

Catholic University of America & Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice  
Certificate in Catholic Social Teaching

Spirituality & Catholic Social Teaching  
A Facilitated Discussion  
Karen Shields Wright, MS, DC  
Notes

***Spirituality & Catholic Social Teaching***  
*Outline*

Why Catholic Social Teaching?  
Definition of Catholic Social Teaching  
The Nature of Catholic Social Teaching

The Purpose of Catholic Social Teaching

The Challenge of Catholic Social Teaching

Foundations of Catholic Social Teaching  
Human Dignity -The Prime Principle

Solidarity

-Spirituality of Solidarity

Subsidiarity

Examples of Derived Principles

Examples of Spirituality

1961 John XXIII Mater et Magistra: Christianity and Social Progress

1987 John Paul II Sollicitudo Rei Socialis: On Social Concern

2005 Pope Benedict XVII Deus Caritas Est

1991 Pope John Paul II Centesimus Annus  
Praxis

Deus Caritas Est

Triple Duty of the Church

## Christian Charitable Activity

Christian Prayer & Charitable Activity  
Social Doctrine & Theology of Charity  
Role of the Laity -We are pilgrims in the pilgrim Church

To Order Temporal Affairs

*To Become the Salt of the Earth*  
Mature Faith

Our Duty

By the Power of Christ  
Apostolate of the Laity

To fulfill Justice, Charity and Peace  
An Example of Christian Anthropology  
Pope John Paul II's Definition of Health versus WHO  
Formation of Conscience  
Using the other two cornerstone principles reflect upon spirituality for each.  
Spirituality  
Several Definitions of Spirituality  
Reflection: What are other definitions of spirituality? What is yours?  
Selection from the address of Pope John Paul II  
Write your own Contextualized Particularized Spirituality  
Praxis – An Example Spirituality in the Workplace  
Discernment -Applying CST & Spirituality  
Discernment is to choose methodologically with God  
Our Tools- Head, Heart, Faith, Intellect, Values, Affectivity  
CAPP's Tools - CST - Principles/Criteria, Judgment, Reflect, Evaluate, Act  
Layers of Affectivity  
Spiritual Growth  
Discernment by a Group  
Special Way of Listening  
The Moment of Decision  
The Gospel Criteria on Discernment

## Why Catholic Social Teaching?

*"Without a vision the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18)*

As Catholics, we have an inspiring vision in our social teaching. In a world that hungers for a sense of meaning and moral direction, this teaching offers ethical criteria for action. In a society of rapid change and often-confused moral values, this teaching offers consistent moral guidance for the now and the future. For Catholics, this social teaching is a central part of our identity. In the words of John Paul II, it is "genuine doctrine" (*Pope John Paul II, Centesimus Annus, no. 5*).

## Definition of Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic Social Teaching is a *set of principles for reflection* derived from the wisdom of 2000 years of Church Tradition containing the Truths of Revelation. It provides *a set of criteria* to use *prudential judgment to evaluate* society, which *offers direction* for creating social, political, and economic policies, and action based upon those *principles*.

### The Nature of Catholic Social Teaching

- It is *knowledge illuminated by faith*.
- It is *a dialogue* with all branches of knowledge: political science, sociology, anthropology, theology, philosophy, economics, political science, etc.
- It is *an expression* of the Catholic ministry of teaching (USCCB).

Catholic Social Teaching belongs to the field of moral theology.

*Faith & Reason* represent the 2 paths of CST.

- Reason is the natural instrument of our intellect.
- Faith is our response to revealed truth.

(*Catechism, 2419-2422*)

### The Purpose of Catholic Social Teaching

Its aim is simply *to help purify reason* and to contribute, here and now, to the acknowledgement and *attainment of what is just....* She [the Church] has to play her part *through rational argument* and she has *to reawaken the spiritual energy* without which justice...cannot prevail and prosper.”  
(*Pope Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est, 28*)

### The Challenge of Catholic Social Teaching

To Live our Faith  
For us to transform society with the light of faith

## Foundations of Catholic Social Teaching

Her moral vision in this area 'rests on the threefold cornerstones of human dignity, solidarity and subsidiarity.'" (John Paul II, 1999 Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in America*, 55.)

### Human Dignity The Prime Principle

Christian Anthropology- 'The correct view of the human person'

The human individual, made in the image of God; not some thing but someone, a unity of spirit and matter, soul and body, capable of knowledge, self-possession, and freedom, who can enter into communion with other persons and with God, who endowed man with specific dignity that distinguishes man from the rest of both animate and inanimate creation. (*Catechism*)

"In the end, the claim that just social structures would make works of charity superfluous masks a materialist conception of man: the mistaken notion that man can live "by bread alone" (Mt 4:4; cf. Dt 8:3) —a conviction that demeans man and ultimately disregards all that is specifically human." (*Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est*)

### Solidarity

Solidarity is "not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of others. It is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good." (*JPII, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 38) .

Solidarity, which flows from faith, is fundamental to the Christian view of social and political organization. Each person is connected to and dependent on all humanity, collectively and individually.

### Spirituality of Solidarity

"Love of neighbor is a path that leads to the encounter with God, and that closing our eyes to our neighbor also blinds us to God." (*Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est*, 16)

The virtue of solidarity goes beyond material goods. [It is] in spreading the spiritual goods of the faith...  
(*Catholic Catechism [CC]*, 1942.)

## Subsidiarity

“It is a fundamental principle of social philosophy, fixed and unchangeable, that one should not withdraw from individuals and commit to the community what they can accomplish by their own enterprise and industry. (Pope Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*, 79)

### Examples of Derived Principles Common Good

The *Common Good* is a social reality in which all persons share through *Participation*.

Human persons were created by God not for life in isolation but for the formation of social unity. Human existence is communitarian in nature, which means the good of each persons bound up in the good of the community.

Justice and love is fulfilled only when each person contributes to the common good based upon each one's abilities in light of the needs of others.

For man exists ‘with’ and ‘for’ others.

Theme of participation leads to the second main interpretation of its meaning.

*The common good is “the sum total of conditions of social living, whereby persons are enabled more fully and readily to achieve their own perfection.”*

*(John XXIII, Mater et Magistra, 65: VCII, Gaudium et Spec, 26)*

## Examples of Spirituality

### John XXIII

#### 1961 Mater et Magistra: Christianity and Social Progress

“Christianity is the *meeting place of heaven and earth* and has as its basic moral the twofold command to love God and Neighbor.”

### John Paul II

#### 1987 *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis: On Social Concern*

John Paul II added to the tradition of what he term now ‘social doctrine’ – combining ethics and spirituality. It was a fundamental religious theory on how Christians should act – the *theory of a ‘Christian practice’*.

### Pope Benedict XVII

#### 2005 *Deus Caritas Est*

*“God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him” (1 John 4:16)*

It is in these words that Pope Benedict took from the First Letter of John which expresses the heart of our Christian faith: he reminds us that Love is the image of God and the resulting image of mankind and its destiny.’

For that reason, he wanted his first encyclical to speak of love, the love of God that is lavished upon us and that which we must in turn share with others (VIS).

### The Duty of Love

• Love for others rooted in the love of God, in addition to being the duty of each individual faithful, is also the duty of the entire ecclesial community, which in its charitable activities must *reflect Trinitarian love* (VIS).

## Examples of Christian Anthropology

Pope John Paul II

1991 Centesimus Annus

### Political Systems

"The Church respects the legitimate autonomy of the democratic order and is not entitled to express preferences for this or that institutional or constitutional solution. Her contribution to the political order is precisely *her vision of the dignity of the person revealed in all its fullness in the mystery of the Incarnate Word*" (5,47).

### Political Systems – Problems with Socialism

1. The fundamental error of socialism is anthropological in nature, which considers the *individual person simply as an element*, a molecule within the social organism, so that the good of the individual is completely subordinated to the functioning of the socio-economic mechanism...

2.

. *Man is thus reduced* to a series of social relationships, and the concept of the person as the autonomous subject of moral decision disappears, the very subject whose decisions build the social order." (2,13)

3. *Atheism* deprives the human of his or her transcendent dignity which allows utilitarian, but ultimately inadequate solution to human problems." (2,13)

### Developed Nations - Consumerism

1. Consumerism is: A style of life directed towards *'having' rather than 'being'*. It is a "web of false and superficial gratifications" (4,41

2).

2. CST warns, however, that if direct appeals are made to material and instinctive dimensions then "consumer attitudes and life styles can be created which are objectively improper and often *damaging to [our] physical and spiritual health*"

## Praxis

The classical meaning of praxis is *knowledge and action*.

Praxis can be defined as a lived spirituality contextualized within our particular public social role, to be practiced with intent, to seek the presence of Christ.

"*We need a spirituality* that calls forth and supports lay initiative and witness, not just in our churches but also in business, in the labor movement, in the professions, in education and in public life. Our faith is not just a weekend obligation, a mystery to be celebrated around the altar on Sunday. It is a pervasive reality to be practiced every day in homes, offices, factories, schools and businesses across our land. We cannot separate what we believe from how we act in the marketplace... Holiness is not limited to the sanctuary or to moments of private prayer; it is a call to direct our whole heart and life toward God and according to God's plan for the world... *Holiness is achieved in the midst of the world, in family, in community, in friendships, in work.*" (Economic Justice for All).

In the documents of CST the word spirituality is not dominant yet it is implicit and woven throughout. It is an inherent *spirituality of discipleship*. It isn't just the spirituality of the interior life, but *a holistic spirituality* – an inner religious experience in which the search for that experience in one's relationships with God, self, others and the world.

*A spirituality of the experience of the transcendent that is expressed in one's world.*



Spirituality of discipleship comes from sharing in Jesus Christ through our baptism and grace where we look to walk in his footsteps and to put into practice his teachings. A *justice spirituality* going beyond the law to acts of justice.

Therefore the two realities of the Spirituality of CST are experience and expression. Experience of God and God's will for the world. And reflection upon the concrete manifestations of its expressions in a social setting. It was Paul IV and JP II who shifted to a spirituality of solidarity from experience to expression. St. Paul in Gal 5:25 said - If we live by the Spirit, let us be guided by the Spirit. A Spirituality that recognizes a change in one's heart that reflects a change in one's attitudes that reflects upon one's actions.

## Spiritual Poverty

In *Centesimus Annus* John Paul II warned against alienation. Mother Theresa said that one of the greatest evils in the West is loneliness.

## Deus Caritas Est

### Triple Duty of the Church

- History of charity. ...the "deaconry" emerged as a service of love towards others, a love exercised collectively and in an ordered fashion: a concrete service, but at the same time a spiritual one.

- With the progressive growth of the Church, the practice of charity was confirmed as being one of her essential aspects.

- The Church's intimate nature is thus expressed in a triple duty:

1. Announcing the Word of God ("kerygma-martyria")
2. Celebrating the Sacraments ("leiturgia")
3. The service of Charity ("diakonia")

- 

These duties are inherent to one another and cannot be separated. (VIS)

## Christian Charitable Activity

Charity's activity: apart from its professional competence must:

1. *Experienced Agape Spirituality*

1. *Solidarity Praxis Spirituality*

- 1.

## Christian Prayer & Charitable Activity

- In this context, and faced with the impending secularism that also risks conditioning many Christians committed to charitable work, we must *reaffirm the importance of prayer*.

- Living contact with Christ ensures that the immensity of need coupled with the limits of individual activity do not, on the one hand, push charity workers into ideologies that seek to do now that which God,

apparently, does not manage to do or, on the other, serve as a temptation to surrender to inertia and resignation.

•

Those who pray do not waste their time, although a situation may seem to call only for action, nor do they seek to change and correct God's plan. Rather they aim - following the example of Mary and the saints - to draw from God the light and the strength of love that defeats all the darkness and selfishness present in the world (VIS).

### Social Doctrine & Theology of Charity

• "The Social Doctrine of the Church and the Theology of Charity are, without doubt, inter-linked," the prelate said, "but they are not exactly the same.

•

Indeed, the former expresses ethical principles associated with the search for the common good and moves, therefore, more at a political and community level.

•

On the other hand, caring - both individually and together - for the suffering of others does not call for a systematic doctrine. Rather, it arises from the word of faith."

*(Archbishop Paul Josef Cordes President Pontifical Council "Cor Unum"  
Jan 25, 2006. VIS)*

## Role of the Laity

### We are pilgrims in the pilgrim Church

In the Vatican Council II document: *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Lumen Gentium* promulgated by His Holiness Pope Paul VI on Nov 21, 1964 wrote on the Mystery of the Church, the hierarchy, religious, and the role of the laity.

Were we, as the laity, find our call to our *vocation to holiness* within the “the pilgrim Church” - we as pilgrims, in the pilgrim church are moving towards union with the Church in Kingdom of Heaven, traveling by routes well marked by those who have gone before. It is the tradition of our Christian ancestors, through the apostles directly from Jesus Christ, who offer us the road map.

### To Order Temporal Affairs

"The laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God...

[S]ince they are tightly bound up in all types of temporal affairs it is their special task to order and to throw light upon these affairs in such a way that they may come into being and then continually increase according to Christ to the praise of the Creator and the Redeemer." (Lumen Gentium, 31)

#### To Become the Salt of the Earth

•Now the laity are called in a special way to make the Church present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them can it become the salt of the earth."(LG 33)

•

•Therefore, let the laity devotedly strive to acquire a more profound grasp of revealed truth, and let them insistently beg of God the gift of wisdom. (LG 35)

•

### Mature Faith

"I urge you to move on from a faith of convenience to a mature faith that is expressed in clear personal choices that are decisive and courageous."(*JPII Homily June 6, 2004 Allmend SQ, Bern Switzerland.*)

### Our Duty

"The direct duty to work for a just ordering of society...is proper to the lay faithful. As citizens of the State, they are called to take part in public life in a personal capacity. So they cannot relinquish their participation "in the many different economic, social, legislative, administrative and cultural areas, which are intended *to promote organically and institutionally the common good*"(*Pope Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est, 21*).

### By the Power of Christ

'This task is proper and unique to the lay faithful, [reordering society] called to focus the light that comes from the Gospel on the many social realities and, with the power infused by Christ, to undertake *to "humanize" the world*. It is surely a great responsibility that should be seen by the Christian laity not as a limited obligation, but as a generous and creative mission." (*Pope John Paul II in his talk to Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice on 5 July 2003*).

### Apostolate of the Laity

“Apostolate of a Trained Laity: we desire to call attention to the fact that scientific competence and ... *professional experience, although necessary, are not of themselves sufficient to elevate the relationships of society to an order that is genuinely human...* that is, to an order whose foundation is truth, whose measure and objective is justice, whose driving force is love, and whose method of attainment is freedom. ... *It is necessary that human beings, in the intimacy of their own consciences, should so live and act in their temporal lives as to create a synthesis between scientific, technical, and professional elements on the one hand, and spiritual values on the other*” (Pope John XXIII, 150).

### To Remedy the Conditions of the World

- Moreover, let the laity also by their combined efforts remedy the customs and conditions of the world...so that they all may be conformed to the norms of justice... (LG 36)
- In this way the world may be permeated by the spirit of Christ and it may more effectively fulfill its purpose in justice, charity and peace. The laity have the principal role in the overall fulfillment of this duty (LG 36)

## An Example of Applied Christian Anthropology

During the Conference of the International Federations of Catholic Health Care Workers, Feb. 2000 Vatican City, Archbishop Lozano, the president of the Pontifical Council for Pastoral Assistance to Health Care Workers, offered in his speech to the doctors, the definition of health by Pope John Paul II. As we can see it is a comprehensive definition of health using a bio-psycho-social-spiritual model based upon our view of the human person and human dignity. If we compare it to the definition of health by WHOM, those of faith would find the WHO definition lacking, and even those of us, who by reason alone, could see it as incomplete and impossible. Perfection does not exist.

### *World Health Organization's Definition of Health*

"Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

### *Pope John Paul II's Definition of Health*

"Health is a dynamic tension towards physical, mental, social, and spiritual harmony, and not only the absence of illness, which gives man the ability to fulfill the mission which has been entrusted to him, according to the state of life in which he finds himself." JP II.

A comparative view of these definitions can take a thesis length discussion. Yet several important considerations are here to reflection upon, which JP II included that is not included in the WHO definition:

- The spiritual component of the human person
- "Dynamic tension...harmony" - implies a relational balance [if one is weak physically one can be strong spiritually]
- "Towards"- implies that a 'complete well-being' in each area may not be realistic or achievable and we, as human persons, are in a continuing state of becoming – our pilgrimage – the missions one has been given.
- Offers the role of health in the fulfillment of the human person and its interconnectedness with spiritual harmony, but not as one's ultimate fulfillment.

## Formation of Conscience

John Paul II called for the formation of conscience as one of the roles of CAPP for its members in addition to others by way of the evangelization of CST. Archbishop Claudio Celli spoke to CAPP's US members in November 2003. There he reminded us not to forget the spiritual dimension of our mission.

*Definition- Formation of conscience is for the development of one's moral, intellectual and spiritual life in order to have one act and experience themselves as accountable. It is not just a transmission of information; rather it is an educational process by which value sensitivities are inculcated to create a conscious intentionality. CST houses the principles and values necessary for one called to work in the world, so as to serve the common good and to follow God's ways.*

Formation of conscience is developed by formal and informal education within the Christian community and by one's experiences. Formation is a life long journey within the Christian community of growing and developing one's interior life.

The process of such formation is of an **intellectual, moral and spiritual conversion** having **four precepts: experiencing, understanding, affirming, and deciding.**

*Anterior conscience* is the exercise of moral consciousness in choosing a behavior, and *posterior conscience* refers to the reflecting that follows the act.

A/ there is a need to create a space to allow one to awaken one's interior life- as a person in relationship to the self, family, community, work, world, and the Trinity- in order to put the theology and principles of CST to work. CST provides a resource of wisdom along with the lived experience of the community. Studying and reflecting upon CST together is part of developing a 'rightly formed conscience' by sharing in a facilitated intimate group setting.

B/ Time of reflection on the theology and principles of CST, along with guided spiritual direction, is needed to incorporate the spiritual wisdom and understanding to allow one to be activated by the received gifts of the Holy Spirit in order to facilitate *discernment*. For wise decisions are made by entering into the process of discernment to discover how a particular action ought or ought not to be performed- ultimately for us to become *intentional agents*. In addition to understand one's call in the secular world.

*How to begin to address more deeply the theological definitions and spiritual dimensions of the three foundational principles – human dignity, solidarity, subsidiarity. And why?*

In order to provide someone who reviews the document the ability to absorb and to understand the principles, and to reflect more deeply in their internal dialogue, what is explicitly and implicitly written, and how it relates to their circumstances, roles and responsibilities in life in order to take action in a transformative way by co creating with God.

*Example: Summaries taken from Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality.*

Solidarity is a term used in theological writings and Church documents which refers to the empathetic foundation of Christian love as the basis for all Catholic action. Though we have come to know it as primarily related to the preferential option for the poor, as in charity work, there are many other aspects in one's living spirituality where the concept of solidarity is necessary for one's praxis to be lived authentic act as a disciple of Christ in the secular world.

Solidarity as a way is to live one's life in awareness and actions that are deeply rooted in the identification with another in their daily and extraordinary sufferings, struggles, and life's joys. It is a lived awareness of being connected with another human being, knowing one's unity with another is in community, a filial bond- as children created under the Father through the Son joined by the Holy Spirit.

Solidarity as action becomes a response in knowing the reality of our interdependence and inter responsibility, which prompts one to be an agent who serves the human community for the common good. This is a moral virtue, which calls especially those in leadership, for a response by action rooted in justice.

Solidarity and Marginalizing - " To exclude another from full participation in society is this not only to commit an injustice against the other ...but also to commit a sin against God - JP II {On Social Concern 38-40}"NDCS.

Solidarity is more than just empathy, it is a submission of our ego to allow oneself to enter into another's pain and suffering. For solidarity to be implemented it must go beyond one's heart and affirmation. It calls for not just action of inclusion, but an actual personalized identification with the other. Just as God, who became man identified himself with our sufferings to the point of taking them on to expiate our sins and giving us eternal life.

Those who are called will come to see with the eyes of the other, to feel with the heart of the other and to walk with the other in Christ. Commitment to lived solidarity spirituality is to live with Christ as one's horizon as seen through the life of another in Christ. Mother Teresa is the contemporary example of preferential option for the poor. Today we need to look for other examples in the business, academic and professional communities, who live out solidarity spirituality

Using the other two cornerstone principles reflect upon spirituality for each.

## Spirituality

The term Spirituality has several meanings depending upon one's focus. It can be used to describe the existential level of lived experience of an individual or varying spiritual traditions. Spirituality as an object of study is multidisciplinary which looks at the various elements of one's journey towards God as a lived experience of the gospel in differing historical cultures

As Catholics we hold to our traditions and Traditions as a source of personal inspiration and guidance. Within our history we have many examples of spiritualities such as Augustinian, Benedictine, Dominican, Franciscan, and Ignatian founded upon certain charismas. Others are rooted more in a culture such as Celtic and Hispanics. Even some spirituality have developed and grown out of political issues such as the Feminist and Liberation spiritualities.

Today we have a wide spectrum of groups i.e. charismatics or Opus Die and individuals who are models such as Mother Teresa, Dorothy Day, and Merton. Yet for those in business, entrepreneurial or professional activities may find it difficult at times to translate the disciplines of such spirituality into their own contemporary lay spirituality.

All authentic Christian Spirituality is rooted in the Pauline sense as "Life lived according to the Spirit of God." As lay people we are called within our personal family life and careers to live out our life to bring forth the Christian message through our actions those actions run the risk of error if they are not guided by sound judgment based upon our understanding the mysteries of our faith.

Therefore those with responsibilities in leadership we need to have a sound understanding of the Trinity, of creation, the human person, our human destiny, of Christ and his saving work, the interplay of grace and human work, the sacraments, prayer, and gifts of the spirit, discernment, sin, virtues, the principles of a moral life and how to make a moral decision.

## Examples of Definitions of Spirituality

Spirituality is the conscious connectedness with one's interior self with the Other - The Other meaning God – the Trinity and His creations – living creations human persons, animals, plants, - organic and non organic creations - a cosmic solidarity with all of life.

Our spirituality is where we take root – it takes its life from our deepest knowingness – which gives meaning and purpose to everything we do.

**Reflection:** What are other definitions of spirituality? What is yours?



Selection from the address of Pope John Paul II to the participants in the Congress  
of the Vatican Foundation Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice  
Saturday, 4 December 2004

*“ In any case, it will be crucial to understand the social doctrine as an element that characterizes the spirituality of the lay faithful. In this regard, the Compendium fittingly recalls that lay spirituality “steers clear of both intimistic spiritualism and social activism and can be expressed in a vital synthesis that confers unity, meaning and hope upon life, which is contradictory and fragmented for many different reasons” (cf. Compendium, n. 545)... The social teaching of the Church illumines the values of an orderly and supportive human coexistence with the light of Revelation and keeps them clear and unambiguous. Lay Christians, open to the action of God's grace, are the living means of effectively instilling these values in history.”*

Write your own Contextualized Particularized Spirituality

-----  
Praxis – An Example Spirituality in the Workplace

*The Praxis of Practice – Spirituality for the Clinical Setting*

By Karen Shields Wright, MS, DC

The was presented to the attendees of the International Federation of Catholic Medical Association's Scientific Symposium in 1998.

The model of spirituality for health care providers is found within the biblical accounts of the healing ministry of Jesus. Christ, moved by compassion, healed all who asked by removing the physical obstacles of their sickness, so they could experience more fully the presence of God. Our call to this vocation, as health care providers, was mandated by Christ when He said we are to care for the sick, especially for the least of them.

*The classical meaning of praxis is knowledge and action.* For us praxis can be defined as a lived spirituality contextualized within our particular public social role, to be practiced with intent, to seek within the clinical setting the presence of Christ.

For us this is a spirituality lived within the ‘embodied activity’ of our Christian faith with a ‘communal purpose to help transform’ the experience of the suffering by love of Christ. We are called to relieve not just pain, but suffering.

We are called to a particular spirituality that participates in a provider-patient relationship, not to be built upon the economics of a practice, but to be built upon a covenant relationship grounded in Christ's love, compassion, and mercy. A covenant relationship brings forth obedience, commitment to justice, and an ethic of compassion.

Our professional ethics and set of personal principles of moral conduct, are to be governed by our faith and traditional beliefs in which the dignity of every human shares in the “dignity of the ‘image of God.’” Our Church reminds us that it is a human body precisely because “it is animated by a spiritual soul, and it is the whole human person that is intended to become, in the body of Christ, a temple of the Spirit” [cc]

How we are to answer this call is by our intentional response to participate in the suffering of others. *This is the struggle of life encompassing all of humanity, at all times, and in all dimensions. When we suffer physically, we suffer spiritually. When we suffer spiritually, we suffer physically.* Our deep awareness of another is the foundation of professional virtue, ethic, and compassion.

We are to become an instrument, a mediator of the love of Christ through our actions as His healing agents. Through our actions we connect, not only with the physical side of suffering, but the emotional and spiritual side of humanity, and to the divine that animates all that exists. [Ash]

To participate in this spirituality is to be present, to become unrestrained by the current systems, so we may experience with the patient, through their suffering, the presence of God. Praxis in the clinical setting then is the application of love, ordered to transform the clinical encounter into a witness of the gospel.

All spirituality calls for an intentional response. This intention springs forth as a natural response to the love of God that lives in our heart. How we come to recognize this living presence of God's love within is by making time to be silent. For in prayer -in the silence of the heart- God speaks. For 'prayer feeds the soul, as food feeds the body' [Mother Teresa]

It is there that we will come to deeper awareness that we have been made for God, and the role we are called to - for society. This role has a higher moral responsibility. To meet those responsibilities we need wisdom. Finding wisdom for clinical knowledge comes only through a life of prayer.

To live in the presence of God in the clinical setting calls for an awareness of whom we are to Him and to each other. In this special role, as a primary care provider, to the person as patient, we both stand equal and humble before God. For we are one with Christ with one another – with Christ's love, as the unifying element.

How precious are those who come to us as patients. They are a gift to us directly from God. Here we are invited by God to the clinical encounter because we have a capacity to offer something other than technical therapeutic applications – it is by making God visible through our actions. For healing is wholeness, because it is from holiness. This is an invitation of service: to listen -to observe -to value -to empathy.

Within the clinical setting, we come to live in grateful reflection – to a benevolent LOVE.

By Listening for the whispers of suffering through the symptoms

By Observing with a child-like wonder God's creation before us

By Valuing the person, we are able to bear another's sufferings on the wings of love

By Empathy – the capacity given to us through grace to see with the 'eyes of our hearts'

Reflection Questions:

Since our technical aspect naturally causes an objective self-distancing do we then we become lost in our roles?

Does the person we treat disappear behind 'the patient'?

Are we sharers of grace or just controllers of our own technical achievements?

For us today praxis in practice is the application of love and compassion as a practical response of our heart to be moved, not just to assist technically but to participate, as Jesus who participated totally in our suffering, we by sharing in the suffering of others. This is how we share the gospel.

This spirituality is a lived experience, in which we dedicate our service to Christ, knowing He cares for us, with us, and through us, as we care for others with Him.

## Discernment

### Applying CST & Spirituality

Summary below is taken from Pierre Wolff's *Discernment- The Art of Choosing Well*.

#### Discernment is to choose methodologically with God

Discernment is the process of making decisions, which begins with the desire to walk with God, that is based upon information that corresponds as close as possible to objective reality, that is free from our inner compulsions, and closely attuned to the convictions of our faith. It is the process by which we work in time with our intellectual and affective self according to our value system illuminated by faith. It is in this process that we come to apply the principles of CST in our decision-making.

#### Our Tools- Head, Heart, Faith, Intellect, Values, Affectivity

- Our Head - We begin with the intellect by reflecting on the situation, look for objective complete information, weight the advantages and disadvantages of the option, and try to foresee the consequences.
- Our Heart - We search our heart with what we discovered with our heart to make a decision that is ours that match our values. It is the affective self in action.
- Faith & Values - Faith gives us a set of values.
- Faith & Intellect – Intellect enlightened by divine teachings
- Faith & Affectivity – God gave us a heart to love in service for it is because God is within us. It is by love that we make God exist.

CAPP's process is taken from the Spiritual Exercises in which we work in time with our intellectual and affective self according to the principles of Catholic Social Doctrine and knowledge illuminated by faith.

#### CAPP's Tools - CST - Principles/Criteria, Judgment, Reflect, Evaluate, Act

- Principles / Criteria -
- Human Dignity, Solidarity, Subsidiarity, Others -
- Common Good, Justice, Rights, Participation, Peace
  
- Prudential Judgment
  
- 
- Reflect, Evaluate, Act

A systematic method of discernment will help us not to put too much trust in our instinct, spontaneity, inspiration or impulse. Intuition is different. Inspiration for creative artists and scientists is the fruit of a long period of systematic searching, reflection and pondering. Discernment is a framework in time with the tools of intellect and affectivity in which the cornerstones are our values enlightened by our faith.

#### Layers of Affectivity

Our outer layer is our most immediate reaction; they are our fleeting emotions, the most spontaneous, superficial and subject to change.

Our innermost layer is the center of our soul, which we rarely feel. When we do, it feels as if space and time dissolves. It has little to do with intellectual reasoning. There we find truth, it is simply a fact of knowing, a knowingness that something exists there between God and ourselves. It cannot be produced on demand or reproduced.

Our middle layer is a place that feels like 'home'. It is where our most gut feelings reside, one's that do not necessarily change with daily circumstances. The place where our feelings and emotions seem to operate from. A place that requires a receptive silence. It is here where we use our heart's affectivity to verify whether or not a solution fits.

Verifying – we let the intellectual solution call to my depths – we then listen to the echo and its impact on our affectivity. Will experience either an enlivening or stiffening feeling. This phenomenon is consolation or desolation. “Do not trust every spirit – but put the spirit to the test.”

We are servants put in charge. What to avoid from our head - perfectionism, heroism.

### Spiritual Growth

- Awareness
- Sensitivity
- Management

### Discernment by a Group

The author stated it was difficult to find a set of directives for a systematic method of discernment for a group to use. Since God is unique Being and has a relationship with each unique person, it is not easy to come to a common decision that flows from the deepest level of our beings.

The effectiveness of group discernment is dependent upon the capacity of each member of the group having the presence of the Spirit of Agape and individual experience with discernment.

#### Group Process

- Common Starting point
- Reach Joint Decision
- By choosing the same means.

First, allow the problem to be clarified through the work of the intellect in order to discern for a common decision. Begin with a written account of the main points and agreement on the starting point. Have the group guarantee a freedom of intimacy of the deep sharing of our values and faith and what is fundamental to each.

Be aware that unacknowledged differences can bring forth tension or conflicts in the group or the group can jump too soon for a unanimous decision. Also be aware of the difficulty for some to articulate their relation between the self and God to others.

Question: Where do we all come from, where do we all want to go?

The options are limitless as our creativity and freedom with the situation and historical circumstance. The brainstorming in either a dyad or triads, then in the group screen for the pros and cons with distance from personal bias – that distance is an inner freedom given by grace- where now each serves as the We – it becomes the impetus for our being One – in which each one desires their talents to be used for the common good. Now it is the Holy Spirit and Us for the common good.

### Special Way of Listening

Listening to the information and opinions of other with the values of the Spirit– we are called by Christ to be sensitive to and concerned for the poorest ones. It is being in that place of our inner freedom that will aid in not having the unconscious vulnerability of ourselves or others members become caught up in the group's dynamics.

### The Moment of Decision

At the moment of the decision, the group will experience a sense of gladness and harmony -an enlivening feeling, an experience of a deeper feeling of peace and joy when the decision came out from discernment, not founded on compromise, but in communion. Consolation is the evidence when we reach agreement with ourselves and God.

According to the author, the founding of the Society of Jesus is the only written report on discernment made by a group of individuals who were all trained in individual discernment. Under certain circumstances, when the decision affects someone's physical life, the need to avoid external influences is crucial where the individuals of the group need personal reflection and solitude so as to reduce the potential in which the group dynamic would exert pressure too much on an individual inhibiting their freedom.

### **The Gospel Criteria on Discernment**

The criterion for any situation is to discover who is the hungriest, thirsty, or who is in the state of inferiority. They are the ones to give priority in the decision making process. Such a process is to be rooted in the Life of the Spirit, a personal progressive transfiguration. The Spirituality of Pilgrim is a life long journey towards becoming, ending in union with the one Incarnational Truth - Christ

In life we all can be blind and deaf to our daily circumstances, no less on crucial issues. Therefore, we must discern more systematically to be with God, even in the daily situations with our families.