

Economic justice and mineral exploitation in the Democratic Republic of Congo: A biblical and ethical approach

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BOSTON COLLEGE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY

STL THESIS

**Economic Justice and Mineral Exploitation in the Democratic Republic of Congo:
A Biblical and Ethical approach**

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Introduction

The lack of justice, economic and political, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been partly the cause of political instability and social humanitarian disasters. The conflict and wars that the country has known have as their foundations partly the struggle for the control of its phenomenal mineral resources.

Since colonial times, the unjust and abusive exploitation of mineral and natural resources has been the cause of multiple wars. This has resulted in a growing impoverishment, an unending exodus of populations and a massive violation of human rights. Different reports of NGOs and the United Nations have established the involvement of foreign governments and armies in the destabilization of the DRC.

My purpose in this thesis is to make a contributive proposal on how the abundance of mineral resources in DRC can become a factor for peace and development instead of war and misery as it has been thus far both for the DRC and the neighboring countries.

In aiming at that goal this thesis will reflect theologically (from what can be found in the scripture related to the use of natural resources) and ethically (on the basis of social ethics and the Catholic social teaching) on the particular situation of the DRC and propose a solution based on theological foundations and ethical principles that can transform the resources of DRC into means of peace and development instead of being the reason for war and chaos.

The challenge is to resolve the *DRC's paradoxes*: a country extremely rich in natural resources but with an extremely poor population in real income, many Congolese live with the equivalent 1 USD a day or less.

Two texts will guide the biblical-theological reflection.

The first text is Genesis 1: 28 with God's commandment to subdue and dominate the earth:

And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." (Gen 1:28 RSV)

God's plan in the light of this passage seems to be from the beginning of creation to entrust the world to the human beings whom he created. God wanted people to live free and happy. The human being had to live in harmony with all the creation and find within it the necessary resources to sustain a peaceful, healthy and prosperous life.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) however, the opposite of this commandment of God appears to be the rule: natural and mineral resources have "subdued" the Congolese either through the greed of local authorities or through international interests that do not care about justice, moral behavior and the dignity of human beings.

How should God's commandment be understood and applied in the case of DRC? What are the limits in the quests to "subdue" the earth, especially in the DRC case? How out of such an understanding of God's commandment can we propose a way out for the use of the natural resources?

The second text that I consider is the *Principle and Foundation* of St Ignatius, in the Spiritual Exercises:

Man [and woman] has been created to this end: to praise the Lord his [her] God, and revere Him, and by serving Him be finally saved. All other things on earth, then, have been created because of man himself, in order to help him reach the end of his creation. It follows, therefore, that man may use them, or abstain from them, only so far as they contribute to the achievement of that end or hinder it. Consequently, we must harbor no difference among all created things (as far as they are subject to our free will and not forbidden). Therefore, as far as it belongs to us, we should not prefer wealth to poverty, honor to contempt, a long life to a short one. But, from all these things, it is convenient to choose and desire those that contribute to the achievement of the end.¹

For St Ignatius “the other things” created by God are mere means and not ends. In the DRC context, they are no longer “the other things,” as Ignatius of Loyola calls them in the Spiritual Exercises, they become the center of all things. For many groups of interest the “other things,” mineral resources in particular, are the end to which everything else on earth including the human being must be submitted.

In reflecting on the relationship between human beings and created things, this thesis wants also to affirm the preferential option for the human being and her ultimate concern: the good, identified by Ignatius as God, the End. No sovereignty, not any priority or interest should be more valued than human life and human dignity.

The minerals resources of DRC are a source of concern particularly because they foster corruption and injustice within the country and greed outside the country. They become the occasion of massive violations of human rights and human dignity. As the DRC is surrounded by

¹ Ignatius of Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises*, trans. P. Wolf, (Liguori, Missouri: Liguori Publication, 1997), 11.

numerous and very poor countries that lack resources and space (land) for their growing population, the presence of poor governance in DRC is itself a factor of instability. This is because as long as the country will have poor political and military institutions, incapable of ensuring a productive leadership and maintaining internal and external security, the DRC will continue to be the victim of invasion and looting.

In such a situation where can only arise greed, anger, frustration and confrontations, we will try to reflect on which politics and vision should be implemented for a better distribution of resources in solidarity and respect. Moreover, I will question whether it is just that the mineral resources of DRC should benefit only this country while a share and fair use with the neighboring countries could both stabilize the region and assure peace and economic growth for the whole country and the surrounding nations.

Synopsis of the intended work

The first chapter will investigate the mineral history of DRC: what are the mineral resources of DRC? Where are they situated? What is their importance to the world economy? How do the Congolese people profit or not from them? I will briefly present the history and geography of DRC to address these questions. I will also consider the immediate and remote causes of the conflict and wars especially in the eastern part, the actors in these engagements and other factors at play.

The second chapter will situate my reflection within the context of Scripture and theological perspective. The Principle and Foundation of St Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises and Genesis' commandment to subdue the earth are the key texts that I will examine. I will try to answer to the questions of what should be the understanding of Genesis 1:28 for the Congolese

today and how, may we take back control of the earth? What should be a right Christian attitude in the use of our resources?

The *Principle and Foundation* teaches one to distinguish what is essential from what is superficial. Although its purpose as set forth by Ignatius is personal conversion, I suggest that it can also guide a national conversion and a new way of considering our resources.

Without denying the aspiration to a total political independence that characterizes most Congolese, and the right to have control over all their resources, one can ask how DRC's resources can be used for the benefit of all the people in the region.

In a situation of political and military weakness and of an absence of anthropological and cultural synthesis, after more than fifty years of political and economic confusion, it is time to look at a new approach to the complexity of the DRC situation.

The third chapter will focus on the social teaching of the Catholic Church; especially as it is expressed in the encyclical letter *Caritas in Veritate*, on Integral Human Development in Charity and Truth, by Benedict XVI. This is the most recent magisterial document on the teaching of the Church on the issue of wealth, profit, and labor.

Some poor countries around the world that have mineral resources but lack adequate technology are facing the power of industrial capitalism with its financial means and an endless need for mineral resources. This current global economic reality appeals for action and for more justice. What the US Bishops wrote about economic justice 30 years ago is still true today. Long time ago Adam Smith affirmed that although "men" are capable of interaction they are primarily motivated by self-interest similarly Benedict XVI affirms that our society has turned towards a

purely consumerist and utilitarian view of life. For Pope Benedict XVI, our human life is rather, made for gift in gratuitousness.

The fourth Chapter will conclude my thesis by advancing concrete proposals on how to make the Congolese abundant mineral resources a mean of peace and stability.

Seeking justice and the common good are closely related to building up of global peace in the world. Therefore, how can the country's resources be better shared to make this nation a better place for everybody? Is it possible to eradicate hunger, to provide education and medical treatment to all in need, and to establish justice and peace in DRC?

In the US Conference Bishops' letter entitled *Economic Justice for all*,² written in 1986, almost 30 years ago, the emphasis is placed on the nature of the interdependence of people and all nations, the extreme poverty in which some live, and the shared responsibility with the rest of the world in many of the situations of poverty. The Bishops' call, invites us to rethink the reality of misery. Misery in Africa and in the DRC in particular, is not the result of a fatality. Poverty is not natural or unavoidable. Poverty is not genetically linked. We have to believe in this to fight against misery, and to commit ourselves to the building of a more just society. We must believe that economic justice and prosperity for all are possible, starting with the DRC.

² U.S. Catholic Bishops, "Economic Justice for All," in *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*, D. J. O'Brien and T. A. Shannon (eds.); (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2010), no. 12-13, 698.

Chapter 1: Mineral exploitation in DRC³

1.1. The Democratic Republic of Congo: Brief historical perspective and geographical situation

The Democratic Republic of Congo is situated at the center of Africa. Its geographical area is 2,345,000 square kilometers (that makes it the second largest country in Africa after Algeria). It has a population of around 70 million, belonging to more than 350 different tribes and with almost the same number of languages. The DRC is surrounded by nine countries: Angola, Zambia, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, South-Sudan, Central African Republic, and Republic of Congo.

The present territory of DRC was known as the property of Leopold II the King of Belgians before he “gave” this possession to Belgium in 1908. In his book, *King Leopold's Ghost*⁴ Adam Hochschild affirms that Leopold II established a system of forced labor that kept the people of the Congo basin in a condition of slavery. Hochschild estimates that half the population perished during the period mentioned, essentially due to the forced labor and mistreatment. At that time, the fabulous mineral resources of the DRC were not well known; the interest was rather in the exploitation of the other natural resources of DRC, mainly wood and rubber.

After Leopold II, nearly 50 years of colonization, which included intensive mineral exploitation and large scale human exploitation, will characterize the life of the Congolese. Colonization was marked by a mixture of human rights violations, limited access to education and

³ DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo.

⁴ Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999).

a life of submission that could neither allow the blossoming of a national middle class nor prepare people to really take their own destiny in their hands.

This colonization lasted half a century and ended with independence: a result of the change in the internal and progressive conscience of the native people and probably also in the universal conscience brought by humanistic ideas on human dignity.

In 1960, the DRC became an independent country. However, on the one hand with a political class not well prepared to decide for itself and, on the other hand, the lack of a real bond between people,⁵ the young country will be thrown into a chaos of wars, coups and secessions. The 1965 coup by the Lieutenant General Desiré Mobutu brought to an end this unstable period. Mobutu established a long reign of 32 years of relative peace but unshared power and violent leadership. This situation kept nearly an average population of 45 million in permanent fear and forced veneration of a dictator.

In 1997, Mobutu, tired, abandoned, and ill, was overthrown by a rebellion that came from the east, supported by Rwanda⁶ and Uganda, and officially commanded by Laurent Desiré Kabila. Soon after, a conflict arose among Kabila and his former allies. This ended up in Kabila's assassination and opened the door to a permanent situation of rebellion, counter-rebellion, and war that has killed more than 6 million Congolese.

⁵ The Congolese "nation" was rather a multicultural agglomeration of people who did not decide willingly to form a nation or to live together.

⁶ The inter-ethnic conflicts in 1959, and the consequences of the genocide perpetrated in Rwanda, have brought to Congo many refugees from Rwanda from both ethnic groups Tutsi and Hutu. The tension between these two groups and the alleged presence of perpetrators of the genocide among some of the refugees have provided an alibi for Rwanda to justify its controversial action in the east of DRC (this will be developed later in this thesis) either in support of a rebellion or in justifying their military presence in the region as fighting the militia responsible for the genocide in Rwanda.

This brief historical presentation of the DRC shows how the country and its population have been living almost permanently in conflicts. It depicted a land of martyrs where millions of anonymous sons and daughters of God, innocent children and women, have been killed and mistreated. Many are convinced that the only reason that Congo has known this fate is the extraordinary natural riches that characterize its soil and subsoil, including hevea (rubber), uranium, coltan, gold, diamond, oils and other resources.

The fortunes of the DRC are also its misfortune. The DRC is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of the variety and value of the minerals found within its territory: cobalt, copper, iron, aluminium, uranium, malachite, gold, diamond and coltan, etc. What makes the misfortune of DRC is neither the diversity of its population - the 350 tribes have been living in more or less harmony without killing each other - nor the absence of a political conscience (the DRC has a big number of educated people willing to develop their country). Rather, what make the misfortune of DRC is its huge mineral resources and the greed that this richness provokes within and outside the country. Although such exploitation cannot go on without the participation of internal complicity, it would have been impossible without important external actors. Among all the mineral resources, the coltan explains particularly but not exclusively the current war in the eastern part of Congo today.

Coltan, short term for columbite-tantalite, is found in abundance in the eastern part of DRC and it is relatively easy to excavate. It is essential for the power-storing parts of cell phones, nuclear reactors, play stations, and computer chips. These uses make of it one of the most wanted mineral in the world. However, the DRC is also known for having one of the greatest reservoirs of water in the world. Would this be a source of another conflict tomorrow?

As mentioned in the introduction, this thesis aims to discuss whether a fair and peaceful way of sharing these resources is possible in the respect of God's design and the respect of the human dignity. Can we build a just and fair society in DRC?

The actors of the ongoing war in the eastern DRC

In 2000-2001, the United Nation's report on the exploitation of the mineral resources of DRC indicates that there has been a great looting of mineral resources. This illegal exploitation has involved peoples and companies outside the borders of DRC and Africa.

The conclusions of the report of the panel of experts on the *Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, conducted by the Security Council of the United Nations are explicit.⁷ It mentions the consequences of war, including displacement of population, killing and abduction, and an illegal mineral exploitation by the parties in conflict that fueled the war. Much more recently a commission mandated by the Security Council of the United Nations has concluded that two neighboring countries (Rwanda and Uganda) have been involved in the training, financing and arming of the rebels groups that perpetrate human rights violations and mineral looting of the eastern part of the DRC.⁸

1.2. The economic situation of DRC today

The data about the present economy of DRC reveal a system that is struggling to rebuild and recover after years of war and looting. The economic potential of the DRC is very high by

⁷Report of The Panel of Experts on The Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, conducted by the Security Council of the United Nations in June 2000. Source: <http://www.un.org/News/dh/latest/drcongo.htm> consulted on February 15, 2013.

⁸Report of *The Group of Experts on Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)*, a non-permanent team of independent, individuals appointed by the United Nations Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004). Published on May 25, 2010. Source: <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org>. Consulted on February 13, 2013.

virtue of the abundance of natural resources especially coltan (around 30 % of the world's reserve), but also cobalt (30%), copper (50 %), gold, diamonds (25%) and oil (24000 barrels a day in 2003). Despite this abundance in mineral resources, and a potential to become one of the wealthiest countries in the world, the DRC is among the poorest countries. In fact, the Human Development Index ranks the country among the poorest economically.⁹

1.3. The state of mineral exploitation in DRC today

Besides the war zone, the liberalization of the mineral exploitation in DRC has brought to the country thousands of private companies of different sizes. The CEPAS¹⁰ indicates that in practice mineral companies settle in an anarchic way everywhere in DRC, including in some areas reserved for residential housing and other areas that are, by law, reserved for the protection of the environment. Most of the permits of mineral exploitation are delivered in offices in the Capital with disregard for local consideration and interest. The environmental consequences are disastrous. The Katanga province, in the southern part of DRC, is one of the greatest victims of the mineral boom. The CEPAS¹¹ mentions that in Likasi, a town situated in the Katanga province, some mineral companies use wood to warm their furnaces. In 2007 it was estimated that 448 tons (448,000 kg) of wood (28,6 hectare) were decimated for the use of the furnaces. These facts have had grave social and ecological consequences.¹² Moreover, very little is done to ensure care and protection to the workers and populations affected by the mineral companies. Cases of

⁹ The Human Development Index is a composite statistic of life expectancy, education, and income indexes to rank countries. It was created by Mahbub ul Haq, and Amartya Sen in 1990. It is published by the United Nations Development Program as a tool for analysis and economical actions and evaluation. In 2013, the DRC was ranked the 186th country (out of 187 countries), having with Niger the lowest HDI: 0.304, the first country in the world being the Norway : 0.955 and the first in Africa: Seychelles (46th, 0.806).

Source : http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2013_EN_complete.pdf , accessed on March 28, 2013

¹⁰ CEPAS: Centre d'Etude Pour l'Action Social, a Jesuit institution in DRC specialized in Social Studies.

¹¹ CEPAS Publication 2010 : *Bonne Gouvernance des Ressources Naturelle: Défis de la Responsabilité Sociale des Entreprises Minières*, CEPAS Publication 2010.

¹² Deforestation increases dryness of the land and the dust that results from the deforestation increases the sicknesses linked to respiratory conditions.

contamination of the sources of water with the sulfuric acid used in the mineral industries are often mentioned in those poor areas where nobody really cares for the health of the inhabitants. The corporations installed in those areas often pour out their waste water into the local river that is used for different purposes (cleaning, cooking, and drinking) by the local population. The greed for the mineral exploitation and absence of care described above represents a permanent threat to the equilibrium of the ecosystem all over the region.

The 2008 financial crisis has resulted in the fall of the price of minerals including copper, gold, coltan; the principal minerals exploited in DRC. This crisis had repercussions in the country especially in its mineral regions. Companies were obliged to close. The owners of these Companies, most of them foreigners, left the country without repairing the damage caused by their violent exploitation.

In the Eastern part of the DRC the situation is worse. Coltan is considered as one of the greatest determinant of a war that has last more than 10 years and caused nearly six millions deaths. The presence of important mineral deposits of coltan in this region, known as North and South Kivu, fuels greed that results in the creation or maintenance of rebellions and militia that, according to different reports of the United Nations and NGOs, even involve some neighboring countries.

The following section presents briefly the link that exists between the mineral exploitation and the war that has decimated the population and destroyed infrastructures in the eastern part of the DRC. Although the mineral exploitation cannot explain alone the ongoing chaos and tragedy in that part of the DRC, the presence of natural resources, and mainly coltan, which does not require heavy equipment to be extracted, has contributed and continue to fuel the war.

1.4. Mineral exploitation and war in the Eastern DRC

Many reports by United Nations' commissions have established a link between war in DRC and the mineral exploitation in the eastern part of the country. As an example, I highlight two extracts of the conclusions of the report of *The Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, conducted by the Security Council of the United Nations in June 2000 :

In the mining sector, SOMINKI (Société minière et industrielle du Kivu) had seven years' worth of columbite-tantalite (coltan) in stock in various areas. From late November 1998, Rwandan forces and their RCD (ndlr: Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie, a rebel movement) allies organized its removal and transport to Kigali. Depending on the sources, between 2,000 and 3,000 tons of cassiterite and between 1,000 and 1,500 tons of coltan were removed from the region between November 1998 and April 1999. A very reliable source informed the Panel that it took the Rwandans about a month to fly this coltan to Kigali. The Panel, however, received official documents including one in which RCD acknowledged removing 6 tons of coltan and 200 tons of cassiterite from SOMINKI for a total of US\$ 722,482.

[...]Between September 1998 and August 1999, occupied zones of the Democratic Republic of the Congo were drained of existing stockpiles, including minerals, agricultural and forest products and livestock. Regardless of the looter, the pattern was the same: Burundian, Rwandan, Ugandan and/or RCD soldiers, commanded by an officer, visited farms, storage facilities, factories and banks, and demanded that the managers open the coffers and doors. The soldiers were then ordered to remove the relevant products and load them into vehicles.¹³

In most of the cases, this mineral exploitation is accompanied by forcing children and women to work in the mines. Moreover, this labor is neither remunerated justly nor are the children and women suitably protected in carrying out their forced labor. Since some of these

¹³ Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, conducted by the Security Council of the United Nations in June 2000. <http://www.un.org/News/dh/latest/drcongo.htm> consulted on February 15, 2013.

minerals are radioactive, the frequent exposition of these women and children causes serious risks of contamination with dangerous consequences.

More recently, another commission mandated by the United Nations to inquire about the situation in the eastern DRC has confirmed that there is a financial and military support of neighboring countries, Rwanda and Uganda in particular, to a new rebel movement. This commission has also established that illegal mineral exploitation carried on by the rebels and their allies is a principal way by which the minerals are taken away from Congo and sold. The Report also suggests that high ranking officers of the armies and governments of the neighboring countries mentioned above are personally involved in the fueling, training, and financing of militias in DRC and that this chaos allows the perpetration of mineral exploitation. The Report¹⁴ also mention that some high ranked officer of the Congolese army participate in the looting and the illegal exploitation of minerals in the same region.¹⁵

¹⁴ The Group of Experts on Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is a non-permanent team of independent individuals appointed by the United Nations Secretary-General, in consultation with the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004). The mandate of the Group, which supports the Committee and works under its direct guidance and advice, was originally established to monitor violations of the sanctions and arms embargo introduced by Security Council resolution 1493 (2003). The Group's current mandate is derived from five subsequent Council resolutions, most recently resolution 2021(2011) adopted on 29 November 2011.

¹⁵ During an intense period of investigation, dating from May 4, 2012 when the Government of Rwanda created M23 to June 13, 2012, when the Group orally presented its findings before the Sanctions Committee, the Group reached conclusions about the Government of Rwanda's violations of the arms embargo and other support to the rebellion in eastern DRC through:

- The direct assistance in the creation of M23 through the transport of weapons and soldiers through Rwandan territory
- The recruitment of Rwandan youth and demobilized ex-combatants as well as Congolese refugees for M23
- The provision of weapons and ammunition to M23
- The mobilization and lobbying of Congolese political and financial leaders for the benefit of M23
- The direct Rwandan Defense Forces (RDF) interventions into Congolese territory to reinforce M23
- The support to several other armed groups as well as *Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo* (FARDC) mutinies in the eastern Congo
- The violation of the assets freeze and travel ban through supporting sanctioned individuals.

One can also read in a report in French:

En janvier 2012, le Gouvernement rwandais a arrêté quatre hauts responsables des forces armées rwandaises en raison de leur implication présumée dans le commerce illégal de minerais avec la RDC. Deux des personnes arrêtées, les colonels Dan Munyuza et Richard Rutatina, étaient les chefs du renseignement extérieur et du renseignement militaire,

In this chapter, I have given a brief overview of the present social and economic situation in DRC, a situation that seems desperate and hopeless. This chaotic context is characterized by a significant lack of justice (respect of the law). The people who are responsible of this situation are human beings, fathers and mothers of children, many of them are Christians, or claim to be Christians, who confess a religion, who go to church on Sundays and probably are “decent” person in so far as their responsibilities towards their families and friends are concerned. These people certainly will be described by their own as lovely and caring while at the same time they are causing directly or indirectly the misery of millions of people. That why we need a society where laws are respected, laws that prevent the greed of a few to lead to chaos an entire nation.

respectivement. Selon des responsables provinciaux et d’anciens membres du CNDP et des forces armées rwandaises, Munyuza et Rutatina étaient impliqués dans les réseaux de contrebande passant par Goma et supervisés par le général Ntaganda (voir S/2011/738, par. 484 à 487). Le Groupe ne dispose pas d’informations faisant état d’un procès ou d’une condamnation. Des personnes impliquées dans cette contrebande ont expliqué que les minerais de la RDC étaient introduits dans le système de certification rwandais par le biais de l’achat illégal d’étiquettes établies par des coopératives minières disposant de concessions dans l’ouest du Rwanda. Pour le minerai de tantale, les coopératives vendent jusqu’à 50 dollars pièce les étiquettes apposées sur les sacs de 50 kilogrammes. Le Groupe a obtenu des documents photographiques montrant l’étiquetage, dans un dépôt de Gisenyi, de minerais congolais introduits en contrebande.

Chapter 2: Theological Perspective

2.1. Interest, Profit and Money in the Bible

As described in the first chapter the issues of war and economic justice in DRC are strongly linked to financial interest and economic profit. They can be approached from many angles. In this thesis, I have opted for a theological Christian approach rather than a juridical or political approach. Hence, the question to be answered from this perspective is how we, as a people of God, on the basis of our faith and what our Christian belief commands, can solve the DRC's paradox: A country with immense and diversified natural resources but whose population is the poorest on earth?

This chapter will search for scriptural and theological insights that can provide some light on the notions of interest, profit, and money which are central issues in the DRC paradox. What does the Bible say about the financial practice of charging interest, about the pursuit of profit and money? How can what is said enlighten our approach to today's situation in DRC?

Beside the biblical text, I will mention also some church fathers and the current teaching of the Catholic Church, particularly in regard to the notion of the universal destination of all goods.

The third chapter will discuss how as Christians we can access the DRC paradox but from an ethical perspective. The catholic social teaching, and in particular, the last encyclical issued by the Pope Benedict XVI on social issues (*Caritas in Veritate*) will allow me to articulate my approach.

However, it should be clear that my intention is not to condemn the possession of material goods. God wants people to succeed materially to have enough food and to live a decent life. As Norbert Lohfink writes:

Sometimes the call for a church of the poor sounds like an ideology prepared for those who have not quite made it, for whom the Church's message should serve to justify and sacralize their situation. Such an echo would be thoroughly unbiblical.¹⁶

The issues I want to raise concern the worship of self-advancement, self-importance, ruthless exploitation of the earth, accumulation of power by industries, and all economic area where ethical questions can be addressed. Samuel Greeg, in his book *Economic Thinking for the Theologically Minded*, defines profit as the goal of economic actors and the ultimate incentive to firm operators in the free-market system. For him "profit is best described as the total revenue minus the total costs of an individual."¹⁷

The need to possess, or to make a profit which sometimes leads to greed, is not a new phenomenon in examining how human beings relate with goods and wealth.

Although nowhere in the Bible private ownership is described as an absolute evil, the relation between the private ownership, the pursuit of self-enrichment and profit and their consequences on the rest of the society, on the neighbor and the needy are biblical concerns.

In various Scriptural narratives wealth is presented as a gift from God and many "God's servants" were actually rich. In the book of Chronicle for example, God is acclaimed as the source of all riches and all honor: "Both riches and honor come from thee, and thou rulest over all. In thy

¹⁶ Norbert F. Lohfink, SJ, *Option For The Poor, The Basic Principle of Liberation Theology In the Light of The Bible*, (Berkeley: Bibal Press, 1986), 9.

¹⁷ Samuel Gregg, *Economic Thinking for the Theologically Minded*, (New York: University Press of America, 1984), 127.

hand are power and might; and in thy hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.” (1Ch 29:12 RSV). Many others illustrious “God’s servants” are described in the Bible as people who possessed important wealth (e.g., Abraham, Job, Solomon, etc.). Wealth is also a sign of benediction in the Bible, after his trial, Job will be granted with twice his possession: “And the LORD restored the fortunes of Job, when he had prayed for his friends; and the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.” (Job 42:10 RSV). The Psalmist affirms that the man who fears the Lord will have wealth and riches in his house: “Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who greatly delights in his commandments! His descendants will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed. Wealth and riches are in his house; and his righteousness endures forever.” (Psa 112:1-3 RSV).

Riches and wealth are not problematic per se. Rather; the question is how to keep the desire of possession and enrichment from overwhelming the virtues of charity, compassion, and generosity. How much can the desire of making profit or accumulating privately be morally acceptable? How much can an individual privately possess and earn without violating the Christian value of not ignoring the poor, the widow, and the orphan? As Samuel Greeg has affirmed above, the notion of profit is relevant to the encounter of people with different needs and different things to offer. The profit is the gain that one can get from such an encounter. This gain can be just or unjust. It will be just if it is done in good faith without a desire to deceive; if, for example, a just price and evaluation is made to ensure that each party receives what they deserve. It will be unjust if it is based on fraud (which occurs when one decide deliberately to deceive or to overestimate the element of exchange).

However, some scriptural texts and some teachings and writings of the Church fathers, as I will develop later, are very reluctant to approve the excessive pursuit of interest and profit. This

reservation is due, in my view, to the fact that once it is allowed, it is difficult to set a limit to the pursuit of profit. In normal conditions profit results from trade and other similar economic activities, but it often creates classes within the society, and a consequent imbalance in the rights and duties of the rich and the poor.

Stand G. Duncan has demonstrated how the development of trade brought Israel into poverty. Duncan argues that profit is a consequence of trade, trade generates competition, and competition inevitably fosters inequalities and poverty. He writes:

It is worth noting that in Genesis, the book written to retell their earliest history, the word for “poor” never occurs, not because everyone was rich, but because the gap between rich and poor was so small that the term was irrelevant [...] At first trading was done just within their own tribal system. When they first settled in Palestine, they were mainly in the hills in the east of the region, but eventually as the population grew, some migrated down into the valleys of the west, with that migration came the first vestiges of market based winners and losers.¹⁸

The categories of winners and losers that Duncan describes as the consequence of the development of a market based economy may explain why profit, interest and money, key elements in the market, are referred to with much prudence and sometimes anxiety in the Scripture, in the teaching of the Church father and in theological reflection.

¹⁸ Stan G. Duncan, *The Greatest Story Oversold, Understanding Economic Globalization*, (New York: Orbis Books, 2010), 145-149.

Biblical Teaching Concerning Profit, Interest, and Money¹⁹

In the Bible there are not univocal or direct instructions concerning profit, interest and money. However, there is one specific allusion to profit and interest in Leviticus. In the New Testament, I will mention the encounter between Jesus and Zacchaeus in Luke's Gospel and with "the rich young man," in Matthew to illustrate Jesus' teaching on money and wealth.

1. Leviticus

Leviticus is the third of the five books attributed to Moses. It deals with rituals and details prescription regarding the functioning of the human body, diseases, etc. Leviticus also contains regulations concerning the exchange of goods thus it is also an earlier teaching on biblical approach towards interest and profit. Fox writes:

Unlike the other four books, it is set entirely around Mount Sinai, and so it forms geographically as well as structurally, the heart of the Torah document [...] many of the categories found in Leviticus were continued and expanded by later Judaism: regulations concerning sexuality and diet, concept of separation and holiness, and how to deal with one's fellow human beings in a variety of economic and social setting.²⁰

The reference to "interest" in Leviticus occurs in chapter twenty-five amidst recommendation concerning assistance and lending:

If any of your kin fall into difficulty and become dependent on you, you shall support them; they shall live with you as though resident aliens. Do not take interest in advance or otherwise make a profit from them, but fear your God; let them live with you. You shall not lend them your money at interest taken in advance, or provide them food at a profit. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, to be your God. (Lev 25:35-38 NRS)

¹⁹As I have mentioned above, wealth and riches are not negative things. In many biblical quotations, wealth is given to people that God blesses and wants to reward. However, I focus more on the danger that an excessive pursuit of wealth, interest, profit, and money can involve in terms of violation of human dignity and moral principles.

²⁰ Everett Fox, *The Five books of Moses, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*, (New York: Schocken books, 1997), 498-499

The text may not refer to interest and profit in general or may not intend to give a general teaching on these two notions, but at least it provides a clue on biblical resistance to any attempt to make profit but to favor compassion and gratuitousness.

In the New Testament, many texts praise poverty and detachment vis à vis wealth and money. In these texts, spiritual and material poverty are presented as the best way to inherit God's eternal kingdom and to draw closer to God. Two passages illustrate this emphasis: Jesus encountering Zacchaeus and Jesus encountering the rich young man.

2. Zacchaeus and detachment as a consequence of conversion

In the New Testament, two pericopes illustrate the approach to money and wealth. First, we turn to the story of Zacchaeus who is praised for his decision to share his wealth as the result of his personal encounter with Jesus. Zacchaeus, as reported by Luke, who decided to give away part of his possession in favor of the poor, illustrates the convert who is no longer preoccupied by gaining wealth but cares about the Kingdom of God. As Luke tells the story, the Kingdom of God is opposed to the earthly Kingdom which is characterized by the desire to possess, especially out of fraud and corruption:

Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. (Luke 19:8-9 NRS)

Jesus praised Zacchaeus' magnanimity and affirmed that his new relation toward wealth brought him salvation.

For Brown, the story of Zacchaeus is part of a greater theme about the correct use of wealth. It includes the parable of the Ten Pounds (Luke 19) and the parable of the rich man (Luke 18). It emphasizes Luke's attitude toward wealth.²¹ Wealth, when it is misused or over-cherished becomes an obstacle to salvation. The kingdom of God is about sharing with the poor and not accumulating for oneself. Accumulation for oneself is sinful when it ignores the suffering of less skilled people in order to make profit, or when it promotes injustice and violence. However, God is open to welcome back the faithful who convert and refuse to ignore the poor. For Luke, there is more than wealth and possession. Salvation belongs to those who follow Jesus' teaching and show love, compassion and generosity toward the needy.

Moreover, Zacchaeus was considered a sinner because of his occupation as chief tax agent. He was in-charge of collecting taxes for the Roman administration. However, his encounter with Jesus changed his heart and attitude towards the poor. Johnson writes:

Luke reminds his readers once again that the disposition of the heart is symbolized by the disposition of possessions. The one who clings to his wealth is equally closed to the prophet's call. The one who shares generously with the poor can welcome the prophet gladly.²²

3. The rich young man and wealth as an obstacle to God's kingdom

Another text that presents selfish possession and pursuit of wealth as an obstacle to Christian happiness is the story of the rich young man. In the gospel, we are used to see Jesus confronted to people with material needs. Most of the time it is either a poor or a blind or an old woman or a possessed or an ill person who is seeking to be cured that come to Jesus. In this

²¹ Raymond E. Brown, S.S., *An introduction to the New Testament*, (New York: Dell Publishing, 1997), 252.

²² Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, Sacred Pagina Series, Vol.3, editor: Daniel J. Harrington, SJ. (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 287

passage (Mat 19:16-25 RSV), it is a young, healthy and rich man who interacts with Jesus, someone who apparently has everything that the world cherished who approached Jesus. The stress is obviously put on the relation between discipleship or spiritual poverty and material possession:

And behold, one came up to him, saying, "Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?" And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? One there is who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments." He said to him, "Which?" And Jesus said, "You shall not kill, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother, and, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. "The young man said to him, "All these I have observed; what do I still lack?" Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me. When the young man heard this, he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions. And Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly, I say to you, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. "When the disciples heard this they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?"(Mat 19:16-25 RSV)

In a commentary on this parable Brown writes:

"The story of the rich young man and its aftermath (19; 16-30) adds to the commandments of the Decalogue the demand to love one's neighbor as oneself (19; 19); yet even then, one is not perfect without sacrificing all possession to follow Jesus."²³

For Dan Harrington, Matthew 19:16-30 is an instruction about the danger of wealth. Even if this teaching can hardly find large approval in modern societies it remains a central theme in the Gospel and cannot be dissociated from Jesus' message. The rich young man became sad and went away from Jesus because he could not renounce his possessions; he couldn't take the next step that draws closer to Jesus. That is

²³ Raymond E. Brown, S.S., *An Introduction to the New Testament*, (New York: Dell Publishing, 1997), 194-195.

probably where the “danger” of wealth resides: it can prevent us from being free to embrace the fight for just causes and to denounce social injustices.

Harrington writes:

The most obvious matter for actualization in Matt.19:16-30 are the challenge to renunciation of goods and to recognition of the dangers of wealth. If such teachings were difficult in first century Palestine, they are far more so in the affluent West of the late twentieth century! Most people in our society find such teaching to be utterly foreign and impracticable. Nevertheless they remain major themes in the Gospels.²⁴

Jesus’ words “Truly, I say to you, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven” may sound as a general condemnation of wealth; however, this is not the case. It is an admonition that in human society there is a much more important virtue than wealth and one’s material possessions. A true follower of Jesus should be ready to give up all his possessions to follow Christ. This text illustrates how wealth, if it is overvalued and esteemed above everything else, can become a real obstacle to reach the essential: the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God has a very social dimension: caring for others and sharing with others. The Kingdom of God is about giving, generosity, compassion and not selfishness, greed. The Kingdom of God is not a remote reality to come but it starts here on earth.

On many occasions when Jesus is confronted with the issue of money and wealth, he affirms that the kingdom of God is far superior to all the personal goods and goals, possessions and all the self-realization we may pursue in this life.

²⁴ Daniel J. Harrington, SJ., *The Gospel of Matthew*, In *Sacra Pagina*, volume 1, ed.: Daniel J. Harrington, SJ, (Collegeville: The liturgical Press, 1991), 277

Well-being is a legitimate quest but if the quest for happiness and wellbeing prevents us from entering the Kingdom of God, it becomes an obstacle. This interpretation may be stretched on the social context: if the happiness that I gain from my possessions denies or ignores the suffering of the neighbor, then my happiness is not worthy, it is a false happiness.

How do these biblical elements relate to the present situation in DRC?

One of the main causes of the war in DRC is the search to control the mineral resources and the financial profit that can be gained from them. The three biblical texts that I discussed illustrate a wrong relation to wealth. From this biblical perspective, the DRC's paradox is the result of a distorted relation to wealth, profit, and money. If we now turn to patristic period Ambrose and Basil also consider the pursuit of wealth as contrary to Christian virtue.

Interest, Profit and Money according to the Church Fathers

Inspired by the Scripture Basil and Ambrose, among many other Church Fathers addressed the issue of possession and wealth. They built on these few biblical examples to elaborate their position on profit and personal enrichment.

I understand that in this optic the three notions of profit, interest and money cannot be easily separated but refer to the same process and reality of undue accumulation.

Basil the Great calls for self-examination of conscience while pursuing personal accumulation of goods:

Did you not come naked from the womb? Will you not return naked into the earth? Whence then did you have your present possession [...] Are you not avaricious? Are you not a robber? You who make your own the things which you

have received to distribute will not one be called a thief who steals the garment of one already clothed?²⁵

By commenting on these words of Basil the Great, Charles Avila²⁶ affirms that, in Basil's understanding, all the good that we possess was given freely for the benefit of all. Once one possesses more than what is needed to sustain one's own life and remains indifferent to the misery around oneself, that person's situation is not different from a thief who actively takes something that does not belong to him.

Ambrose affirmed the natural equality for all in *Womb and Tomb* and the fact that *we all have the same and equal claim to the goods of nature*. As Charles Avila explains:

For those who have taken the route of individualistic wealth accumulation, Ambrose says, there is no end to expansion. Objectively, accumulated wealth must grow or cease to be. Subjectively, then, in the individual who have taken this route, limitless greed is born and then daily nourished till oligopoly or monopoly is achieved.²⁷

For Ambrose the desire to possess is insatiable. Once one possesses something one wants to possess even more. This is equally true in a context of DRC where those who find their interest in maintaining the war and take profit from it are the same persons or groups since the beginning of this situation. What they have accumulated does not satisfy their greater desire to possess.

In DRC, all the political solutions that have been attempted have failed. whether power sharing, or the organization of elections, because the losers never accepted the results and eventually rebelled and returned to war, where they are assured of easy money and recognition. They seem to embody the limitless greed which Ambrose mentions and lack any moral boundary.

²⁵ Charles Avila, *Ownership in Early Christian Teaching*, (New York: Orbis Books, 1983), 49.

²⁶ Avila, *Ownership in Early Christian Teaching*, 62

²⁷ Ibid.

Catholic Social Teaching and the Universal Destination of Materials Goods

The issue of property or possession is most directly addressed in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* under the interpretation of the seventh commandment: *You shall not steal*. This teaching is very much inspired by Thomas Aquinas teaching on the natural law. According to Thomas Aquinas' interpretation of the natural law, all things are initially common property: and the exclusive possession of property is contrary to this "community of goods."²⁸ However, the ownership is not contrary to natural law as long as it does not go against any positive law and does not prevent the fulfillment of the needs of others:

Community of goods is ascribed to the natural law, not that the natural law dictates that all things should be possessed in common and that nothing should be possessed as one's own: but because the division of possessions is not according to the natural law, but rather arose from human agreement which belongs to positive law, as stated above [...]. Hence the ownership of possessions is not contrary to the natural law, but an addition thereto devised by human reason.²⁹

In a similar way, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, interprets the seven commandment by affirming that:

The seventh commandment forbids unjustly taking or keeping the goods of one's neighbor and wrongdoing him in any way with respect to his goods. It commands justice and charity in the care of earthly goods [...] It requires respect for the universal destination of goods and respect for the right to private property. Christian life strives to order this world's goods to God and to fraternal charity.³⁰

In others words, the *Catechism* clearly teaches that all the natural resources in the world should benefit everybody. However, the use of these resources must respect certain rules. The

²⁸ St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* II-II, Q. 66, art. 2, response to Obj. 1, translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 1st edition, Volume two (New York: Benziger brother, 1947).

²⁹ *Summa Theologica*, II-II, Q. 66, art.2, answer to the first objection, *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/index.html>, accessed on March 15, 2013.

³⁰ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. 2nd edition. (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000), n°2401.

universal destination of natural resources highlights three points of strategic importance to the argument I am unfolding in this thesis:

1. It commands justice and charity in taking care of earthly goods;
2. It requires respect for the universal destination of goods, which means we are all call to share the resources that God created for all;
3. It affirms the respect for the right to private property. The natural lottery has entrusted to certain countries much more natural resources than others, the universal destination of these natural resources must be considered with regards to notion of private property, a notion that on national level can be enlarged to respect of national sovereignty and primacy.

Hence, the ongoing mineral exploitation of mineral in DRC is comparable to stealing because it involves actors, both national and international, who do not have a legitimate mandate, and who are profiting from a situation that they have created or contribute to maintain, to exploit and trade mineral resources for their own interests.

Yet, the universal destination of all goods stresses that, ultimately the natural resources of DRC as well as the natural resources present in the entire universe belong in common to all the human species.

In creating natural resources God did not entrust them exclusively for selfish benefits to a category of people not even when these people are organized in states and countries. The abundant mineral resources of DRC should benefit all Congolese, the neighboring countries and the entire universal community, but respect and peace is integral to this sharing. Finally, this sharing should be organized and understood without denying the right to private property.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* recognizes the right to private property as promoting liberty and being complementary to the universal destination of goods:

In the beginning God entrusted the earth and its resources to the common stewardship of mankind to take care of them, master them by labor, and enjoy their fruits. The goods of creation are destined for the whole human race. However, the earth is divided up among men to assure the security of their lives, endangered by poverty and threatened by violence. The appropriation of property is legitimate for guaranteeing the freedom and the dignity of persons and for helping each of them to meet his basic needs and the needs of those in his charge. It should allow for a natural solidarity to develop between men.³¹

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* also affirms that Christian life strives to order this world's goods to God and to fraternal charity.³² In fulfilling God's will for the universal destination of goods, conflicts born from greed, like the one in DRC, will no longer be inevitable. This requires a greater integration between countries that will assure, in my view, a lasting peace and true justice.³³

The ethical danger is that to affirm that all the goods of the earth are destined for everyone without any restriction could appear as a legitimization of what is going on in Congo. The modern society is composed of sovereign states that recognize each other's jurisdiction in respect of boundaries and sovereignty. There are rules that regulate the exchanges between States in respect of national and private property. A better and fair use of the natural resources in the world in general and in DRC in particular will assure a better life for all humankind. God's plan for His people aims at flourishing and we can affirm, would include education, health and peace for all. In the biblical text at the end of the process of Creation, God entrusted the earth to the good care of

³¹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. 2nd edition. (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000), no 2402

³² Ibid no 2401

³³ In building common and strong institutions, making laws that bind all the countries and regulate commerce and industries etc. Despite his reluctance Rawls theory of Justice can be a good foundation upon which to build this global society. Cfr for example notion of justice as fairness, Difference principle, veil of ignorance, etc. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 2005).

all men and women. In the following section I interpret Genesis 1:28 and the commandment to subdue the earth as an actual call to the Congolese people and in particular to those involved in the Congolese crisis to seize this moment as an opportunity (Kairos) to build a better society.

2.2. Subdue the earth and DRC opportunities

To “subdue” the earth is not to be understood as a license to a violent exploitation of the earth. Human beings are called to live in harmony with Creation, to respect it and to protect all the creatures (animals and nature). My thesis is not advocating for a “legal exploitation” of Creation by human beings. I want to address the fact that in certain parts of the world the products of the earth, minerals for example, are much more valued than human life. People have been killed and displaced and million have died just because a few people were ready to use any means including mass killing, rape, and other human right violations to take possession of lands rich in mineral. This seems to be the opposite of God’s plan in creating the world. It is in this perspective that I use Genesis 1:28 as a symbolic image to illustrate God’s commandment and plan for human beings and its violation in particular in the case of DRC. The biblical Creation narrative describes human being as God’s stewards to whom the creation is entrusted:

God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." (Gen 1:28 NRS)

On the last day of the creation, God made man and woman, and unlike the other creatures, he gave them the commandment to “subdue” the earth. I understand “subduing the earth” as an invitation to prosperity and happiness, not to exploitation or enslavement of the earth.³⁴

God’s invitation sounds like an admonition to humankind “don’t let the world be your master, but take possession of it, be happy with all in it.” The commandment to subdue the earth is not given either to the man or to the woman alone in isolation or in exclusion; it is given to both of them as a mutual invitation to solidarity and happiness in communion, not in exclusion. The invitation to subdue the earth should not be interpreted, as it seems in certain places, as a license to violate the order of the nature nor as a permission to exploit the natural resources in order to possess more than what is needed.

Genesis 1:28 affirms the universal destination of materials goods, but also the universal obligation to include each man and each woman in possessing and enjoying the goods of the earth.

The commandment to “subdue” the earth is also given after the invitation to be “fruitful and to multiply,” It is therefore a commandment that concerns not only the first man and the first woman but includes also their offspring. Hence, it calls to take care of future generations, in responsibility and respect of nature. The resources entrusted to humankind are given not only for their own use but also for the use of their children and the children of their children.

Genesis 1:28 is a call to responsibility for all generations towards the generations that will come after them. It is in this concrete call to care for the next generations that resides also the

³⁴ On this verse *The Jerome Biblical Commentary* writes: Verse 28 is tied closely to v 27b, repeating the command already given to the fishes/birds in v 22 to be “fruitful and multiply.” Subdue the earth: The nuance of the verb is to “master,” “to bring forcefully under control.” Force is necessary at the beginning to make the untamed land serve humans. Human nonetheless are to respect the environment; they are not to kill for food but are to treat all life with respect . As the rest of v. 28 shows, humans are the pinnacle of the created world; the world is made for man and woman, etc. See : Raymond E. Brown, S.S., Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm, eds, *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*,(New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1988), 11.

universal destination of all material goods. This destination is universal in space (it concern all human beings) but also in time (it concern present but also future generations)

Today's assessment on the state of the earth shows troubling changes in nature and, the global warming is one of the many indicators suggesting that God's commandment has not been fulfilled with responsibility. Many reports affirm that the global warming is the result of human irresponsible exploitation of the earth.³⁵

For example, the level of pollution in some places is beyond the acceptable. Many natural phenomena that are occurring are described as the result of a malfunctioning of our system of production and consumption.³⁶ The call to subdue the earth has been transformed in a violent exploitation of natural resources fruit of a desire to possess beyond any control or limit.

The call to "subdue the earth" implies the fundamental dignity of human persons and their primacy above all other creatures on the earth. Human being are called to subdue the earth (and its wealth) and not the earth to subdue man and woman's intentions and actions.³⁷

As it will be developed later in the *Principle and Foundation of The Spiritual Exercises*, all the other things on the surface of the earth have been created as means for human beings to achieve their first goal. The "things" should never be considered as ends and human beings should never be used as means.

As Saint Ambrose suggested,³⁸ the consequence, in the case of individual or corporations that have taken the route of accumulation and limitless greed daily nourished is the suppression of

³⁵ See Michael S. Northcott, *A Moral Climate: The Ethics of Global Warming*, (Maryknoll: Orbis books), 2007.

³⁶ See John Houghton, "The Changing Global Climate," in *Keeping God's Earth, The global Environment in Biblical Perspective*, Noah J. Toly and Daniel L. Block eds, (Nottingham: Appolos, 2010), 188.

³⁷ Cfr introduction of section 2.2. page 32.

ethical and moral boundaries and lead to situation of disrespect of human life. Sadly, the DRC is a tragic example of such a disruption

Moreover, the mineral exploitation in DRC and all the suffering that the extraction of mineral resources has caused manifest the inversion of God's first will. Human beings were created to "subdue" the earth (not to exploit it), e.g., to protect it and use responsibly its resources as God's stewards, and not the earth to subdue them, e.g., to dictate attitudes, to exasperate greed and to lead them into bloody conflicts. If it is accurate, as many report have affirmed,³⁹ that the war in the DRC is very much influenced, sustained and provoked by the mineral resources present there, then the human violation of the covenant in Genesis 1:28 is an important theological lens through which to interpret and understand the DRC paradox and to address its real root.

However, some critics may put forward that it is a bit forced to relate Genesis 1:28 directly to the mineral exploitation in DRC or to any ecological or natural issue today. The answer could take the form of a question: is it illegitimate to understand Genesis 1:28 as God's expression of caring for the earth and entrusting it to the best of his creatures? If one agrees on this possibility, then one can assume that it is not eccentric to affirm that in today's context, Genesis 1:28 addresses also the way human being relate to the earth and its resources.

On the legitimacy of such an approach, Toly and Block write:

³⁸ Cfr page 28: For those who have taken the route of individualistic wealth accumulation, Ambrose says, there is no end to expansion. Objectively, accumulated wealth must grow or cease to be. Subjectively, then, in those who have taken this route, limitless greed is born and then daily nourished till oligopoly or monopoly is achieved.

³⁹ See chapter I of this thesis pp.13-17: The reports of different commissions of the Security Council of the United Nations.

Admittedly biblical authors could scarcely have imagined the ecological effects that our industrialized and technological culture has produced, but to say they were disinterested in creation care seem extreme on several count⁴⁰

The war in DRC and all the other wars in the world motivated by “limitless greed daily nourished by the desire of accumulation” can be stopped if people engage themselves to responsibly caring for the earth in collaborative ways on behalf of current and future generations.

To succeed, such an attempt will require mutual agreements locally (what do Congolese think about it?) and globally (is the world ready to take the next step?). The present awareness of the dangers that the earth is facing due to industrial exploitation can be the starting point in making decisions.

On the local level, if the people of the neighboring countries that surround the DRC, and lack natural resources, can be assured that a mutual advantageous exploitation of DRC resources is possible in term of employment and building of infrastructures for health and education, they will be reluctant to sustain in their own countries any government that uses their national very limited resources to conduct a war that profits only a few member of the elite. This concern will be developed more fully in the fourth chapter that deals with proposals toward a better world and a better DRC.

On a global level, laws must be defined that regulate the use and trade of natural resources. One must make sure that all the multinationals are subject to these laws. This will have the advantage, first, of preserving the earth, our common heritage, and secondly of warning against

⁴⁰ Noah J. Toly and Daniel L. Block (eds), *Keeping God's Earth: The Global Environment in Biblical Perspective*, (Nottingham: Appolos, 2010), 17.

any attempt to use force and illegal means to obtain natural resources for private and selfish interest at the cost of human lives.

A current attempt exists with the laws that prevent “blood diamonds” from Sierra Leone or Liberia to be sold or bought abroad without a certification of their provenance. This regulation was established in order to make sure that the diamond trade would not finance the war in Sierra Leone, Liberia, or other war zones.⁴¹

In the United States and for the benefit of USA and DRC, the “Dodd Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act”⁴² is an important step towards more transparency in the trade of mineral resources and should inspire a more global movement. In particular, we read that:

It is the sense of Congress that the exploitation and trade of conflict minerals originating in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is helping to finance conflict characterized by extreme levels of violence in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly sexual- and gender-based violence, and contributing to an emergency humanitarian situation therein [...] the Commission shall promulgate regulations requiring any person described in paragraph (2) to disclose annually, [...] whether conflict minerals [...] did originate in the Democratic Republic of the Congo or an adjoining country[...] a description of the products manufactured or contracted to be manufactured that are not DRC conflict free (‘DRC conflict free’ is defined to mean the products that do not contain minerals that directly or indirectly finance or benefit armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo or an adjoining country)⁴³[...]

⁴¹ This process called “Kimberley Process” started when Southern African diamond-producing States met in Kimberley, South Africa, in May 2000, discuss ways to stop the trade in “conflict diamonds” and ensure that diamond purchases were not financing violence by rebel movements and their allies seeking to undermine legitimate governments. The Kimberley Process (KP) is a joint governments, industry, and civil society initiative to stem the flow of conflict diamonds – rough diamonds used by rebel movements to finance wars against legitimate governments. Source : <http://www.kimberleyprocess.com>, access on March 14, 2013

⁴² The Dodd Franck Act aims at promoting the financial stability of the United States by improving accountability and transparency in the financial system, to end “too big to fail”(name given to major US companies that were facing the risk of bankruptcy during the last major economic crisis), to protect the American taxpayers by ending bailouts, and to protect consumers from abusive financial services practices, and for other purposes. See: <http://www.sec.gov/about/laws/wallstreetreform-cpa.pdf> access on February 1, 2013

⁴³ Dodd Franck, H. R. 4173—839, section 1502.

Though many groups which used to gain from the chaos in DRC and from an absence of regulation on this matter are opposed to this law, it illustrates however that if one wants one can make laws that allow the principle of the *Universal Destination of Good* to be effective in fostering integrity and peace.

2.3. An Ignatian Perspective on Wealth: the Principle and Foundation

The *Principle and Foundation*⁴⁴ of the *Spiritual Exercises* describes God's project for humankind and thus, as I argue for the Congolese people as well.⁴⁵ The *Principle and Foundation* can be considered as a spiritual approach towards materials goods. In the context of DRC, it is a statement addressed to the Congolese population and leaders as well as to the entire international community. It stresses that love should come first. Ignatius of Loyola states that the human person was created to love, serve and revere God, and thus to welcome God's salvation.

In such a project, one may see much more than the self-centered plan of a narcissistic God, bent on receiving praise and honor, a God who chooses to create humankind to flatter himself. We answer to God's love with our own love. Moreover, Ignatius of Loyola reminds us that love needs to be manifested more in acts than in words.

⁴⁴ "Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his souls. And the other things on the face of the earth are created for man so that they may help him in prosecuting the end for which he is created. From this it follows that man is to use them as much as they help him on to his end, and ought to rid him of them so far as they hinder him as to it. For this it is necessary to make ourselves indifferent to all created things in all that is allowed to the choice of our free will and is not prohibited to it; so that, on our part, we want not health rather than sickness, riches rather than poverty, honor rather than dishonor, long rather than short life, and so in all the rest; desiring and choosing only what is most conducive for us to the end for which we are created." Ignatius of Loyola, the *Spiritual Exercises*, (trans. P. Wolf, Liguori Missouri: Liguori Publications, 1997), 11.

⁴⁵ From a previous article published in *Promotio Iusticiae*, under the title: The Third Week of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius in the current tragic situation of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). February 2009: Lenge E. Wa Ku Mikishi SJ. "The Third Week of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius in the current tragic situation of the Democratic Republic of Congo," In *Promotio Iusticiae*, no 102, 2009/2. <http://www.sjweb.info/documents>.

God is infinite, out of our reach; and the only way in which we can love, serve and revere God is in our neighbors: our brothers and sisters. God is first and foremost present in the persons physically close to us, those we can see with our own eyes and those whom we often consider hard to love and respect. Surely, it is easier to fall in love with an idea about God than to recognize God in the concreteness of a well-known face.

About the relation between the concept of “God” and the concept of “love,” Timothy Jackson writes that:

“Love” one might say, is both a proper name and an ethical concept. “Love” is God’s proper name, in the sense that it is the most univocal identification we can make of God; and it is an ethical concept, in the sense that it entails various habits and behaviors as normative for human beings.⁴⁶

Unfortunately, both the reality of human life and recent history - e.g., genocide and war in the Great Lakes region of Africa - have shown us that people and societies are able to combine the affirmation of a Christian faith- therefore love- and the tolerance of or participation in crime and serious injustices. This shows that love and, subsequently, justice do not follow naturally from Christian faith. They need to be taught and to be practiced. Love of neighbor as a concrete application of the *Principle and Foundation* should be manifested in deeds rather than in words. Love is central to building a just society. Love of neighbor is essential for the construction of a society. Ultimately, it is not possible to build a just society without love. True justice cannot take place without love otherwise it becomes just fulfillment of a need for vengeance. True love encompasses forgiveness and compassion, two qualities that are needed to build a better society in DRC.

⁴⁶ Timothy P. Jackson, *The Priority of Love: Christian Charity and Social Justice*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003), 24.

The DRC and its nine neighboring countries (Congo-Brazza, Central African Republic, South Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, Zambia, and Angola) are predominantly Christians. However, with the exception of Tanzania and Zambia, all the other countries have either been at war or have been plagued by internal rebellions in the last 10 years. This situation of insecurity within these countries is also a permanent threat to all the countries. The armed groups operating in these countries find refuge within the region. One could expect that the religious faith affirmed publicly by the population as well as by their leaders could prevent greed and corruption to arise, but this is not the case. The HDI (Human Development Index) reveals that many of these countries are among the most corrupted and the poorest, even in Africa.

In the next section I affirm that there is hope even in the midst of this very dark description. It is the conviction of many Congolese that the actual crisis can be the occasion for a new beginning, a *Kairos*, a starting point for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Congo and of the Congolese.

2.4. DRC: from Crisis to *Kairos*⁴⁷

Concluding the discussion on biblical and theological perspectives, one can ask: what is to be done in the Democratic Republic of Congo? Is it not delusive and utopian to hope getting rid of such a situation? What is to be done in the face of such a chaos? As long as there is mineral and natural wealth in DRC and as long as greed dominates the heart of many actors involved in the conflict, Congolese and non-Congolese, can the fate of DRC be else than war, death, and poverty?

One can answer these questions from two perspectives. The first, a negative one, is as a columnist wrote recently in the *New York Times*:

⁴⁷ In Greek, *Kairos* means the right or opportune moment. This title was inspired by A. E., Orobator S.J.: *From Crisis to Kairos: The Mission of the Church in the Time of HIV/AIDS, Refuges and Poverty*, (Limuru: Kolbe Press, 2005).

The Democratic Republic of Congo, which erupted in violence again earlier this month, ought to be one of the richest countries in the world. Its immense mineral reserves are currently valued by some estimates at more than \$24 trillion and include 30 percent of the world's diamond reserves; vast amounts of cobalt, copper and gold; and 70 percent of the world's coltan, which is used in electronic devices.

If some enterprises, public or private, can be said to be "too big to fail," Congo is the reverse: it is too big to succeed. It is an artificial entity whose constituent parts share the misfortune of having been seized by the explorer Henry Morton Stanley in the name of a rapacious 19th-century Belgian monarch. From the moment Congo was given independence in 1960, it was being torn apart by centrifugal forces, beginning with separatism in the mineral-rich southern province of Katanga.⁴⁸

This is a very pessimistic point of view, in my opinion. It tends to offer a quick and easy solution to a problem that as we have seen is much more complex: to solve the issue in DRC, let it burst, affirmed the author of the article. Does he realize how many dead such a process will involve? How many refugees and homeless people it will create?

Besides, is it really the size of the country that is the cause of war today? Congolese in their majority have expressed the will to live together. Moreover, many smaller countries have been the theatre of very bloody wars in Africa (Rwanda, Somalia, Eritrea, Congo Brazza...) and elsewhere. Therefore, it is not the size of a country that determines peace or war. The issue lies elsewhere, as I have mention earlier concerning the mineral resources and as I will develop later in the fourth chapter.

One can also look at the situation in DRC from an optimistic and faith based point of view. God loves the DRC and its people and Congolese deserve to live in peace and to enjoy their mineral resource with responsibility and in justice. This crisis can help to build a national

⁴⁸ Mr. Peter Pham signed the article as the director of the Africa Center at the Atlantic Council. The article can be found at <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/01/opinion/to-save-congo-let-it-fall-apart.html>: entitled "To save Congo, let it fall apart A version of this op-ed appeared in print on December 1, 2012, on page A25 of the New York edition with the headline: "To Save Congo, Let It Fall Apart."

conscience. This crisis can be the *Kairos*, the right moment to fight those who finance wars in the world that kill millions of people and ignore the innocent victims for selfish interest.

A DRC without war can build up a strong economy that will provide work and stimulate the creation of health and education structures for many people in the region because it is the richest, the biggest, and the most populated country. A stable and economical prosperous DRC can promote the development of all the countries that surround it.

This is the reason why I focused on a theological and biblical perspective to address the DRC crisis. The starting point of this endeavor was that the DRC crisis and paradox depended on the presence of abundant mineral resources. To acquire these resources, people and companies within and outside the country do not hesitate to use means that are often harmful to the peace and the Congolese. Moreover, in DRC, war is often explained by the need of certain groups of people to maintain a situation of chaos that allows and facilitates the procurement of very lucrative minerals. I analyzed this issue from a theological and biblical perspective. Some scriptural narratives illustrate the attitudes and teachings of Jesus concerning the issues of wealth and property. They helped us to understand and propose a solution. In addition to Leviticus, that prohibits any charging of interest between God's people, I mentioned the teaching of two church fathers, Ambrose and Basil, early theologians who interpreted the scripture with regard to the pursuit of self-enrichment and greed. I argued that greed and the pursuit of personal enrichment, at the expense of all moral values help to explain the crisis in DRC. To counter these human and social dynamics (as opposed to a pursuit of personal enrichment and greed that has resulted in chaos in the DRC), the Catholic Church affirms the universal destination of all material goods without denying the right to private property. In the same vein, I have referred to Genesis 1:28 as

God's plan for the world and I advocated for using the DRC natural resources with responsibility.

Therefore this biblical passage (Genesis 1:28) can help us to affirm:

1. The universal destination of material goods.
2. The responsibility towards the future generations
3. The inclusiveness of God's message.

Finally, the *Principle and Foundation* can be interpreted as the affirmation of the priority of love in all human relationships: vertically towards God and horizontally towards the created things and the others human beings.

Chapter 3: An Ethical Perspective on DRC: The Catholic Social Teaching

The first Chapter suggested that the DRC crisis could provide a timely opportunity (*Kairos*: the right moment) to start building a better future, and given that opportunity, hope nourished by Christian faith is still possible in the DRC.

In this chapter, I address further the Christian ethical commitment. What does the Catholic social and ethical teaching say about the way our social world is organized, especially in so far as the issue of money making is concerned? How does the social teaching of the Catholic Church address the role of the market in influencing production and distribution? What are the insights concerning the notion of profit and the pursuit of private ends?

The most recent document in the Catholic Church that addresses these issues is the encyclical letter *Caritas in Veritate* (Charity in Truth)⁴⁹ and in particular its third chapter: “Fraternity, Economic Development and Civil Society.” I will discuss some of the elements mentioned in the this chapter of *Caritas in Veritate*.

Another important document that I will analyze is the US Bishops letter “Economic Justice for All” and I will use it as a practical way that illustrates interactions between countries.⁵⁰ Then, I will mention how the Church in DRC addresses the same issues of mineral exploitation. Finally, I will indicate what steps the Congolese Jesuits are taking in favor of a better use of the natural resources entrusted by God to their country.

⁴⁹ Benedict XVI, “*Caritas in Veritate: On Integral Human Development.*” In *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*, Edited by David J. O’Brien and Thomas Shannon, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2010), 524-585.

⁵⁰ U.S. Catholic Bishops, “*Economic Justice for All,*” no. 12-13, in *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*, ed. David J. O’Brien and Thomas A. Shannon (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2010).

3.1. Catholic social thought

In the introduction of *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage* a book that contains all the social encyclicals of the Roman Catholic Church from *Rerum Novarum* to *Caritas in Veritate* plus the important documents of the US Bishops on social issues, one can read:

Catholic social teaching, like everything else Christian, begins with the person and message of Jesus. Jesus offered no specific economic message, of course; instead, he proclaimed the advent of the kingdom of God and the redemption of people from sin.⁵¹

The social teaching of the Catholic Church attempts to draw people's attention on issues that matter in a world that is very much oriented to profit making. The social teaching wants to make relevant the message of Jesus, a message of love and care for others. This teaching seeks to encourage people not to forget the poor and the weak and not to be indifferent to the social issue that endanger the human community.

Throughout centuries, many papal teachings tried to raise the faithful's awareness to care responsibly for each other. *Caritas in Veritate* has the advantage of being more relevant to our time. Although it focuses on economic justice as other encyclicals on the social teaching of the church did earlier, it offers a more modern message in a world in which globalization has reinforced the gap between the rich and the poor, and has increased the possibility of people being harmed by those who do not have any moral concern.

⁵¹ David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, (eds), *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2010), 2.

Caritas in Veritate speaks out for more justice in the world and more concern for the poor. Two previous encyclicals have addressed the same issues: *Rerum Novarum on the condition of labor* (1891), by Leo XIII and *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931) by Pius XI, which was written 40 years later. Since *Caritas in Veritate* was influenced by both *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*, I will briefly refer to them.

Rerum Novarum puts the poor at the center of all social reform (preferential option for the poor). It also calls for the responsibility of those in charge of the Government whose purpose is to promote public and individual well-being, to protect equitably each class of citizens, and to strengthen the community. According to *Rerum Novarum*, the Government should be concerned with all members of society, which implies that it should give special consideration to the weak and poor:

Nevertheless, rulers should anxiously safeguard the community and all its parts; the community, because the conservation of the community is so emphatically the business of the supreme power, that the safety of the commonwealth is not only the first law but is a government's whole reason of existence; and the parts, because both philosophy and the Gospel agree in laying down that the object of the administration of the State should be not the advantage of the ruler, but the benefit of those over whom he rules.⁵²

In 1931, Pope Pius XI issued the encyclical letter *Quadragesimo Anno* in commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, by addressing again economic and social justice. Although at that time some global improvements could have been noticed in the condition of the workers and in moralizing capitalism, in Africa most of the countries were still colonized and had a long way to go before these reforms would be achieved. However, both encyclicals probably

⁵² Leo XIII, " *Rerum Novarum, On the Condition of Labor.* " In *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*, Edited by David J. O'Brien and Thomas Shannon, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2010), 28

affected the perception of the situation of people in colonized countries and their social, political and economic conditions. I highlight two quotations from the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*:

1. Now not every kind of distribution of wealth and property among men is such that it can satisfactorily, still less adequately, attain the end intended by God.⁵³
2. In the first place, then, it is patent that in our days not alone is wealth accumulated, but immense power and despotic economic domination is concentrated in the hand of a few, and that those few are frequently not the owner, but only the trustees and directors of invested funds, who administer them at their good pleasure. This power becomes particularly irresistible when exercised by those who, because they hold and control money, are able also to govern credit and determine its allotment, for that reason supplying, so to speak, the life-blood to the entire economic body, and grasping, as it were, in their hands the very soul of economy, so that no one dare breathe against their will. This accumulation of power, a characteristic note of the modern economic order, is a natural result of unrestrained free competition which permits the survival of those only who are the strongest. This often means those who most relentlessly, who pay least, heed to the dictate of conscience.⁵⁴

In other words, already at that time (eighty two years ago) Pius XI reflected ethically on economic dynamics and on the danger that a humanity concerned solely by making profit can bring to the world. This analysis sounds still relevant today. Moreover, the same issue: despotic economic domination, reckless pursuit of profit, increasing gap between the rich and the power that were denounced, still exist today and in some places, they have even gotten worse. D.R. Congo and the Congolese, who could have been perceived at that time as victims of the system denounced in this encyclical, are now, at least some people in the country, perpetrators of the same injustice. These people too, have been seized by the greed and other vices described by Pius XI. These persons also are now part of those few who administer the natural resources for their good pleasure at the expense of millions of their brothers and sisters in Congo.

⁵³ Pius XI, "*Quadragesimo Anno*," In *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*, Edited by David J. O'Brien and Thomas Shannon, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2010), 57.

⁵⁴ "*Quadragesimo Anno*" No 67.

Moreover, the principle of subsidiarity and need for an ethical government that are stressed in the two encyclicals mentioned above are central in Catholic social teaching. When the poor, the weak, and the needy cannot protect themselves, the legitimate government needs to ensure that this category of people is not marginalized. The Catholic Church always tries to identify herself with the weakest, the poorest, and the voiceless. She often identifies herself with the victims of systems that allow only the strongest to survive, the victims of systems that do not leave a place for compassion, gratuitousness, and charity. Lisa Cahill explains the double meaning of the principle of subsidiarity:

Traditionally, the principle of subsidiarity embodies the idea that groups, organizations, and structures of government at the local level have the right to determine and manage local community needs (Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*, no. 79; 1931). In *Mater et Magistra*, John XXIII turned the principle on its head. He interpreted subsidiarity also to mean that when local communities, property owners, or investors are unable or unwilling to respect the concrete requirements of justice, the government or higher authority should intervene to rectify the situation (John XXIII, *Mater et magistra*, no. 54; 1961).⁵⁵

More recently *Caritas in Veritate* is an updated testimony of this long tradition of the Church.

My reading of *Caritas in Veritate*, will concentrate on the third chapter: “Fraternity, Economic Development and Civil Society.” This chapter of the encyclical is, in my view, the most relevant to the topic of this thesis. I am using the encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* only insofar that it can provide resources to reflect on the DRC paradox from an ethical perspective.

⁵⁵ Lisa Sowle Cahill, “Catholics and Health Care: Justice, Faith and Hope,” *Journal of Catholic Social Thought*, 7 (2010), 29-49.

Benedict XVI tries to raise awareness on the consequences of an exclusively capitalistic (profit-oriented) approach to the world. Benedict XVI is not merely advocating for the amelioration of a system that has proved its limitations. He argues for a greater change in the world's economic system. In the next sections, I discuss some of the main topics addressed in the third chapter of *Caritas in Veritate*: (1) gratuitousness, (2) the market, (3) the common good, (4) justice, (5) the economy and profit. The next sections reflect a sensibility that can extend the scope range of the debate on these economic issues and, hopefully, open new horizons for discussion and reflection.

3.1.1. Gratuitousness⁵⁶

Gratuitousness is a notion that is not frequently used in economic sciences, or in market based institutions. In the market system, everything is regulated by the law of supply and demand. Everything is to be sold or bought.

Benedict XVI affirms that our society is turned towards a purely consumerist and utilitarian view of life. However for the Pope, it is in giving without expecting anything in return that we express and make present our transcendent dimension. Deep within ourselves we feel more human when we give. For the pope, our times have encouraged us to think that we are the authors of everything. It is this conception that has led us to sin, and the economy is one of the areas where the pernicious effects of this sinful approach are evident. "The different successes of the human being in different areas have led him to confuse happiness and salvation with immanent forms of

⁵⁶ Benedict XVI, "*Caritas in Veritate*," no 34, 547.

material prosperity.”⁵⁷ God calls the human race to a fraternal communion behind all our differences. We are one community, and should learn to care for each other. Everything is not for sale; gratuitousness affirms that human life is more than profit making. There are values that should never be negotiable: values of human dignity and respect for life. The pope writes:

The human community that we build by ourselves can never, purely by its own strength, be a fully fraternal community, nor can it overcome every division and become a truly universal community. The unity of the human race, a fraternal communion transcending every barrier, is called into being by the word of God-who-is-Love. In addressing this key question, we must make it clear, on the one hand, that the logic of gift does not exclude justice, nor does it merely sit alongside it as a second element added from without; on the other hand, economic, social, and political development, if it is to be authentically human, needs to make room for the principle of gratuitousness as an expression of fraternity.⁵⁸

To be genuinely human, economic development and social welfare cannot ignore the moral and ethical value of gratuitousness. *Caritas in Veritate* was written just few years after the last global economic crisis (2007-2008), a crisis that has shown the limits of an economic system in which the dangerous pursuit of profit, interest, and competition have brought many families to ruin.

Caritas in Veritate thus calls us to integrate gratuitousness in decision making. Gratuitousness can make the economic, social, and political development become more and authentically human. Gratuitousness should not mean the end of the profit based enterprise. Gratuitousness asks that our relation should overcome the exclusiveness of self-interest. Gratuitousness is a human attitude that refuses to believe that everything is for sale or everything could be bought or taken by force.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid. no 34.

In order to be more “human,” humankind should learn to care more about the poor and the needy. It should be inconceivable for all, not only for religious or human rights NGOs, that in the same world, people of the same species, created in God’s image, are ready to use any means, including rape and large scale killing, to take possession of natural resources and to leave almost an entire nation in chaos, as it is the case in DRC.

3.1.2. The Market: Commutative Justice or Distributive Justice

The market responds to principles that are as old as the father of modern economic theory: Adam Smith. Adam Smith had complete confidence in the market’s ability to regulate prices and give to each person according to his or her merit. His only concern was to make sure that the balance between the demand and supply was maintained. He wrote:

It is the interest of all those who employ their land, labor or stock, in bringing any commodity to market, that the quantity never should exceed the effectual demand and it is the interest of all other that it never should fall short of that demand.⁵⁹

For Adam Smith, there is an *invisible hand* that regulates everything in the market in order to guarantee a just allocation of labor and profit. In *The Wealth of Nations* he writes:

It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages. Nobody but a beggar chooses to depend chiefly upon the benevolence of his fellow-citizens.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and the Causes of the Wealth of the Nations*, (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993), 25.

⁶⁰ Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, 11.

Smith suggests that people are guided by an invisible hand to promote an end which is not part of their intention. Nowadays, the invisible hand has shown its limits in regulating the market. The size of an interconnected global economy commands much more regulation. And if, as human beings, we really want to build a just society, moral principles should be brought into the market system: moral principles that guarantee that it is not only the law of supply and demand that is respected in transactions, but also the nature of the supply, the conditions in which the product that are supplied were acquired, where they were acquired and that no one is harmed or no human dignity is violated in the acquisition of the products to be supplied in the market. *The Dodd Frank Act* mentioned in the second chapter of this thesis⁶¹ is the proof that one can move towards a greater moralization of the market. *Caritas in Veritate* is also the Church's call to a reform of the market by shaping it in light of moral and ethical values.

Caritas in Veritate defines the market as:

The economic institution that permits encounter between persons in as much as they are economic subjects who make use of contracts to regulate their relations as they exchange goods and services of equivalent value between them in order to satisfy their needs and desires.⁶²

However, to ensure that the market plays a morally acceptable role, the pope advocates for an integrated approach to distributive justice, commutative justice, and social justice that takes into account the weak and the poor rather than exclusively a commutative justice which can hide behind an appearance of equity the premises of a social Darwinism that will, in all circumstances, disadvantage the weak or the less well informed or equipped. One can read in the encyclical:

⁶¹ See chap 2, page 38.

⁶² Benedict XVI, "Caritas in Veritate", no 35.

In the global era, the economy is influenced by competitive models tied to culture that differ greatly among themselves. The different forms of economic enterprise to which they give rise find their main point of encounter in commutative justice. Economic life undoubtedly requires contracts, in order to regulate relations of exchange between goods of equivalent values. But it also needs just laws and forms of redistribution governed by politics, and what is more, it needs works redolent of the spirit of gift.⁶³

It is my understanding that the encyclical suggests that relying only on the principle of commutative justice to organize the market will not produce the social cohesion that is the primary good of each society.

Many agreements and principles may be in accord with the notion of commutative justice. For example, some corporations or individuals who intervene in the trade of mineral resources can affirm that they pay the price demanded for the mineral resources that come from Congo but when one looks closely, at the nature of these transaction, through the lens of a distributive justice, that embodies somehow the value of Christianity, especially the values of compassion and sharing, they may reveal an intrinsic unfairness. As *Caritas in Veritate* explains:

The church's social doctrine holds that authentically human social relationships of friendship, solidarity and reciprocity can also be conducted within economic activity, and not only outside it or "after" it. The economic sphere is neither ethically neutral, nor inherently inhuman and opposed to society. It is part and parcel of human activity and precisely because it is human, it must be structured and governed in an ethical manner.⁶⁴

One cannot ignore the risk that at one level or another Congolese minerals concerned in economic transactions may have influenced a human rights violation and that as long as the war

⁶³ Ibid., no 37, 550

⁶⁴ Benedict XVI, "*Caritas in Veritate*" no 36.

and chaos will last, the real value of those minerals will not be determined accurately and the country will never get a just profit from these resources.

Moreover, *Caritas in Veritate*, in my view, is actually calling for another approach towards some aspects of the economic market. This approach should take into account the capacity and limitation of each part of the market (especially its effect on the poor, the weak, and the ignorant). Relying only on the law of the market, even though it seems to guarantee, (using Rawls' words in his *Theory of Justice*) to each person an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others⁶⁵ will be actually unjust because it imposes on all, the rich and the poor, the sick and the healthy, the strong and the weak, the same inflexible rules, laws and treatments which make people equal only in appearance.

Benedict XVI also denounces that a certain milieu of economists believes that we need a market where a “need” must be maintained. It means that the market has an intrinsic “need” for a quota of poverty and underdevelopment in order to function at its best. From a strictly ethical perspective, this approach will maintain an evil situation that guarantees the well-being of a few people by imprisoning in poverty a greater number of people. To conclude this section on the market, Duncan Foley argues that even from a logical perspective, the non-regulated or non-moralized pursuit of self-interest can only lead to a dead-end. In *Adam's Fallacy*, Foley comments on Adam Smith's claim:

⁶⁵ See John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, (Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 2005), 60.

Others writers have been able to capture the inner logic of capitalist competition and accumulation as well as or better than Smith. But Smith stands out as a philosophical and moral defender of capitalist social relations through his ingenious, if tortured claim that the ruthless pursuit of self-interest, which can lead people to do bad things to other people, is transmuted by capitalist social relations into a moral good. If only this claim could be made good, how much simpler the history of capitalism would have turned out to be! In his views about the capitalist project, Smith sheds his general good sense and moral authority without rigorously establishing the logical basis for his approbation.⁶⁶

The difference between *Caritas in Veritate* and Adam Smith is that where Adam Smith and his modern followers will trust blindly *the invisible hand* to regulate the market, Benedict XVI is calling for a firm engagement to regulate the market. The Pope calls for an engagement in favor of a justice that is not “blind,” a justice that is not imposing the same amount of burden on the shoulders of all people. Those who have received more should give more.

3.1.3. Common Good, Economy, Profit, and Justice

In the last sections of the third chapter of *Caritas in Veritate*, the pope addresses the issues of the common good, profit, and economy. In the following paragraphs I summarize and discuss some of these ideas. Benedict XVI writes:

It must be borne in mind that grave imbalances are produced when economic action, conceived merely as an engine for wealth creation, is detached from political action, conceived as a means for pursuing justice through redistribution.⁶⁷

⁶⁶Duncan K. Foley, *Adam's Fallacy: A Guide to Economic Theology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 43.

⁶⁷Benedict XVI, “*Caritas in Veritate*,” no 36.

Relying only on the call to the people's conscience may never bring any solution to the injustice and imbalance in our world because those who find profit from it may never want to bring about any change. For Benedict XVI, trying to dissociate justice and economy is not a necessary evil, but is clearly wrong because every economic decision carries moral consequences. Economists should be made sensitive to this evidence and encouraged not to dismiss the virtue of fraternity and distributive justice in their thinking.

The pursuit of self-interest however, is not a sin. In my judgment, it is even a necessary condition for reaching out to the other. Self-interest is a mark of self-appreciation and self-love. If one cannot love and care for oneself, one cannot care for others. For example, in the Gospel of Mark when Jesus is answering to the question asked by one scribe: "Master what is the first (greatest) commandment?" Jesus answered:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. And he added "The second is this, 'you shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."⁶⁸ (Mar 12:28-34 RSV)

To love one's neighbor as oneself is God's commandment. The measure for love of another is love for oneself. Self-interest is a normal attitude of a man or a woman who cares for himself or herself and can therefore care for the other. Unfortunately, often self-interest becomes selfishness and greed. These sins threaten God's plan for humanity: to live in community as brothers and sisters who care for one another. Selfishness and greed are opposed to the society God wants us to build. Richard Gula, a Catholic theologian, writes that we are meant to live together despite our differences:

The covenantal perspective is that we have no life without community and cooperation. Of course we have individual differences; diversity and the tension which comes from it are part of life. In fact, we can enhance our lives to the extent that we are able to sustain a high degree of diversity within a cooperative community.⁶⁹

Selfishness and greed are a distortion of God's plan. They are personal sins and the principal vector of social and structural sin that keeps situations like the one in DRC alive. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states that:

Sin makes men accomplices of one another and causes concupiscence, violence and injustice to reign among them. Sin gives rise to social situations and institutions that are contrary to the divine goodness. "Structures of sin" are the expression and effect of personal sins. They lead their victims to do evil in their turn. In an analogous sense, they constitute a "social sin."⁷⁰

Passivity in the face of a sinful situation may be as culpable as actions which perpetuate it. The social sin embodies also the notion of sin by omission, sin for which we are responsible because we have failed to do what was right.

Margaret Pfeil writes:

Magisterial invocation of the language of social sin represents a development of doctrine in process. The growing edge of that process entails the relationship between personal responsibility for sin and the unconscious, indeliberate activity involved in the creation and maintenance of sinful systems, institutions, and structures.⁷¹

However, one must avoid the error of going to the other extreme that leads one to consider human nature as irremediably corrupted and devoted to sin. Sin is not only a harm done to oneself. It always involves prejudices toward the community. Sin hurts oneself and others. Therefore, the

⁶⁹ Richard M. Gula, S.S. *Reason Informed by Faith: Foundations of Catholic Morality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 95.

⁷⁰ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Second edition. (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000), no 1869, 457.

⁷¹ Margaret Pfeil, "Doctrinal implication of magisterial Use of the Language of Social Sin," *Louvain Studies* 27, (2002), 132-152

pursuit of self-interest at all cost is the denial of the community, is an act against God's commandment to love the neighbors as oneself. Earning money or gathering goods is not intrinsically bad. It becomes an evil and therefore a sin when it does not take into account the consequences that it has on other people. Self-interest becomes a sin when, for example, it allows millions of people in poverty, when it chooses to ignore the suffering of people and care only on mineral or natural exploitation. The final essence of greed and wrong pursuit of self-interest is to deny the other.

3.2. The US Bishops Letter Economic Justice For All, and the DRC

One of the most important documents on economic justice is the letter of the US Bishops: *Economic Justice For All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the US Economy*. This letter was written by the US Bishops in 1986. Twenty seven years later, this letter is still very relevant. The Bishops explain that their goal in writing the letter was:

1. To share their teaching (provide guidance),
2. To raise questions,
3. And to challenge one another.

This pastoral letter reveals that poverty as well as wealth and the means used for gaining it cannot be addressed in isolation. Our world is so globalized that each decision made in one part of the world influences the rest of the earth. The US Bishops wrote:

Developing countries, moreover, often perceive themselves as more dependent on the industrialized countries, especially the United States, because the international system itself, as well as the way the United States acts in it, subordinates them. The prices at which they must sell their commodity exports and purchase their food and manufactured imports, the rates of interest they must pay and the terms they must meet to borrow money, the standards of economic behavior of foreign

investors, the amounts and conditions of external aid, etc., are essentially determined by the industrialized world.⁷²

As I mentioned early in the first chapter, poor countries and the DRC in particular will be wrong to hold industrialized countries as solely responsible for their misery. The United Nations Report on mineral exploitation, for example, has demonstrated that some Congolese army officers are involved in the exploitation of mineral resources. They are accomplices of the persecution of their own people. However, it is true that most of the mineral resources are transformed outside of the DRC and some people inside and outside of the country are ready to use any means to gain as much of these resources as possible. And maintaining the chaos in DRC by fuelling the conflict regardless of the millions of deaths incurred by the violence is the best way to perpetuate the acquisition of the minerals at the lowest cost.

The US Bishops' letter shows that even within the industrialized countries there are people who are not indifferent to a situation that is not morally acceptable. As one of the solutions, the Bishops propose:

Locked together in a world of limited material resources and a growing array of common problems, we help or hurt one another by the economic policies we choose. All the economic agents in our society, therefore, must consciously and deliberately attend to the good of the whole human family. We must all work to increase the effectiveness of international agencies in addressing global problems that cannot be handled through the actions of individual countries.⁷³

What makes this letter particularly relevant for this thesis is the fact that it was written by Christian leaders of the most important economic power in the world. Without any other pressure

⁷²U.S. Catholic Bishops, "Economic Justice for All," In *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage*, eds. David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2010), 756, no 253.

⁷³ Ibid., no 324.

but the voice of their human conscience and faith, these pastors decided for more economic justice in and outside their country, to raise their voice, to speak on behalf of those who cannot be heard. In this letter the Bishops show concern for the poor not only in the USA but also all over the world, especially in the poorest countries. The bishops write:

Fifteen out of every 100 children in these countries die before the age of five, and millions of the survivors are physically or mentally stunted. No aggregate of individual examples could portray adequately the appalling inequities within those desperately poor countries and between them and our own. And their misery is not the inevitable result of the march of history or the intrinsic nature of particular cultures, but of human decisions and human institutions.⁷⁴

Hence, they make a claim for human dignity. They refuse to give up hope. They call for respect and for building a better world, where everybody can find a place and live with dignity. Poverty is not a necessity it is avoidable. Poverty is not linked to the nature of people. As we have seen in the case of the DRC it is, the unfortunate combination of some recurrent and historical events and also the deliberate choice of a few groups of people without moral concern and blinded by greed who take advantage of the silence and passivity of the people of good will. If laws like the *Dodd Franck Act* and many other laws of that nature continue to be made and implemented much of the extreme poverty in the world would disappear.

Moreover, the US Catholic Bishops wrote:

The resources of the earth have been created by God for the benefit of all, and we who are alive today hold them in trust. This is a challenge to develop a new ecological ethic that will help shape a future that is both just and sustainable [....] In short, nations separated by geography, culture, and ideology are linked in a complex commercial, financial, technological, and environmental network. These links have two direct consequences. First, they create hope for a new form of

⁷⁴ U.S. Catholic Bishops (1986), "Economic Justice for All," no 254

community among peoples, one built on dignity, solidarity and justice. Second, this rising global awareness calls for greater attention to the stark inequities across countries in the standards of living and control of resources.⁷⁵

However, one can ask if such a Christian vision of the world is not merely and only idealistic. Peoples are so different, cultures are so opposed and interests are so antagonistic that we need much more than the good will of a few bishops to convince people of the possibility of living together in justice, peace, and respect. Besides, can we, American, Chinese, Indians, and Congolese... live together as people of the Earth? Can we create a community where everybody feels at home, is treated with justice and respect, feels protected and not used, accepted and not tolerated? The US Bishops seem to answer yes to all these questions, and I share their Christian optimism and hope. This is vital for DRC. Only in a world that becomes a global community like the one envisioned by the Bishops, will the Congolese, whose history have been marked by war, violence and poverty, be able to live in peace and their natural resources will cease to be a curse.

3.3. The DRC Bishops and the Congolese Jesuits on Mineral Exploitation

Congolese religious, nuns, priests, and Bishops have paid a high price since the beginning of war in DRC. Abductions, lootings and killings that come with the war, especially in the eastern part of DRC, have not spared them.

One of the first victims of the war in the eastern part of DRC was Mgr. Christophe Munzehirwa Mwene Ngabo, a former Jesuit provincial who was later appointed archbishop of Bukavu, the capital of South Kivu. Mgr. Munzehirwa was killed on October 29, 1996 during the first war that overthrew the regime of the late president Mobutu. This war set in motion a cycle of

⁷⁵ Ibid., no. 12-13, 698.

rebellions in the eastern part of DRC. Members of the clergy and the nuns have often been targeted because they speak out and denounce crimes and lootings.

In DRC the Bishops have very limited means to act; mostly they have spoken out through pastoral letters. In these letters, the Congolese bishops denounce both the mineral exploitation that involves national and international actors and the corruption of the authorities.

In their letter *Changeons Nos Coeurs: Let Us Transform Our Hearts*, written in February 2008, the Bishops asked for a revision of all the unjust mineral agreements and call the international community to respect and sustain this process. To the Government of the DRC they demand for more transparency in disclosing of the many mineral contracts and trade agreements regarding wood and other non-mineral resources. Most of these agreements were signed by government authorities with some international corporations while they were still rebels.

The Bishops also ask that all the corporations involved in the mineral and forestry activities become more committed to their social and environmental obligations, for example by protecting and respecting of the environment and also paying a just wage to workers. In their letter *Changeons Nos Coeurs*, the DRC Bishops write:

Nous soutenons le processus de révision des contrats injustes et nous exigeons des gouvernements étrangers et des institutions financières internationales qu'elles respectent ce processus. Nous demandons à notre gouvernement de rendre clair et transparent le cadre juridique de la situation des contrats miniers et forestiers. Les entreprises minières et forestières doivent respecter les obligations en matière sociale et environnementales.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ <http://www.zenit.org/fr/articles/r-d-du-congo-les-eveques-pour-la-revision-des-contrats-miniers-injustes>
Accessed on February 17, 2013.

Moreover, the Bishops ask for more transparency in mineral and forestry agreement from the Government. In another 2008 letter entitled, *Il Est Temps De Nous Reveiller: It Is Time to Wake Up*, the bishops denounce the corruption, social poverty, insecurity, violence, and mineral exploitation:⁷⁷

Nous sommes convaincus de l'impérieuse urgence de prendre à bras le corps le problème de l'exploitation irrégulière, illégale, massive et abusive, des ressources minières et forestières de notre pays. Les contrats léonins et les trafics d'influence mettent à nu la cupidité de nos congénères autant que des étrangers. Comme nous l'avons relevé dans plusieurs de nos messages, nous continuons à croire qu'au lieu de contribuer au développement de notre pays et profiter à notre peuple, les minerais, le pétrole et la forêt sont devenus des causes de notre malheur. Nous faisons nôtre ce diagnostic lucide de l'Assemblée Episcopale Provinciale de Lubumbashi: Il est clair que les minerais ne profitent ni à notre population ni à notre peuple. Alors que les bénéfices des investisseurs croissent sensiblement, les travailleurs, eux, s'appauvrissent davantage. Notre économie locale n'en tire apparemment pas le profit. Le peuple se demande à qui profite finalement l'exploitation minière au Katanga.

The Bishops declare that they do not understand how, while the number of corporations that invest in mineral activities is growing and the amount of the mineral production is increasing, the population is still in poverty, and many families are not able to afford one decent meal a day. The Bishops denounce the passivity of the public authorities, but the impact of this letter is difficult to measure. Because the Church does not really have any means of coercion and the authorities do not feel themselves accountable to the national conscientiousness. Besides, the Congolese population is very divided on whether or not support the Government in time of war. Despite the evident will to remain one country, most of the Congolese are still very "loyal" to their tribe. Any critic made to the authorities, on the way of governing always bears the suspicion of having an

⁷⁷ <http://www.cheikfitanews.net/article-21179815.html>
Accessed on February 17, 2013.

hidden agenda. This issue will be addressed in the next chapter as a challenge to promote the common good in DRC.

In Congo, the Jesuits are very involved in social justice. There is an office and Congolese Jesuits devoted to social issues and economic justice: CEPAS (Centre d'Etude Pour l'Action Social) which aims at raising awareness on social issues through publication and formations of the population. CEPAS search to establish a link between social studies and concrete action in DRC. It wants to promote the building of a just society inspired by the Gospel and to encourage and promote actions that aim at the economic development of the country.

The mission statement of CEPAS affirms:

Entre autre objectifs, le CEPAS vise à assurer le lien entre l'Etude et l'action sociale, à dégager, à partir d'une connaissance approfondie des réalités politiques, économiques, sociales et culturelles du Congo, les éléments d'une doctrine, inspirée par l'Evangile, de promotion de la justice et du développement intégral et à contribuer à l'effort d'étude économique et sociale au Congo, par l'analyse de la société, de ses structures et des conditions d'un véritable développement durable.

To reach this aim, CEPAS also focuses on assisting students and researchers in providing them with research means such as access to internet, library, seminars and conferences where economic, social and politic issues in DRC are addressed. One of the most renowned publications in DRC, "Congo-Afrique" that addresses social and political matters in DRC and in Africa is published by CEPAS.

In the recent years, CEPAS has published documents on: mineral exploitation; management of natural resources in DRC; the Congolese law on mineral concessions; production and trade and on

the mineral convention between DRC and China.⁷⁸ CEPAS has also published documents informing workers about their rights and has organized seminars on issues related to social justice and development.

Although this is a very ambitious objective, the impact of CEPAS is very limited and difficult to access, because the majority of the population is uneducated and many people are focused on pursuing the basic means of survival. However, by raising awareness even only among the few elite, CEPAS is taking an important step toward the promotion of more social justice.

In the two previous chapters my focus was on understanding the DRC's issues theologically and ethically. The Republic Democratic of Congo is a country that has been at war almost since its existence from its status as a property of Leopold II to a Belgian colony and an "independent nation." I have mentioned that one of the main elements that explain the wars in DRC is the presence of mineral resources that attract to the country the misfortune it has known. Unscrupulous people and companies use different illegal or authorized means to gain control of the minerals. The war in DRC facilitates the acquiring of minerals at a low cost. The members of rebellions and militia groups are often the intermediaries between the small mineral operators and the large companies who want to acquire the minerals.

I stressed that the resources of the world, including DRC's, belong to all. Everyone on the earth should benefit from them and they should certainly not become a cause of the killing that we witness in Congo. However, this universal destination of natural goods cannot ignore the right to private property. DRC is a territory with boundaries and right to its territory. These elements are not details to ignore, but they provide a starting point for a global policy that can ensure that the

⁷⁸ This last agreement, initially evaluated at ten billions USD, was based on the exchange between DRC and China of mineral resources and construction of infrastructures in DRC. It has been renegotiated and is estimated to six billions USD.

Congolese people are not excluded from God's intention. In the following chapter I will give some concrete proposition to address the Congolese paradox.

Chapter IV: Propositions towards a Better Congo

Facing this situation of general chaos, crimes and confusion, there are two possible attitudes: whether despair in front of the killing of millions of people as the result of the most recent war in the eastern part of DRC or a more optimistic approach that seize this moment as a *Kairos* to build a strong and prosperous nation.

Despair, in my view, is a wrong answer to the real question: how to stop the mineral exploitation and its cruel consequences on the populations? The proposed solution must seek to deal with the causes and not the consequences. The problem of DRC is not its size; bigger countries than DRC are in better shape and smaller countries than DRC have known the same fate than DRC or even worse (e.g., Somalia or Cambodia). The size of DRC is not the reason for the chaos in DRC. To put the DRC under the administration of the United Nation, as some have proposed, will only be a temporary solution and will probably be very humiliating for many Congolese. If the real issues causing war are not addressed, issues linked to economic and social justice, this commissioning will simply postpone the resurgence of the same effect once the DRC will be on its own again.

One can also decide to look at war and mineral exploitation in DRC from a positive perspective. Not because war can be a good thing: war is always a bad thing. But from this chaos a nation is coming to life, the feeling of belonging is awakened, and justice and peace are more valued. The Congolese can now understand that nothing has more importance than human life and human dignity. It is my conviction that our natural resources can serve both our population and the poor populations of our neighboring countries. But we still need to determine how this can happen.

This crisis can become the *Kairos* that will lead to a more just society with just laws to which each citizen is bound.

In this chapter, I reflect on some of the following practical questions: What is the common good in DRC and how should we build it? The Church in DRC, and particularly the Catholic Church, has been very instrumental in ensuring the tasks that the public administration has failed to do by providing information, education and health care system to the poor. How to reinforce the role of the Church? How to do it without replacing the public administration? The ecclesial community in DRC and specially the Catholic Church can play an important role in accompanying the transition from crisis to prosperity. Since the interference of neighboring countries - especially from the eastern part of DRC- have been a serious factor in causing further chaos in DRC: how could we prevent in the future any invasion and looting in DRC? If we want to go beyond any military solution, what can be done to assure that these countries become friends and not enemies?

4.1. Defining the Common Good in the DRC

In this section I reflect practically on what should bind us together as Congolese. If it is obvious that we love our country and dream of a great nation, what explains our current failure and how can we build our common future?

The first challenge of the Congolese has been creating a national identity. From a disparate population obliged to live together as the result of the *Berlin Conference*,⁷⁹ how can we create a nation that is able to face our common threat and opportunities?

⁷⁹ The Berlin Conference was held in Berlin, Germany, in 1885. It decided to share territories of the African Continent between some European countries.

The DRC is composed of more than 350 tribes speaking almost the same number of languages. However, there is not a majority tribe in DRC. The country is made of “minorities” that live together, and after only a century of common history, not out of a free decision but because of the historical context.

The DRC was defined as a homogenous territory at the *Berlin conference* without taking into account the cultural, political, and economic context of the native populations concerned. Today, more than a century after the *Berlin Conference*, a large majority of Congolese wants to assume their history and affirm their will and right to exist as a coherent nation in its current size and with all its cultural, historical, and economic challenges.

With such a background it is not an easy task to build a nation based on the common interests and aiming at promoting the common good. Moreover, the common good is not a ready-made reality. It presupposes a common “fight” for an ideal to build and a common and persevering engagement despite all the obstacles and challenges to be surmounted.

David Hollenbach affirms that even in countries as much advanced in the building of their nation such as the USA, maintaining the common good is not something given once and for all. He writes:

This skepticism about the difficulties involved in conceiving the common good is certainly not limited to academic ivory towers. Ordinary people today are increasingly aware that their neighbors have many ideas about what a good life is. The reality of pluralism impinges on people daily as they rub shoulders at their workplace with those who have different religious beliefs and cultural traditions, and whose race, ethnicity, or language is different from their own [...] More to the point, when group of people are fundamentally divergent in their culture, tradition, and way of life, they can appear as threats to each other. When fear of this threat set the tone, interaction with people who are different is perceived as a danger to be avoided. When understood in such terms, interaction can seem more

like a “common bad” than a good we share in common. Defense of one’s turf becomes the first requirement of the good life.⁸⁰

In writing this, David Hollenbach was probably more concerned with his own society and his own people, the American people, than with the Congolese. Nevertheless, this quotation shows how differences, apparent or real, can pose a difficulty in defining and building the common good.

For the average Congolese, the expectation and definition of the common good is very simple. It resides in how to meet some very basic needs: to have three meals a day (one good meal a day will be even the only requirement for a majority of Congolese); to have access to good medical care for most of the Congolese; to have access to education for children; and to have work and wages that can guarantee the person’s dignity and help her to meet the other two basic needs. People want to work but cannot find decent work and, in most of the cases, when they are hired, there is no authority to ensure that the laborers’ rights are respected. Today, for some Congolese, the common good means just the possibility of living in peace, where peace is understood as absence of war, no fear to be raped or being obliged to leave one’s home to escape killing. For many Congolese, since the outset of the war the common good means the right to life, a right that is currently denied to many Congolese.

4.2. Common Good versus Common Bad

One can ask what in the Congolese society represents the biggest threat to building and preserving the common good. What is the responsibility of the Congolese for what is happening to the country? Why do some other African countries rich in mineral resources seem to be in better

⁸⁰ David Hollenbach, SJ, *The Common Good in a Divided Society*, The Santa Clara Lectures 5, no. 3 (April 1999): 1-12.

shape than the DRC? Angola, Nigeria, or Algeria, for example, although they have also known periods of war and violence, do not seem to have reached the level of disintegration of DRC.

In my view, the responsibility of the Congolese to build a country and to resist foreign assault or even for some to participate in it is due to some sort of “cancer” within the Congolese society, a reality that can be identified, using Hollenbach’s expression, as a *common bad*. Our *common bad* as Congolese and our first and worst obstacle to building of the common good is named tribalism.

Tribalism has two sides. First the passive: fear to denounce all situations of favoritism, injustice towards a group of people based on their tribal membership. Second, an active one: active rejection of one group by another, the approval of discourses based on prejudices toward a group of people based on the tribe or, worse, the exclusion, violence and killing of people who belong to different tribes. Tribalism is the root cause of the Congolese failure to build a strong nation and to resist assault from the outside. Tribalism could be considered as the original, personal, and structural sin of the Congolese and of the DRC. Tribalism is a structural sin insofar that it approves of structures (internalized or not openly expressed) that deprive people from certain rights and opportunities only because they belong to another tribe. In time both of peace and of war, tribalism is the secret struggle and fight that opposes the Congolese and undermines all initiative towards building a common good. Because tribalism involves suspicion, fear, hatred and rejection of the other, tribalism is as harmful as racism. Tribalism is the form that racism takes in DRC. The first form of social and cultural prejudice and discrimination that the DRC faces and that explains together with the exploitation of mineral resources in DRC the reason of the growing chaos as well as political instability is, in my view, tribalism. The ideology of tribalism is more or

less founded on the same principles as racism: prejudices, discrimination, rejection and hostility based on the simple fact of difference.

4.3. How is, Tribalism this *Common Bad*, as Bad as Racism in DRC?

In *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*,⁸¹ Bryan Massingale addresses the issue of racism. It is striking how a parallelism can be made between racism and tribalism both based most of the time, on prejudices. I will briefly describe what is tribalism in DRC using some of the concepts of Massingale and then I will agree with Massingale that the Christian and ethical virtue of compassion is the key element in addressing this Congolese *common bad*.

As in most sub-Saharan countries, the DRC is more or less composed of one racial group. Therefore, racism (understood as discrimination based upon the color of the skin) as such does not exist. The *Oxford Dictionary* defines racism as an ideology that validates the belief that members of a race share a set of characteristic traits, abilities, or qualities, that are inherited, and therefore that race can be ranked as innately superior or inferior to others. The same dictionary defines tribalism as “chiefly derogatory, the behavior and attitudes that stem from strong loyalty to one’s own tribe or social group.”⁸² This definition of tribalism is quite clement because my own experience of tribalism is not that it is only a strong loyalty to one’s own tribe or social group, which could actually be a positive thing. This loyalty is mainly directed *against* the members of other tribes who are considered as a threat and in some cases people to physically eliminate. Although many people have suffered from the prejudices and violence linked to the racist ideology during colonialism, the DRC is now an “independent” country and “ruled” by native people.

⁸¹ Bryan N. Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, (New York: Orbis books, 2010).

⁸² “Tribalism.” *The New Oxford American Dictionary*, 2nd edition. 2008.

Therefore, in my view, tribalism is another sort of “racism” that replaces the notion of race with the belonging to a cultural group, a tribe. The same prejudices and hostility toward a “different” people that characterize racism are found in tribalism. Tribalism is as harmful as racism. Tribalism is based on the conviction that one’s own tribe is superior or better than the other and people belonging to one’s own tribe should have the best positions in the society, in political, economic or religious organizations, notwithstanding their competence or experience. In DRC many political parties are constructed on a tribal basis. Military conflicts are identified, beyond the political claiming, as opposing people belonging to different tribes or ethnic groups.

The issue of tribalism is not yet fully addressed in DRC. Very few documents mention and discuss about it. There is even a sort of tacit agreement not to talk about it publicly. This situation may be explained by the fact that people find themselves powerless, not knowing what to propose to address it and do not really believe that the nation can be cured from it. Since tribalism is not institutionalized, it becomes difficult to make law about an issue that officially does not exist.

4.4. How to Address the Issue of Tribalism? How to Cure the DRC from this *Common Bad*?

Addressing the issue of discrimination based on race, Bryan Massingale affirms that most of the people who are against discrimination tend to show sympathy towards the victims. But sympathy is not enough; sympathy does not solve the problem. Massingale rather advocates for an attitude of compassion, which commands a greater engagement. For Massingale, sympathy focuses just on the effort to treat the victim with courtesy, decency, and respect, while compassion should result in a call for social transformation.

What is Compassion?

Compassion is a composed word, of Latin origin, that means “to suffer together with.” Compassion as a virtue consists in trying to put oneself in the shoes of the person who is affected and imagining how the person feels. Massingale is not the only author to believe in the strength of compassion, Albert Nolan, in *Jesus before Christianity*, writes that:

Although he came from the middle class and had no appreciable disadvantages himself, he mixed socially with the lowest of the low and identified himself with them. He became an outcast by choice. Why did Jesus do this? What would make a middle-class man talk to beggars and mix socially with the poor? What would make a prophet associate with the rabble who knows nothing of the law? The answer comes across very clearly in the gospels: *compassion*.⁸³

Compassion, both for Massingale and Nolan is the key virtue that moved Jesus and should move all his followers engaged in social transformation. Tribalism finds its root also in the absence of compassion. If those who act out of tribalism could be helped to put themselves in the shoes of their victims, this probably would change their sense of tribal belonging. Therefore, compassion should engage any person with a healthy mind in taking action against injustice and discrimination. However, compassion is a virtue and a virtue is both what we receive as a gift, given by the Creator, and what we can learn and practice. In DRC the education process should be oriented towards teaching children and adolescent to be compassionate and to fight tribalism as the biggest threat to our life and common good. This will be the first step towards building a more homogenous nation.

In DRC the Catholic Church has worked to maintaining civil society alive in many territories and in many ways. In some places in DRC the only social structures that still exist are

⁸³ Albert Nolan, *Jesus Before Christianity*, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books , 2001). kindle edition, p.34

run by Catholic priests and nuns. However, if a few years ago these structures were more efficient because of the financial support that the missionaries could have brought from their countries, today the Congolese Bishops, priests, and nuns do not have the same financial means. Nevertheless the same spirit of compassion and devotion still help in struggling to maintain the structures and finding new ways to respond to the local challenges in creating new facilities (hospitals, schools, etc.).

In the following section, I discuss further what the Catholic Church in DRC is doing, and could do, to help build the nation and the common good while fighting the “common bad.”

4.5. The Church in DRC and the Challenge of Building the Common Good

On the issue of tribalism

The majority of Congolese affirm to be Christians. Most of the Congolese attend Catholics masses or Christian’s celebrations and affirm their commitment to the teaching of Jesus, and “believe” that the Scripture is really the Word of God. A biblical approach to the issue of tribalism could help to address this problem within the Congolese context. In the Scripture, Jesus repeatedly challenges exclusion. Paul helped Christianity to affirm the brotherhood of all peoples of all races, tribes and nations. By stressing on this teaching, the Church could help to address and alleviate the impact of tribalism within the society. The Christians Churches in DRC could embrace this task more seriously in order to contribute to building of the Congolese nation. Biblically, the reference to the twelve tribes of Israel is a good example of the starting of a successful society although previously scattered into different tribes: in the midst of their differences, the 12 tribes were able to worship and serve the same God and develop into a strong nation. Moreover, Jesus sent his disciples, to the whole people of Israel and to all the nations without discrimination based on race,

tribe or language. Hence in Christ, we are all brothers and sisters called to be compassionate to one another:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age. (Matt 28:19)

Although personal identity defines each human being and the tribe to which one belongs contributes to building one's personal identity, in DRC tribalism is a social and cultural cancer that has undermined the blossoming of the nation. Sometimes, a too strong emphasis on cultural identity and differences may not be compatible with the ideals of love, unity, and "self-denial" that the building of a nation entails. We need love, "self-denial" and unity to build the DRC.

In DRC the Catholic Church should be more proactive and break the silence that surrounds the issue of tribalism. In other words, it should openly address tribalism as one of the worst handicaps of our society. Tribalism is not a value and no good can come from it. A strong emphasis should be placed on education because tribalism, like racism, is often the fruit of ignorance and ignorance is the lack of education. The Catholic Church, which has many schools in DRC, should take good care of the children and adolescents and teach them to accept differences, respect the dignity of all human beings, reject the fallacy of tribal prejudices, and embody the virtue of compassion. Within the country, the public authorities should be brought to challenge openly and clearly tribalism. Policies should be elaborated to prevent any action or situation that could be, equated with tribalism either in appearance or in reality.

At the same time the Catholic Church must stand firm on values that have been faithfully carried out throughout the ages: values of life, respect of human dignity and righteousness. The sacrifice and commitment of vowed religious must be revitalized with respect to the duties linked to the sacrament of order. The priests must be helped to be now, more than ever, the ministers, the shepherds and the witnesses. In a country where almost everything is relativized and, people are looking for certainty, help and model, they should be able to find that help in the Catholic Church. For many people the priests are the living face of the Church. How can we make the priest more aware (if they are not yet) of carrying such a responsibility? How can they be helped to fulfill their responsibilities in promoting the common good and social justice?

The Catholic Church must also continue to denounce bad governance. Once again at the root of bad governance is the insufficient commitment to promote the common good. Perhaps the greatest challenge for our political leaders is their lack of the notion of common interest.

In DRC people have been so traumatized by different tragedies that have affected the country - from slavery and malaria to HIV/AIDS, from colonization to the present wars - that hope in a confident future has disappeared. The notion of “tomorrow” has been devalued. The only moment in which we can be sure of is here and now. We do not know what will happen the next day, the next hour. What new calamity will strike us again? Politically dictators and corrupt leaders have challenged the trust in political institutions and leadership. Whoever has got some power tries to steal as much as possible to assure his future and the future of his own family. On the national level, in our current political situation, each one in power wants to assure his financial security first. The goal is not to expand and share the prosperity for everyone by including each citizen, but to “feed” oneself in exclusive way. In this context, there is no room for long term projects, for a policy of common interest. The nation subconscious is marked by uncertainty and fear of

tomorrow. Hence, education and the role that the Catholic Church can play in this domain are crucial to form people who are open to others, who aim at promoting the common good and the general interest, people who are not focused exclusively on their own interest but willing to build a nation that would last.

Earlier I mentioned that the immediate cause of war or the efficient cause of war, to use Aristotle's concept,⁸⁴ is the mineral wealth and the involvement of foreign armies in pursuit of that wealth. Moreover, tribalism and the absence of the notion of the common good and general interest constitute the material cause. In fact, tribalism has prevented a greater national cohesion and has inhibited a stronger resistance to external influences. However, one should recognize that among the younger generations the importance given to one's tribe and to particular traditions is smaller than within the older generations. The number of inter-tribal marriages is growing and the sense of belonging to the same nation is increasing. Having said this, what are the external influences on the war in DRC? What can help to promote peace in region?

4.6. The Role of the Neighboring Countries in the Chaos of DRC

DRC shares its borders with nine countries: Zambia, Angola, Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and Tanzania.

In the first chapter, I mentioned how various reports of the United Nations have pointed out the active participation of some neighboring countries in the war in DRC. Actually out of the nine neighbors, only three are repeatedly mentioned in the United Nations Reports as playing an active role in the DRC conflict. Among these three countries (Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi), two

⁸⁴ Aristotle, *Metaphysics, Books Γ, Δ, and E*, translated with notes by Christopher Kirwan, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

(Rwanda and Uganda), have been accused of playing the most active role in fuelling, arming and training the actual rebellion in the eastern part of DRC and participating in the looting of minerals.⁸⁵

Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi share some similarities: all the six other neighbors of DRC are known for having either important mineral deposits (Zambia, Angola, Central African Republic...) or important oil deposits (South Sudan, Congo, Angola). However Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi have very few natural resources. Moreover, these three countries have the largest population density per square km in the region.⁸⁶

<i>country</i>	ANGOLA	ZAMBIA	CONGO	D.R.C	S/SUDAN	Tanzania	C.A.R	RWANDA	BURUNDI	UGANDA
<i>Inhabit. / km²</i>	17	17	12	30	13	46	8	416	290	141

There is therefore a serious problem of space in these three nations. The combination of lack of resources and lack of space for a growing population in these three countries can explain the hostile attitude of the government of Rwanda and Uganda towards DRC.

Nothing can justify the killing of millions of people, even the insufficient national space or the lack of natural resources. The wars of conquest belong to a past and gone age and the frustration and humiliation that it has sown in Congolese hearts can only create an endless cycle of violence that would only be harmful to all the people in the region.

As Christians, a most peaceful and comprehensive approach can be adopted in the way that compassion and justice allow all the populations to live in peace and dignity. In the second chapter, I affirmed that the *universal destination of all material goods* can point to God's purpose in creating the world and in entrusting it to the humankind. The condition for peace in DRC and in

⁸⁵ See Chap I, pp. 13-17

⁸⁶ List of sovereign states and dependent territories by population density, <http://en.wikipedia.org>. Accessed on February 28, 2013.

the rest of the world ultimately depends, on the use and sharing of the resources entrusted by God to the human race. They should promote the common good.

If the mineral and natural resources of DRC are used with efficiency by the Congolese, they could generate enough financial resources to improve the living conditions not only in DRC but also in the areas less endowed with natural resources among its neighboring countries. Besides, Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi have the largest population density per square. Rwanda for example, has 416 inhabitants / km², meaning that soon people will practically live above one another, meanwhile; the DRC has a large area of uninhabited land that could in a mutual and just agreement welcome the foreigners as both the Scripture and compassion teach. However, this cannot be considered as a right to be imposed by Rwanda on DRC, and certainly not as a reason to engage in a hidden war of conquest, as unfortunately it seems to be happening. Nothing can justify any country in its goal to occupy the territory of DRC and impose itself on the Congolese population. Such a procedure will be always considered as invasion and would sow the seeds for hatred that will only nourish dreams of revenge. The population of both the DRC and the three eastern neighboring countries should be brought to understand the danger of acting through violence to reach the same results that can be reached by dialogue and political action.

Conclusion

In this thesis I provided a theological and ethical reflection on DRC's mineral exploitation and the resulting suffering of the DRC people for more than a century. I analyzed the root causes of war and permanent instability in DRC and I proposed some solutions towards the building of a better future.

The first chapter describes what the Republic Democratic of Congo is, a vast territory inherited from the *Berlin Conference*: first a personal property of Leopold II, then a Belgian colony and finally an "independent country." The DRC is the second largest country in Africa and probably one of the richest countries in the world in terms of mineral and natural resources. Very few of the minerals now known in the world are not present in DRC, from uranium to diamonds, oil, and natural gas. The DRC also possesses one of the most important reserves of coltan: columbite-tantalite, a mineral that is used in the electronic industry and one of the core components in the advanced industry of cellphones, computers, and diverse electronic devices of high precision. Meanwhile, despite this abundance of mineral and natural resources that would have brought the DRC to equal economic wealth of the most developed world countries, its population is among the poorest at least according to the Human Development Index, that measures the level of development of a country in term of education, access to medical care, life expectancy at birth and other services, and infrastructures that define the wellbeing of a population.

The DRC also has been at war almost since its establishment as a distinct territory. Slavery, persecution, and colonialism have been the daily reality of a population that is now estimated at nearly 70 million people. One of the most important elements contributing to the instability of its political regimes, poor leadership, and the killing of millions of people has been identified as the

lust that its huge reserve of mineral resources has generated and the greed that it has provoked within and outside the country. Different United Nation Reports have described the mineral resources in DRC as the main factor that explains the driving war in the country and especially in its eastern part. Some neighboring countries, especially Rwanda and Uganda have been mentioned explicitly as financing and equipping the rebellions in DRC to create a situation of chaos in order to profit from the mineral resources in the eastern part of the country.

In this thesis I also proposed some keys to understand and resolve this situation that, in daily life, is neither benefiting the Congolese, nor the aggressor nations described above.

Then I focused on a Christian and theological discussion of the situation in DRC and affirms that the DRC is not an isolated land that should be treated separately on the contrary, it is part of God's project, who created the world and entrusted it to men and women for their common benefit. The commandment of God in Genesis 1:28 - "Subdue the earth"- was addressed to humankind as an invitation to use responsibly all the resources of the earth in a fraternal community. God's plan was that the created human beings would rejoice in solidarity and love, and would profit from all the resources of the earth, including the mineral resources. God did not entrust the resources of the earth to a group of people to the disadvantage of another, but to the whole humankind. Therefore, the resources of the earth belong in common to all. Theologically, in a similar way, Thomas Aquinas affirms, and the teaching of the Catholic Church stresses the universal destination of all material goods. In other words, all the goods on the earth belong to all the creatures and should be used for the benefit of all the human beings on the earth. However, this principle does not ignore the right to private property as a means of freedom. The resources of DRC belong to the universal community but also and first to the Congolese, who by international law, have pre-eminent claim on them. The Congolese cannot illegally be deprived of their natural rights, and war and killing as

a means to take possession of their natural resource are opposed to the will of God and violate human rights.

Spiritually, the *Principle and Foundation* of the *Spiritual Exercises* describes God's project for humankind. The human person was created to love, serve and revere God, and thus to welcome God's salvation. The other things created should be used only to reach that goal. This *Principle and Foundation* explains, in other words, that the material goods created should serve human beings to reach their ultimate telos: God who is love. Our natural resources should help up to promote good living conditions on earth. Therefore the minerals in DRC should not be a source of war but an occasion of feasting and love, *agape*, for the Congolese, their neighboring countries, and the entire world, in justice and respect for all. I have affirmed that in order for such a community to take place the principle of justice and equity should lead to global collaboration.

The third chapter focused on the social teaching of the Catholic Church and seeks to apply its wisdom to the DRC crisis. I reflected on the encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* of Benedict XVI. In this encyclical, the pope challenges the world economy and its insufficient concern for the poor, and how the market, in its present structure and dynamics does not help in building of a more just society concerned with the fate of the poor. For Benedict XVI, the dominant consumerist and utilitarian view of life are problematic. God calls the human race to a fraternal communion beyond all our differences. We are one community, and we should learn to care each for each other. Not everything is for sale. Gratuitousness affirms that human life is more than profit-making.

In the same way, the US Bishops in their letter *Economic Justice for All* and the Congolese Bishops, in various documents, call political leaders to be accountable, to care more for people of

low income and for the poor. The Bishops denounce structures of injustice that prevent a large part of the world's population to escape poverty and misery.

Finally, in the last chapter I identified the Congolese responsibility in the middle of all the current chaos and the external influences. It appears that the Congolese society suffers from a serious handicap named *tribalism*. This “common bad”, hinders its society into building a stronger communities that can, on the one hand, promote economic development, fight extreme poverty and lead the whole Great Lake Region to flourish. On the other hand it resists all the external negative influence.

In DRC, tribalism has historical roots. The different local populations of DRC have never had the chance to “choose” living together; rather their conglomeration is the consequence of the *Berlin Conference* that shared the African territories among some European countries. Therefore, the process of building a nation has been characterized by violent opposition and hostility within the Congolese population. However, a great sentiment and will to constitute a nation is coming to life among the Congolese. Many citizens from different parts of the country and different cultural groups have openly shown their opposition to the dismemberment of the nation. The Congolese want to “remain” or become one nation and to face together their challenges.

The Christian Churches in DRC and, particularly the Catholic Church have been instrumental in the survival of the country. In many places, the only hospitals and schools that are still functioning are run by the local catholic clergy and nuns but with very limited means. The Congolese Catholic Bishops have raised their voice on many occasions to denounce the war, identify their authors and question the government on its failure to address the social and security issues in DRC. Moreover, many members of the Catholic Church have been victims of their involvement in searching for peace and justice.

I have explained why and how the Congolese Catholic Church could do more: it could create more schools, and get involved in more social initiatives. It should not substitute the Government but answer its call to care for the poor and the abandoned. The Congolese priests, nuns and lays could become more involved in education, especially of the young and the children. Such an effort would fight ignorance, the source of all vices, and teach such virtues as honesty, justice, and compassion, which are necessary to build a strong nation on ethical bases. A strong DRC, economically prosperous and politically steady will be a driving force for the all neighboring countries towards development and peace.

However, the action of the Catholic Church can only be very limited in time and impact because, as I have already point out, it is not the vocation of the church to rule nations and replace governments. The ultimate solution resides in the building of societies respectful of human dignity both in the DRC and in neighboring countries. The Congolese and all men and women of good will throughout the world must ensure that the financial means provided by a legal and just trade of mineral resources benefit all Congolese. A DRC economically and politically stable will have the moral obligation to care for the poor even in the surrounding poor countries and to help their government to respond to their social obligation⁸⁷. This approach will discourage greed within the poor countries. On the international level, more initiatives such as those that resulted in the creation of the *Kimberly Process* or the *Dodd Frank Act* must be taken and reinforced. In such a way, that never again diamond, or coltan or any other natural resource will cause war and massive killings.

⁸⁷ in particular in Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi and south Sudan

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