASI:

Father J. Bryan Hehir, who in 1983 delivered a series of lectures at the far-left Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) entitled, "Matthew, Marx, Luke, and John" illustrates the continuing left-wing drift of the Catholic Church in foreign affairs. Hehir, who served on the staff of the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops in Washington, D.C., from 1973-1992 and now teaches at Harvard, appeared on an October 15, 2007, Center for American Progress panel on "pursuing the global common good."

The ASI writer and analyst, the late Robert Chandler, in his essay, *How Marxism Has Infiltrated the Catholic Church*, said about IPS:

The Institute for Policy Studies, a progressive-socialist-Marxist think tank based in Washington, D.C...spawned or established alliances with other Marxist groups. When assembled together in a vast Left-wing network, these progressive-socialist-Marxist "shining stars," as the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) calls them, present an all-encompassing solar system of radical organizations. With ties to communist regimes in Havana and Hanoi, the IPS has been at the center of this network for many years...

Another example of the Church/totalitarian left nexus is in the area of "Liberation Theology," a movement mostly attributed to the work of a Peruvian priest Fr. Gustavo Gutierrez, who cobbled together a Marxist/faux Catholic ideology, long on communism and short on Christianity, which preaches armed revolution of "the people."

Like most of the Church's secularists, Gutierrez' perspective is utopian, willing to employ any means to attain a personal vision of worldly perfection.

In a manner all too reminiscent of previous Church history, though denying it, Gutierrez rejected the spiritualism of Christianity for the more tangible rewards of a material world.

Implicit in such an ideology is the notion that religion should serve man rather than the Almighty.

Given that proponents of liberation theology had supported the likes of Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega, a communist, one would think that Rome would at least admonish him.

Instead, as reported by the Catholic News Service, Pope Benedict XVI actually bestowed ashes on his forehead while he attended an assembly hosted by the Vatican:

"On Feb. 21 [2007] Father Gutierrez gathered with several hundred faithful in the Basilica of Santa Sabina, where the pope was opening the Lenten season. Midway through the liturgy, Father Gutierrez was among a small group who went individually in front of the pontiff for the imposition of ashes on their heads."

Father Gutierrez was by no means the only Catholic prelate who supported the totalitarian, Soviet-backed communism of Ortega. Numerous Latin American priests joined in with him. Some, such as Fathers Miguel D'Escoto and Ernesto Cardenal, were actual members of Ortega's ruling Nicaraguan junta.

The de-frocked Miguel D'Escoto [also a supporter of Venezuela's Marxist ruler dictator Hugo Chavez] then brought his corrosive beliefs to the United Nations, where he served as President of the General Assembly.

Unbelievably, liberation theology is still gaining in official acceptance, with the Chicago based Catholic Theological Union [the self described, "largest Roman Catholic Graduate School of Theology and Ministry in the U.S."] employing the likes of "Catholic" theologian Edmund Key Fook Chia, who writes glowingly about liberation theology:

"This year marks the 40th anniversary of the ground-breaking 1968 Latin American Bishops' Conference (CELAM) which was held in Medellín, Colombia, and which officially baptized the method of Latin American liberation theology. This method spread all over the world, bringing to form revolutionary ways of theologizing...traditional, neo-scholastic, Roman

theology that had been passed on to Asia and elsewhere as "the" theology was no more than a European theology which had evolved from within its own contextual realities. Just because this was transposed and forced upon the mission lands and colonized territories does not mean that they have been indigenized or accepted by the peoples of Asia. That is why Christianity continues to be perceived as a foreign religion in Asia. All this was brought to heightened awareness by the liberation theologians of Latin America and it has helped in the evolution of a series of local theologies in Asia, all of which take as starting point the realities and challenges of their own local situations and contexts. Specifically, Asian theologians have since been engaging in theological reflection in new ways, thanks in part to the impetus provided by Latin American liberation theology..."

With the foregoing constituting only a small part of the evidence, the painful conclusion is obvious - the American Church is in large part a microcosm of the Church worldwide, the political inertia of which is indistinguishable from that of the socialist left in and out of this country.

The leftist influence in the Church is pervasive, inescapable and worldwide.

The congruence between all-too-many Catholics prelates and this ideology is - with the exception of the life issue, to which it now often gives only lip service - nearly airtight.

This is manifestly no longer your mother or father's Catholic Church.

CONCLUSION

The start of this was of course Catholicism's poorly crafted response to totalitarian socialism, which it correctly viewed as a clear and present danger upon it being presented so forcefully by Karl Marx in the mid nineteenth century. First propositions are important and for all of his undoubted good and holy intent, Pope Leo XIII ushered the Church into an area in which it had neither the authority [except as by declaration] nor the necessary expertise to be able to render authentic teachings.

Though Leo and his successors would deny it, in the same manner that Monsignor John Augustine Ryan - despite his authorship of "Distributive Justice, the Right and Wrong of Our Present Distribution of Wealth" - denied it, the Pope took the Church out of its unquestionable area of competence and there constructed the intellectual machinery which has since been used to justify its sugar-wrapped Christo-socialism.

That the Church's prodigious efforts have provided ideological comfort to far more doctrinaire members of the socialist community including Marxists, is only one of several unintended consequences of meddling in areas which for a considerable period of time, had been off-limits -- and for good reason.

The ingenuity of this harder brand of leftism is amply demonstrated by its deceitful aping of Catholic social justice theory, to validate their demands as Biblically countenanced.

In a revealing example, we find the Communist Party USA making just this type of argument:

"Our Party has a history of working with religious activists and communities of faith. Many of our members are people who are active in religious communities, or have connections with faith-based groups...Religious activists, both in and outside of the Party, have played significant roles in the peace, civil rights and labor movements. Meetings of movement groups, including Party meetings, are often held in churches which are at the center of community life...Our involvement with people of faith in the struggle for a better world is not new. But the times call for greater unity, and moving into new forms of struggle...The newly-constituted Religion Commission of our Party aims to move our work with people and communities of faith to a higher level. We need to insure that the Commission includes comrades with connections to faith communities that is as broad as possible."

When self-avowed communists are convincingly able to argue that Catholic theology is supportive of their proven evil methods and goals, something is tragically wrong.

Catholicism's century of wrongheaded thinking has also had the unintended effect of largely absolving the faithful of the Biblical requirement [not to mention the joy] of caring for their less well-off brothers and sisters...personally...instead making it a function of the state. No longer does it seem reasonable to deny the body in order to make possible one-on-one charity and giving. Instead, the Church has demonstrated by all manner of affirmation, that it's now the government's duty to fulfill that role, engendering a certain level of smugness among the uncharitable and miserly.

That the Church, via its deep pockets, bestows its - collection plate fed - largesse upon unworthy secularized political groups of questionable repute and intent completes the farce. When the Church joins hands with the left in the mistaken notion that the causes it embraces are authentically Christian in character, it empowers the leftist's larger agenda which is entirely anti-Catholic - abortion, radical gay rights, and outright hostility to religion and its expression in the public square.

The left ultimately seeks the destruction of Western liberal democracy, the only political structure in which the Church can thrive. Catholic support then of these groups is not only ill-advised and contrary to its faith tradition - it's suicidal

Writers such as Michael Hichborn and organizations like the American Life League and the Bellarmine Veritas Ministry, have done great service demonstrating the moral confusion displayed by the Church underwriting groups which actually violate the life affirming tenets of Catholicism, but the problem is far worse.

It's fundamental in nature in that the Church has become among the richest and most influential members of the leftist establishment, bestowing upon it a macerated Catholic imprimatur.

By a variety of theological twists, revisions and maneuvers since *Rerum Novarum*, a system has been established that indulges the personal political ideology of very liberal Church elders who have succeeded in pushing the limits of faith far outside the traditional boundaries of Catholicism.

This change has produced a Church that is far more worldly and materialistic, one preoccupied with pushing an extremist legislative agenda, all the while disingenuously claiming that its activities are faith justified, much to the detriment of the Church's traditional role as guardian of Christ's spiritual message.

Catholicism under such an expanded mandate emerges bloated and misshapen, a corpus of belief intricately reasoned to countenance the limitation and even denial of free will, per government edict.

Though it might be a case of stating the obvious to some readers, free will is at the core of Christianity, for if man does not possess the freedom and capability to choose right from wrong, then the corresponding concepts of sin and its punishment become unworkable. How could a loving and just God predestine man to commit offenses against Himself, then rain down righteous punishment as retribution?

Whether and to what extent the Church should delve into crass political matters, especially engaging in - with such great vigor - the dubious proposition calling itself social justice, is worthy of a full and open debate, something which has been denied by the secretive and opaque nature of the USCCB's proceedings and its pigheaded response to the few critics who have been brave enough to step forward.

But there is good news. Even though the USCCB through its CCHD program has provided between \$250 and \$300 million to community organizers, many straight out of the pages of Alinsky's "Rules for Radicals," a growing number of American Catholics are objecting.

Perhaps upon robust debate, the jettisoning of traditional Church wisdom might be slowed, finally halted and hopefully reversed, allowing an opportunity for the American Church to be reintroduced to Catholic orthodoxy. One key metric upon which this restoration might be gauged would be in seeing a complete halt to CCHD's grant authority accompanied by an unbiased outside investigation of its goals and practices.

After such an inquiry, on the affirmative side, any resumption of CCHD's activities should assure that personal charity and almsgiving to the poor and disadvantaged is once again elevated to its rightful and critical place across the Faith - replacing the current corporatized political structure.

It can't be strongly emphasized enough that though CCHD's practices have been singled out, it shouldn't be made the victim of scapegoating. Though it certainly bears responsibility for its policies and actions, it doesn't stand alone. It answers to and was created by the all encompassing organization representing this country's Church leadership, the USCCB.

The blame falls where it deserves to be -- upon the thin shoulders of America's Bishops.

In sum, then, what is laid at the feet of CCHD also darkens USCCB's reputation. After all, the USCCB created its "social justice" counterpart and gave it direction. As the latter's problems are examined so too must USCCB be scrutinized, because it has experienced an identical drift to the left and devolvement into partisan political activity. Both are of the same issue, winnowed from the same misinterpreted faith tradition and hence are two halves of the same problem.

The Church thus faces an existential challenge. If these issues aren't satisfactorily resolved in a reasonably quick and comprehensive manner, the Church's message will increasingly ring hollow. In that type of setting, one can easily envision a confused Church turning inward on itself, becoming divided and plagued by the type of bitter divisions and recriminations which have been seen in other Christian sects.

Unless the Church's ordained and laity rise with equal resolve to meet this threat in a devout manner, respective of a tradition going back 2,000 years, Church pews which today are underutilized, to put it kindly, will be further depopulated as the faithful trickle away.

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In this explosive new report,
*Bitter Harvest: How Marxist “Progressives”
Have Infiltrated the American Catholic Church,*
William Mayer reveals that:

- Pope Leo XIII's 1891 Encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, set the Catholic Church on the road to embracing Marxist economics.
- Succeeding Church documents and/or pronouncements on the subject, via a process similar to "mission creep," provided opportunities to push the politics of Catholic social teaching further leftward.
- This newly ascendant liberalism led to the creation of such bodies as the Catholic Campaign for Human Development.
- The growing spirit of liberal activism of many in the Church led to an unholy alliance with Saul Alinsky, a Marxist-oriented "community organizer."
- The Church has moved from a more-or-less hands-off approach in worldly matters to one in which it actively engaged in organized political lobbying and now directly funding leftist political causes.
- All of these changes took place with no public airing or plebiscite as to the direction of the Church's new conception of "good works."
- The Church has developed relationships with Marxist organizations and support for liberation theology, which uses the Gospel of Christ to justify the imposition of communist regimes.
- Most political positions of the Church on the issues of the day are leftist. The Church's last bedrock conservative position - the sanctity of life – is being increasingly challenged, distorted, or watered down.
- The laity must question the direction of the church, investigate the activities of priests and bishops, and take action.