BUILDING THE COMMON GOOD THROUGH VIRTUOUS LEADERSHIP

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CHAPTER I

A. INTRODUCTION

Every human society is fundamentally divided into two important categories of coexistence in the pursuit of the common good. The leader(s) and followers or subjects. And each of these categories must efficiently operate within a certain framework in the society so that their desire of fulfilling the individual and collective goals can be realized.

Notably, in considering the importance of the common good, regard for human dignity and justice for human flourishing and fulfilment, it becomes an issue of great concern to evaluate the part of leadership. Pope St. John XXIII, in his encyclical, *Mater et Magistra*, underscored the interconnectedness between society, the common good and leadership. He observed that "the national economy, as it is the product of the men who work together in the community of the state, has no other end than to secure without interruption the material conditions in which the individual life of the citizens may fully develop."[1] Thus, he advanced that "a sane view of the common good must be present and operative in men invested with public authority, and who would take account of all those social conditions which favour the full development of humanity."[2] This understanding of the role of leadership in the actualization of the common good, wherein, the equality and dignity

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[1] John XXIII, Encyclical on the Church as Mother and Teacher of all Nations *Mater et Magister* (May 15, 1961): 74 (Libreria Editrice Vaticana), accessed September 14, 2020, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_15051961_mater.html.

[2] John XIII, Ibid: 65.

of the human person are acknowledged as the foundation for justice and policy implementation informs the concept of social justice."[3]

Unfortunately, many leading figures in our world today have lost sight of the essential obligations and demands of the leadership position, the significant goals and the mission of leadership. Rather than appreciate leadership as a noble service to the human society, and as such, must be exercised with diligent attention and responsible authority, many have reduced it to an avenue of self-aggrandizement. These developments have met many human societies with awful experiences of poverty, terrorism, protests, unjust killings and other forms of crimes and injustices.

In this paper, I intend to highlight the situation of government and leadership in Nigeria. This is because recent experiences have seen the nation as unimaginably inhabitable and hostile to individuals and groups within the social milieu. From the recent acts of banditry and agitations, protests, followed by police brutalities. Such incidences have been tagged as products of injustice, tribalism, nepotism, lack of respect for human dignity, etc., so that Nigeria as a nation, prominently regarded as the "Giant of Africa," is now almost at the verge of disintegration, due to incessant agitations from different quarters of the population.

Many have alleged that such realities as bigotry, tribalism and the corruption of individuals and government in the country have brought many reasons for pain, suffering and backwardness of a great population of the citizenry. We can recall that the unjust use of military force and firearms, at the order of the government, on the peaceful and unarmed protesters at the Lagos Toll gate,

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[3] Reisch, M. "Defining Social Justice in a Socially Unjust World. *Families in Society*, 83(4): 343-354. Accessed, February 10, 2021, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1606/1044-3894.17?casa_token=rweNtxv2sW4AAAAA:0UOYBbJlZdac7vJI341HdYH5Th8wBhWB1Idhd-KW2id9E_oAnRX2HdTdql7LxPW-BMqLmp5h8hV4.

Nigeria, on October 20, 2020, was an exhibition of brutality from the high quarters. A terror against young citizens, for merely and peacefully demanding justice and the dividends of democracy.

These ugly events are narratives of betrayal and disappointment; a glaring show of stark contradiction of mission, where people in authority demean, brutalize and butcher the same people they pledged to protect. Thus, much of the culpabilities over that Toll gate incident, for example, and other similar situations in the country, which point accusing fingers to the institutions of government, display a clear exhibition of irresponsibility on their part. And if that is true, it leaves the position and competence of those in leadership positions questionable, since they are moral agents who have the legal mandate to implement policies or strategies and build up virtuous social structures that foster the common good.

I chose to deliberate on the experiences of Nigeria, because, these incidents of injustice, which are horrifying tales of "man's inhumanity to man," call for attention and redress. These instances, which concern, especially political leadership are not issues that merely impact this given context, rather, they affect the larger human society as a global community, and as such, attract global moral debates. Little wonder then Pope Francis advised, "I ask everyone with political responsibility to remember two things: human dignity and the common good."[4]

Now, in most moral deliberations for a positive change in any given society, especially in connection to leadership, there are bound to be parameters set to that effect, and there are also agencies for its realization. Such parameters may include necessary strategies to be applied,

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[4] Francis, "*May day Appeal for Human Dignity and the Common good*" (Independent Catholic News Online, May 1, 2014), accessed October 20, 2020, https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/24651

principles to be adopted, as well as resources to be harnessed and structures to be reconstructed; it may also include virtuous traits and invaluable characteristic attributes to be acquired.

Notably, it could arouse wonder, as to the connection between such virtues as justice, prudence etc. or such moral principles as respect for human dignity etc. with the politics of leadership.

Now, to address such wonder, the relationship of virtues, moral or intellectual, to democracy, or in a broader sense politics, may sound odd, and appear incompatible. However, one of the concerns of this paper is to explain why this pairing is necessary, at least, in a twenty-first-century study of theology and politics.

We live in an era of modernity when present phenomena are evaluated based on the interwoven nature of subjects that bother human affairs and social relationships. Michael Himes observed that:

> The sense of the relativity of all things to one another in the passage
> of time- of the forms of the cosmos itself, of natural life, of our own
> species, of political and social structures, of the most significant
> historical events, the noblest of ideas, the most sacred scriptures,
> institutions or creeds- practically defines our era.[5]

He further supposes that "religion is concerned with man's/woman's relations to God and his fellow man/woman so that any deepening or enriching of our apprehension of man/woman possesses religious significance and relevance."[6] In other words, we are in an era of historical,

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[5] Michael Himes, in *Technological Powers and the Person: Nuclear Energy and Reproductive Technologies* (Workshop on Pastoral Problems of Nuclear and Reproductive Technologies, St. Louis: Pope John Center, 1983), 54.

[6] Michael Himes, 55

theological and anthropological consciousness, so that the human person is more sensitive and informed to question or deliberate on issues that affect them and their milieu. They are more equipped to draw from what history provides, to evaluate and interpret them within the purview of their immediate social contexts.

When, for instance, as Daniel Daly highlighted, thinkers like Gustavo Gutierrez and Enrique Dussel analyzed the "miserable" situations of Latin Americans, they underscored that "social sciences" wherein falls political science or politics, "are extremely important for theological reflection." Thus the early liberation theological turn to social sciences was not to "understand abstract concepts such as structures or institutions but to understand the mechanisms, such as liberal capitalism and the paradigm for development that caused so much hunger, misery and premature death in Latin America. It was a concrete social analysis, to address the continent's current social problems."[7]

In this understanding, theology, which is an aspect of religion, a "science treating of God and his relations to man," is significantly linked to politics, as it evaluates man's relations to fellow men, as God's friends, and as they coexist in the same social environment or society. Little wonder then, "politics is said to be a choice-worthy way of life because it is a medium within which the development of moral virtue or virtues (such as justice and self-control) is possible."[8]

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[7] Daniel J. Daly, *The Structures of Virtue and Vice*, Moral Traditions (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2021), 36.

[8] Stephen Salkever G. "Virtue, Obligation and Politics." *American Political Science Review Vol. 68, 1974, 78-92.* Accessed, January 22, 2021, https://repository.brynmawr.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1016&context=polisci_pubs.

This paper, therefore, argues that for a contemporary evaluation of leadership and for political leadership to meet the essential reasons for its institution, in twenty-first-century human society, its obligations and framework must be established on the grounds of moral virtues and other moral standards that enhance human dignity and worth.

We can recall that Thomas Aquinas, who was a renowned thirteenth-century philosopher and theologian, evaluated the issues of the common good based on legal principles. He contended that "every law is ordained to the common good,"[9] and that the making of the law belongs to the whole people or to a public personage who has the care of the whole people.[10] In this assumption, for centuries, papal encyclicals and the rich history of Catholic social teaching have provided a powerful voice concerning poverty, health care, labour rights, the death penalty and environmental stewardship, analyzing the essential role of government in serving the common good.[11] They have maintained that safeguarding the life and the property of the citizenry and the pursuit of the common good falls within the prerogatives and the obligations of political leaders, in virtue of their position of authority and custody of the law.

Furthermore, in his virtue theory, Aquinas further associates some virtues, such as justice and prudence etc., as leadership characteristics, noting that their privation or absence can constitute grave anomalies in the society.[12] Thus, recent authors like Kyrian Echekwu, who considers

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[9] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, q. 90, a. 2. Second and Revised Edition, 1920 Transl. Fathers of English Dominican Province (Kevin Knight Online Copyright Edition, 2020): Accessed, https://www.newadvent.org/summa/.

[10] *ST,* I-II, q. 90, a. 3, Transl. Fathers of English Dominican Province.

[11] Nicholas P. Cafardi, ed., *Voting and Holiness: Catholic Perspectives on Political Participation* (New York: Paulist Press, 2012), 81.

[12] *ST*, II-II, q. 58, a, 7 and II-II, q. 50, a, 1.

injustice on the part of leaders as corruption, argues that injustice gives no title to ownership and that negating the principles of justice rubbishes a just social order.[13]

This work, therefore, presupposes that every leadership institution has grounds upon which its relevance is built. Therefore, leadership positions should be structured such that they enable the position holders to promote the fundamental dignity of every human person and constrain them from the opposite. Only positions of leadership that are designed to promote human dignity will foster authentic human development and flourishing.

Now, with the growing historical consciousness of the human transcendence, evident in scriptures and traditions, and with the heightened awareness of all other essential dimensions of human dignity, it is needless emphasizing the necessity and the role of good conduct in choosing leadership figures. Without saying they must be perfect, never the less, they must be embodiments of virtues and must display conscious and uncompromising energy to lead the human society to the haven, where justice and fair play, equality of persons and fundamental human rights will be upheld.

I want to establish here that matters concerning political leadership is an issue of moral concern, and that its evaluation is also a matter for theological reflection and deliberation. I will draw

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[13] Kyrian C. Echekwu, *Nigerian Politics and Corruption: The Challenges before the Nigerian Church as a Socio-Moral Actor* (I-universe, 2017), accessed November 13, 2020, https://books.google.com/books?id=-8KJDwAAQBAJ&pg=PT226&lpg=PT226&dq=imprudence+and+leadership&source=bl&ots=k2a1LnHUHf&sig=ACfU3U0KEMjlakmjLOzjo4AZp9y39hq_NA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjK3o264eXlAhXPrFkKHQvtAWoQ6AEwA3oECAgQAQ#v=onepage&q=imprudence%20and%20leadership&f=false.

insights from Aquinas' virtue theory, and with the lens of Catholic social teachings, I will attempt to show how moral principles and virtues add credibility to contemporary leadership, on account of the common good. In the chapters of this paper, therefore, I will present those Christian virtuous characteristics and values which should constitute appropriate dispositions and habits for exercising leadership.

Having introduced this paper, the rest of Chapter one will highlight the awful experiences or examples that demean human dignity. It will also show the level of injustice that has existed in Nigeria, with the crop of leaders witnessed in the past 60 years, since independence. I will also show how the political mechanisms and structures have contributed to enabling the injustices and constraining the implementation of good principles.

Chapter two will feature the moral principles for contemporary leadership, which includes the principle of human dignity, as a fundamental principle of life. It will also expatiate on the principle of subsidiarity and deliberate on the common good, as a goal of the society. These will be explained as promising templates for social transformation.

In addition, I will discuss extensively the virtues that promote human dignity and the common good. I will feature distributive justice, as a part of justice that is concerned with an equitable and impartial distribution of a society's resources, in fulfilling the demands of social justice. I will also feature regnative prudence, as part of prudence, which concerns itself with kingship, leadership obligations and decision making. I will also discuss the notion and importance of solidarity in dealing with the nature of humans as social and relational being.

Finally, I will deliberate on how these virtues and moral standards can dialogue with the Nigerian situation, to proffer necessary directions for human development, and to show how their practical

engagement with the principles, laws and structures of the Nigerian nation can engender democracy, build social order and enhance the common good.

B. The Nigerian Leadership System and the Violence of Injustice

I have noted the salient nature of leadership role in human society. This assumption also advances the truism that bad leadership can be the bane of corruption and a range of other social anomalies. In this section, I will attempt to highlight an aggregate of events in the Nigerian society that point to situations of social evils, which I attribute to bad leadership. They contradict the goal of society, and the common good, and contravene the essence of leadership.

Indeed, it is unfortunate that, for many years, Nigeria has witnessed a succession of leaders, who have turned the supposed duty of directing the society towards the common goal, which is the common good, into an agency for impoverishment and exploitation; the denial of the common masses' fundamental human rights and continuous enrichment of the elites. As Oko Asukwo Edet rightly puts it, "Nigeria has become a place where the land, money and wealth are shared among the nobles at the detriment of the poor. Thus, oppression has become the food of the populace as the poor suffer in the hands of the rich."[14]

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[14] Oko, A. E. Social Needs and Injustice in Nigeria: An Appraisal. In *Sapientia Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies* (SGOJAHDS), vol. 3 No. 2 June, 2020; pg. 187-196. https://www.sgojahds.com/index.php/SGOJAHDS/article/viewFile/71/74.

Generally speaking, at independence, western liberal social scientists expected the third world to emerge as examples of democratic or civilian government, beyond the western hemisphere.[15] This is because one would expect that the desire and the enthusiasm for self-determination should propel development and engender the implementation of due process, after independence.

On the contrary, the Nigerian experience has been a tale of woes, considering the spate of backwardness and underdevelopment that has defined its existence, even after sixty years of independence. Although, with the independence in 1960, Nigeria has witnessed both civilian and military governments, the difference between these regimes are insignificant.

At the time of the military, the use of force and monopoly of power was the order of the day, and since military rulers are not elected, but came to power by their monopoly over the instruments of violence- whereas, the essence of a democratic polity is that the rulers should be elected and thus made accountable- that power of accountability which rests with the people, was taken away from them."[16] Indeed, as J. Isawa Eliagwu agrees, "military rule is an aberration."[17]

On the other hand, the civilian regimes are not different, in that, even after about twenty-one consecutive years of civilian take-over in 1999, the use of military force, and the violence of injustice against the citizenry persists. In Eliagwu's observation, the leaders have been so used to the western model of "civilian supremacy" that they have not bothered to ponder over the possibilities of political adaptation of the concept of 'civilian supremacy' to their own settings.[18]

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[15] J. Isawa Elaigwu, *The Politics of Federalism in Nigeria* (Jos, Nigeria: Aha Pub. House, 2005), 9.

[16] Elaigwu, 11.

[17] Elaigwu, 12.

[18] Elaigwu, Ibid.

Otherwise, how is it that a government that claims to be democratic, exists without concrete templates for people's participation or "have inputs into decisions which affect their lives."[19]

In this section, therefore, we would like to highlight the different episodes or dimensions that showcase the level of injustice from the crop of leaders that have dominated Nigeria's political systems for decades.

<u>Injustice and Corruption</u>

Issues affecting the vivacity of leadership in Nigerian democracy can be summarized as corruption. It ranges from selfishness and unaccountability to abandonment of infrastructure and impunity.

With what is unfortunately obvious, in the series of analyses over the state of political leadership in Nigeria through history, one would presume that the only factor that propels interest in political aspirations is their material security. As Gerald Mcloughlin and Clarence Bouchat observed that, "in Nigeria, the elected office has become one of the most effective ways of getting rich and gaining personal power."[20] Whereby, leaders, either as individuals or group, are manipulated by their greed and selfish drives to amass wealth. They seek to utilize every opportunity to secure a material fortune for themselves and their families, without considerations to the polity. Their appetite for self-aggrandizement keeps them blind to their foremost obligations of nation-building and the common good. James-Michael Okpalaonwuka clearly explains the situation when he stated:

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[19] Elaigwu, Ibid.

[20] Gerald McLoughlin and Clarence J. Bouchat, *Nigerian Unity: In the Balance* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute and U.S. Army War College Press, 2013), 31.

The leadership of the independent Nigerian state fell into the hands

of a people, some of whom were not interested in nation-building.

They were primarily interested in using state power to acquire

wealth for themselves, their families and their collaborators.[21]

We recall here, the likes of Ibrahim Babangida who introduced the Structural Adjustment Program

(SAP) in 1986 and singlehandedly siphoned the Gulf War 1991 proceeds.[22] Also, Sani Abacha,

who, according to Nuhu Ribadu, former chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes

Commission (EFCC), was believed to have taken for himself about $5-6 billion, from Nigerian

coffers.[23] Again, former senate president, Adolphus Wabara, was reported to be guilty of receiving

a bribe of 55 million Naira from professor Osuji (the former education minister) to inflate the

budgetary allocation to the education ministry. Madam Patricia Olubunmi Etteh, the first female

speaker of the house of representatives was forced to resign following an allegation of

misappropriation of public funds in multiple contracts of 628 million Naira (US $5 million) for

the renovation of her official residence and purchase of 12 official cars. Likewise, the senate

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[21] James-Michael Okpalaonwuka, *Morality and Politics in Nigeria: Moral Integration in Nigerian Politics as a Way Out* (Frankfurt am Main; New York: P. Lang, 1997), 29.

[22] Onifade Comfort and Ojukwu Chris, Democratic Governance and Fuel Crisis in Nigeria, in *Akanji Tajudeen et al (eds.) Challenges of Democratic Governance in Nigeria (Society for Peace Studies and Practice:* John Archers Publ., 2011): 66.

[23] Aluko Adeniran, Political Corruption and National Security in Nigeria: The Imperatives of Transformational Leadership in Isaac O. Albert, Willie Aziegbe Eselebor, and Nathaniel Danjibo, eds., *Peace, Security and Development in Nigeria* (Abuja : Dugbe, Ibadan: Society for Peace Studies and Practice in association with Peace and Conflict Studies Programme, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan : in collaboration with John Archers Publishers, 2012), 474.

committee in 2006 pronounced the former vice president under President Obasanjo administration, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, guilty of corrupt enrichment, having said to have diverted the sum of US $145 million Petroleum Technology Development Fund.[24] Just to mention these few. In the long run, they all go scotch free after a few brief attempts at prosecutions and trial.

Furthermore, in his work, *There was a Country*, Chinua Achebe noted that his sojourn in politics was marked by disappointment and frustration because the vast majority of the characters he encountered in the political circles were there for their selfish advancement.[25] Thus, his rejection of the offer of the award of honour of the commander of the federal republic was his way of protesting against the environment of corruption and injustice perpetrated by the Nigerian leaders.[26]

With these instances, one would conclude that many of the people who are in leadership positions in Nigeria were not moved into it for the reason of the common good, and some never had good moral plans and proposals for the animation of the society into an environment for societal development and human fulfilment. Rather, they were there for their selfish gains.

It is unfortunate, yet factual that a lot of political office holders in Nigeria use their time in office to engage in the business of building castles, hotels and establishing other private businesses in all

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[24] Ogundiya, Ilufoye S., Political Corruption in Nigeria: Theoretical Perspectives and Some Explanations. *The Anthropologist.* Vol. 11, no. 4 (2009): 281-292. Accessed, march 10, 2021, https://www.issuelab.org/resources/20162/20162.pdf.

[25] Chinua Achebe, *There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra* (London: Allen Lane, 2012), 244.

[26] Achebe, 249.

the major cities of the country and beyond. They abandon their primary obligations- of setting up working infrastructures and other social amenities- to decay and deterioration.

In recent times, there have been huge records of loss of lives and properties, due to accidents on dilapidated and sub-standard roads, infernos and other road hazards. In most of these incidents, the unavailability of standardized facilities for rescue operations turns would-have-been-salvaged cases into hopeless situations. The paucity of infrastructure, electricity and other structures that boost the economy has for long marginalized development and investment in the country.[27]

Currently, Nigeria has been rated low in its access to sources of external financing, due in part to international credit ratings that rendered the country non-credit worthy. It is on record that debt servicing has been a huge source of capital efflux in Nigeria. For example, as Oshikoya Temitope reported, that as of 2004, Nigeria's total external debt amounted to 35 million dollars or half of Gross Domestic Product (GPD) and one hundred and twenty (120) per cent of exports, as compared to 26.6 per cent in Algeria and 22.6 per cent in South Africa; sister countries with whom Nigeria is considered as the "Big-four" in Africa (South Africa, Algeria, Nigeria and Egypt).[28]

Notably, too, the debt burden has been very high, with the budgeted debt service constantly exceeding expenditure in the social sector by two-and-half times.[29] And although the renowned

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[27] Innocent Franklyn Ezeonwuka O., Transforming Nigeria's Economy on the Path of Sustainable Development in the 21st Century: Challenges and Reflections. *Mgbakoigba Journal of African Studies*. Vol. 3. July, 2014.

[28] Oshikoye Temitope, Nigeria in the Global Economy in *Business Economics*. 2008, Vol. 43: 31-43. Accessed February 1, 2021, file:///C:/Users/Henry/AppData/Local/Temp/Oshikoya2008_Article_NigeriaInTheGlobalEconomy.pdf.

[29] Oshikoye Temitope, Ibid.

Paris Club has at a time written off external debts owed by the Nigerian government, there has been nothing to show in the economy for such development, since every money that comes into the country, by any means, is embezzled, shared and looted by the political leaders. In this connection, Nuhu Ribadu of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission reported in a 2009 paper that between 1960-1999, Nigerian officials had stolen or wasted more than $440 billion. Needless to emphasize that these leaders/officials used these amounts of money for their private and individual purposes, leaving the economy to a decline, and the country, to perpetual debt.

According to Ogbonna G.N, available evidence as of 2010, shows that Nigeria has proven oil reserves of about 36 billion barrels, condensate of 4 billion barrels, proven gas reserves of 187 trillion cubic feet, and the present average daily production of oil is 2.6 million barrels.[30] This is evidenced by the total oil revenue generated into the federation account from 2000 to 2009 which amounted to #34.2 trillion, while non-oil was #7.3 trillion, representing 82.36 per cent and 17.64 per cent respectively. Observably, the world bank report of 2010 stated that as a result of corruption, 80 per cent of Nigerian energy revenue benefits only 1 per cent of the population. This means that 99 per cent of Nigerians do not benefit from oil revenue, according to the report. Also, the world bank development report of the same year reviewed that Nigeria's per capita income stands at US$2,748; an amount that is poorer than Ghana, US$10,748 and Cameroun, US$10,758.[31]

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[30] Ogbonna G.N. "Petroleum Income and Nigerian Economy: Empirical Evidence" in *Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review.* Vol. 1, no.9 (April,2012): 33-59. Accessed February 4, 2021, https://www.arabianjbmr.com/pdfs/OM_VOL_1_(9)/4.pdf.

[31] Ogbonna G.N, ibid.

A country considered as one of the largest oil-producing countries of the world, yet her citizens have at most times suffered inflated prizes of petroleum products, and at other times scarcity of the said products. Rated as the giant of Africa, yet has remained "one of the poorest in the world." All, because of the failure of successive governments to use their revenues adequately for the development of the economy, coupled with mismanagement of funds and unaccountability on the part of leaders and their cohorts. And although several agencies, like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent and Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), Fiscal Responsibility Bill and the Public Procurement Bill, the Budget Monitoring and Price Intelligence Unit (BMPIU), etc., have been instituted to monitor transparency and ensure accountability, most of these end up being hijacked by the same leaders and turned into avenues for witch-hunting their political opponents.

About wages, Nigerians have been exhausted with the complaint without change or at least improvement, regarding the overwhelming gap between the wages of those in leadership- the governors, the senators and other constitutional representatives- and the wages of the common civil servants. It will not be an over statement to say that in most regions of the country, civil servants and pensioners are owed in perpetuity, for over months that run into years.

In a 2008 report from the National Bureau of Statistics, for example, over 70 per cent of the population can barely feed themselves.[32] And in 2010, the world bank reported that an average Nigerian lives under $1.25 daily, and place their life expectancy at 48 years.[33] This shows the level

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[32] Aluko Adeniran, Political Corruption and National security in Nigeria: The Imperatives of Transformational Leadership, in *Peace, Security and Development* in Nigeria, 476.

[33] Adams Adeola, The Significance of Early Warning Signs in Preventing Electoral Violence in Nigeria, in Albert, Eselebor, and Danjibo, eds., *Peace, Security and Development in Nigeria*, 40.

of poverty that common Nigerians live with. Sometimes the debts on wages are transferred from one administration to another. Etc.

Occasionally, out of poverty, hunger and frustration, the poor masses indulge in industrial action, or the less patient among the citizenry, troop to the streets for a peaceful protest. Many times, their expression of dissatisfaction over the state of affairs are usually turned down or countered by either of two ways. The first, resorting to the political divide and rule strategy, whereby a few leading figures in given parastatals or unions are cornered and handsomely rewarded to disband and destabilize the collective efforts and action of the poor masses. Or secondly, a declaration of a state of emergency, through military enforcement. In the cases of the latter, lives are lost, people are injured and the masses' efforts come to nothing. The recent protest that resulted in the Toll-Gate shooting, as I hinted earlier, is a clear example.

In the aspect of the education and health system, both sectors of the country's economy are significantly underfunded and grossly neglected, coupled with the living conditions of educational and health personnel. Without giving a detailed analysis of these two sectors, the current situation of things is appalling. The situation in Nigeria, if not alleviated speedily and drastically, will gravely contradict the United Nation's 17 points 2030 projections of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially, regarding health, poverty and education. This is because currently, Nigeria's 2019 poverty and inequality index report, from the National Bureau of Statistics, states that about

40.1 per cent or 80 million Nigerians, out of about 201 million, are considered to be poor by national standards.[34]

Thus, an average Nigerian cannot afford adequate education and health services. The unjust response to this anomaly is that the political elites, rather than establish templates to better the situation, send their children and wards abroad for medical check-ups and adequate education, while the poor masses, who have little or nothing to contribute to this declining situation, are left to suffer in pain, anguish and frustration. Notably, Emmanuel Danjibo reports that, by the year 2010, about 68 per cent of Nigerians still lack education,[35] 46 million (33 per cent) have no access to healthcare; 1.8 million have minimal access to healthcare through the national health insurance scheme (NHIS), 16,560 political office holders have access to healthcare in Europe, North America and India, Arabia, Israel etc.[36]

Notably, in the past, the Nigeria catholic bishops' conference had decried "with deep concern the prolonged distress of the Nigerian nation." They have been moved by "the misery and agony of the individuals and families in Nigeria, who are unable to live worthwhile lives and fulfil their obligations and aspirations," due to the greed and impunity of the public officials, whose interest is in their gains rather in the service to the community. After many years, the situation is still the same or even worse. The conference had warned that "justice is the only way to true and lasting

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[34] National Bureau of Statistics, 2019 Poverty and Inequality Report in Nigeria, accessed March 30, 2021, https://taxaide.com.ng/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2019-POVERTY-AND-INEQUALITY.pdf.

[35] Danjibo Nathaniel, Democracy and Development: Evaluating Nigeria's Social Indicators, 1999-2010, in Albert, Eselebor, and Danjibo, *Peace, Security and Development in Nigeria*, 61.

[36] Danjibo Nathaniel, 62.

peace."[37] It is the most basic cornerstone for life in one's community, nation and world. More than an individual option, an illusionary virtue, or an abstract notion, justice is understood theologically as a life-giving reality, as an envisioned and desired world that sustains the flourishing of humans and creation.[38] Unfortunately, as it seems, these admonitions have gone unnoticed.

Achebe once reviewed the thoughts of James Booth (1981:49), a perceptive student of Nigerian politics, who drew attention to the excerpts in the biographies of Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe and Chief Obafemi Awolowo, two pioneer leaders and among the founding fathers of Nigerian politics. He highlighted that in a solemn vow made by Azikiwe in 1937, he pledged to utilize his earned income to secure his enjoyment of a high standard of living and also to give a helping hand to the needy. Awolowo on his part, promised to make himself formidable intellectually, morally invulnerable, and to make all the money that is possible for a man with his brains and brawn to make in Nigeria. Achebe concludes that thoughts such as these, among many other such mentalities, are more likely to produce aggressive millionaires than selfless leaders of their people.[39] According to him, the "theft of national funds is one of the factors essentially making it impossible for Nigeria to succeed.[40]

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[37] Okpalaonwuka, *Morality and Politics in Nigeria*, 229.

[38] Gerald M Boodoo, World Forum on Theology and Liberation, and World Forum on Theology and Liberation, *Religion, Human Dignity and Liberation*, 2016, 283.

[39] Chinua Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria* (London ; Exeter, N.H., USA: Heinemann Educational Books, 1984), 11.

[40] Achebe, *There Was a Country*, 249.

Indeed, the cruel "tendency to pious materialistic wooliness and self-centred pedestrianism"[41] seen in Nigerian leaders is a social and economic malady. Otherwise, how can one explain this height of injustice and criminality, where a political office holder will be elected, sworn in and inaugurated for public service, but then he/she spends the entire duration of his/her tenure, without any reasonable development to the society, nor accountability to the people, yet, in most cases, be welcomed, or better understood, buy or rig their way into another higher, strategic and even more sensitive political positions. There, they enjoy immunity from probing and continue in their selfish projects of embezzling public funds and defrauding the countries' coffers, with impunity at all levels of government, to say the least.

Insecurity

This prolonged economic brutality, inequality in wealth distribution, political emasculation, indiscriminate human rights violations, blatant denial of rightful desserts by political leaders has given voice to eco-terrorism and agitations and general insecurity in many parts of the country.[42] This is because "corruption is an affront to national security.[43]

The constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria provides that "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government,"[44] and that includes government at all levels

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[41] Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria*, 11.

[42] Ezeonwuka Innocent Franklyn O. Ibid.

[43] Adeniran Aluko, "Political Corruption and National Security in Nigeria: The Imperatives of Transformational Leadership" in Albert, Eselebor, and Danjibo, *Peace, Security and Development in Nigeria*, 462.

[44] The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (promulgation), section 14, paragraph 2, sub-section B.

and jurisdictions. But given the "deficit democratic governance," the level of corruption, from the high places and then infecting the entire polity, coupled with the inability and failure of the political henchmen to establish, institute and sustain adequate and sufficient programs and policies that will alter the structure of inequity and injustice, the security of lives and properties of many Nigerians are jeopardized and compromised;[45] since, as Aluko pointed out that, "political corruption undermines the legitimacy of the state and thus incapacitates the state from performing its primary responsibility, which is, that of providing security for her citizens."[46]

It is notable that all the dimensions of activities that are proving serious security challenges, in forms of militancy, kidnapping, armed robbery, political crises, banditry, tribal crises, even ethnoreligious conflicts, and eco-terrorism, are characterized by agitations against the absence of justice. For example, as Ilemona Adofu and Abdulkareem Alhassan, noted,

> The genesis of the Niger Delta crisis can be traced to the disenchantment that arose between the representative of some Niger Delta minority ethnic groups and a multi-national oil corporation operating in their land over the exploitation of their God-given treasure without compensation.[47]

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[45] Joseph Fayeye O. Role of the Security Sector in Promoting Democratic Governance in Nigeria in Tajudeen Akanji, Nathaniel Danjibo, Willie Eselebor, eds., *Challenges of Democratic Government in Nigeria* (Ibadan: John Archers Pub. Ltd, 2011), 77.

[46] Aluko Adeniran, Ibid.

[47] Ilemona A. and Abdulkareem A. Insecurity and Economic Development in Nigeria. In *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development.* Vol. 9. No. 18, 2018: 101-111. Accessed February 4, 2021, https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/234648572.pdf.

This explains why most security challenges and the efforts to curb them are proving abortive, since most Nigerian youths within the labour age bracket are jobless, and even the certified among them remain unemployed after many years of toil in the universities.[48]

Regrettably, those who bear the brunt of this menace to the social system are the poor common masses and their children. The children of the leaders and a few other self-made wealthy, find comfort, safety and security in some other countries outside Nigeria, while the leaders themselves live exquisitely under the watch and protection of poor, underpaid and submissive orderlies and security agents.

It is an unfortunate, yet real situation, that a country that has enjoyed her independence for 60 years; a nation blessed with rich natural and human resources, and tremendous landmass and flourishing vegetation for agricultural production, etc., is still struggling to feed her citizens; a country of over 170 Universities, yet with over 2 million young graduates unemployed, to mention a few. Indeed, it is factual that, Nigeria as a nation is "entangled in a web of atrocities and maladies such as corruption and gross under-development."[49]

The level of injustice is alarming, and more so as it is practically perpetrated by the leaders, who relegate the rule of law, disregard the fundamental human rights and make a mess of the provisions of democracy. Nigerians are witnesses to collapsing public utilities, inefficient and wasteful parastatals and state-owned companies.[50]

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[48] Nathaniel Danjibo, Democracy and Development: Evaluating Nigeria's Social Indicators, 1999-2010, in Albert, Eselebor, and Danjibo, *Peace, Security and Development in Nigeria*, 63.

[49] Oko A.E, Social Needs and Injustice in Nigeria: An Appraisal. Ibid.

[50] Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria*, 20.

There is no people's participation in decision making, and even elections are emptied of such free and fair arrangements that would have engineered authentic change through people's choices and voting franchise.[51] Power and all it provides are monopolized by a small elite group of cabals. Except for a few private educational and health institutions, which the situation has made quite unaffordable, there are no authentic provisions of basic amenities from the government, etc. Social justice is entirely denied. Impoverished and embattled, with a marginalized life span, many Nigerian youths, out of desperation, hopelessness and frustration flee the country at the slightest opportunity.[52] And in fact, the degree of "social injustice currently prevailing in Nigeria" has sparked off the height of dissatisfaction among the poor masses, demonstrated, among other things, by the various recent uprisings and protests against the Nigerian state.[53] Which, unfortunately, is confronted by a careless and depraved show of impunity and disregard from the authorities, who would rather unleash a violent military might on their innocent and armless citizens, than work for the common good.

C. __The Agency of Social Structures__

Having discussed the problems of injustice that exist in Nigeria, and having also pointed out certain experiences that are not in line with acceptable "rules of engagement" or "modes of operations" in democratic societies or in social contexts, where human life and dignity should be valued, and the

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[51] Aaron Tolen. "Political Ethics in Africa." In Koson Srisang and World Council of Churches, eds., *Perspectives on Political Ethics: An Ecumenical Enquiry* (Geneva, Switzerland: WCC Publications [u.a.], 1983), 48.

[52] Innocent Frankly Ezeonwuka O. Ibid.

[53] Oko A.E., Social Needs and Injustice in Nigeria: An Appraisal. Ibid.

common good and equality adequately pursued, this section deliberates on the agency of social structures. In other words, drawing a "connection between moral character (of individual actions) and the social institutions" through which actions are exercised.

The Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, writing *the Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation,* taught that 'structures*,'* are sets of institutions and practices which people find already existing or which they create, on the national and international level, and which orientate or organize economic, social, and political life.[54] Daniel Finn further elucidates that 'a social structure emerges from the interaction of individual persons, often existing far longer than a human lifetime; having an impact in the lives of those persons through the restrictions, enablement, and incentives which structure present to those who operate them.[55] Christian Smith submits that "Social structures involve a human activity that is highly patterned but being patterned does not mean being static, rigid, or inert. Structures are stability and durability in motion. And that motion contributes to the potential for social structural change.[56]

Recall that in the 19th century, with the encyclical, *Rerum Novarum,* on *Capital and Labour,* Pope Leo XIII turned the institutional Church's attention to social structures, where he maintains that although the society's purpose is to make people virtuous, industrialization, coupled with the

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[54] Congregation for the doctrine of faith, "Instruction on Christin Freedom." 74, accessed February 23, 2021, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_1986032 2_freedom-liberation_en.html.

[55] Daniel Finn, "What is a Sinful Social Structure," *Theological Studies* (Theological Studies Inc., 2016): 151.

[56] Christian Smith, *What is a Person, Rethinking Humanity, Social Life, and the Moral Good from the Person up* (University of Chicago Press, 2011): 369.

breakdown of the guild system, led to the poverty of the masses and general moral deterioration. And since the moral character and social institutions are intertwined, he proposes that a return to Christian institutions and social practices could remedy the social situation, believing that a just economic institution, would help to form virtuous persons.[57]

Following this awareness from this 19th-century ecclesial document, Christian reflections over moral principles, the common good and social justice have, to a great extent, been evaluated on the connection between human actions and social structures. With the Vatican II, and especially with the promulgation of the apostolic constitution on *The Church in the Modern World*, *Gaudium et Spes,* talks and reflections regarding the dimensions of human actions and the agency of social structures heightened. Observably, while *Gaudium et Spes* focuses its evaluations on "moral acts and character of individual persons," it does not overlook the fact that social, political and economic structures of the society can thwart a person's goodwill and direct their actions in ways that undermine human dignity and the common good objective.[58] In this connection, many Christian scholars and thinkers have cued into the debate, in the understanding that the agency of social structures is also a matter of concern in deliberations about the existence and flourishing of human society.

The council fathers maintained that "when the structure of affairs is flawed by the consequences of sin, man, already born with a bent toward evil, finds their new inducement to sin, which cannot be overcome without strenuous efforts and the assistance of grace."[59]

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[57] Daly, *The Structures of Virtue and Vice*, 34.

[58] Daly, 34.

[59] Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, (Dec. 7, 1965): 25, at the Holy See. Accessed, March 31, 2021,

Little wonder then it is believed that the historical transformative moments recorded in the social situation of the Latin American countries, through their institutional genesis of liberation theology, draws from the above orientation. In their 1968 Medellin bishops' conference (which came after the Vatican II), they noted that much of the sufferings in their continent was a "sinful situation" which resulted from "unjust structures." Thus, the "structures of sin" subsequently emerged as a central idea within the broad movement of liberation theology, recognizing how social structures were causal factors in poverty and violence.[60]

Although there were a lot of controversies that accompanied the development of the theory of "structural sin" or "structures of sin," especially, given the assumption that, if the structures were regarded as the locus of moral responsibility, the category of personal sin would cease to have meaning, Pope John Paul II, however, realized that the theory of structural sin could not oust the part of human agency. Thus, he incorporated the concept into the official Catholic social teaching around the 1980s.[61] Structures of sin, for him, are "the total of negative factors working against a true awareness of the universal common good, and the need to further it gives the impression of creating, in persons and institutions, an obstacle which is difficult to overcome."[62]

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http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html. Also in Daly, *Structures of Virtue and Vice,* 35.

[60] Daly, 37.

[61] Daly, 39.

[62]John Paul II, Encyclical on the Twentieth Anniversary of *Populorum Progressio, Solicitudo Rei Socialis*, (Dec. 30, 1987): 36, at the holy see. Accessed, march 23, 2021, http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html. .

Notably, with the subject of structures of sin integrated into the Catholic social teaching, there have been series of opinions on the subject; from the encyclicals of Popes to the broad analyses of great Christian thinkers of our time; though not without criticisms, digressions and assents. But while our scope in this work does not include details of the development of the theory of structural sin/evil or social structures, suffice it to say that, we appropriate the ideas of structural sin and social structures for our purposes. First, the factor of "sin" in this context implies any situation in the society that oppresses God's children or keeps them in situations or experiences that contradict their inherent dignity, which is fundamental to their existence as humans, God's images and beloved. An assumption that is highlighted in the works of several moral theologians. For instance, in his *Theology of Liberation,* Gustavo Gutierrez underscores that "the entire political and economic system of Latin America is sinful because it is characterized by the breach of friendship between persons, and God and neighbour."[63] In the same light, Oscar Romero noted thus,

> It is impossible to offend God without offending one's brother or
> sister. And the worst offence against God…is to turn children of
> God, temples of the Holy Spirit, the body of Christ in history, into
> victims of oppression and injustice, into slaves to economic greed,
> into fodder for political repression. [64]

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[63] Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1988), 109.

[64] Óscar A. Romero, Ignacio Martín-Baró, and Jon Sobrino, *Voice of the Voiceless: The Four Pastoral Letters and Other Statements* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1985), 183.

Pope John Paul II, expressed similar thoughts. He agrees that "the God who is rich in mercy, the redeemer of man, the lord and giver of life, requires from people clear cut attitudes which express themselves also in actions or omissions toward one's neighbour," arguing that, not to observe these is to offend God and hurt one's neighbour, including all attitudes which interfere, delay or slow the process of the development of peoples.[65]

Similarly, Pope Francis, who refers to such structures as evil rather than sinful,[66]posits that "if every action has its consequences, an evil embedded in the structures of a society has a constant potential for disintegration and death. It is evil crystallized in unjust social structures, which cannot be the basis of hope for a better future."[67] And for Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, who uses structural sin and structural evil to signify theologically the same reality: structural injustice,[68] "structural evil is a theological category for what social theory calls "structural injustice" or " structural violence."[69]

Secondly, we are appropriating the idea of social structures to deliberate on how the social institutions or structures in the society can enable or constrain, human actions, in the practice of virtues, and how, even without individuals' knowledge, the social structures can constitute a

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[65] John Paul II, Encyclical on the Twentieth Anniversary of *Populorum Progressio Solicitudo Rei Socialis*, (Dec. 30, 1987): 36, at the holy see. Accessed, march 23, 2021, http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html.

[66] Daly, *The Structures of Virtue and Vice*, 45.

[67] Francis, Encyclical on the Joy of the Gospel, *Evangelium Gaudium* (Nov. 24, 2103): 59. Also cited in Daly, *Structures of Virtue and Vice*, 44.

[68] Cynthia D. Moe-Lobeda, *Resisting Structural Evil: Love as Ecological and Economic Vocation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013), 64.

[69] Moe-Lobeda, 65.

hindrance to an effective realization of social justice, or in some instances, become instruments for justifying circumstances that ordinarily would be judged as unjust.

Our reflection on social structures draws from "critical realist social theory," which maintains that social reality is complex and irreducible in type, and can exist independent of human consciousness, albeit known through reason. It also maintains that structures are realities that emerge within relations of persons and groups; they shape but do not determine agency and action, etc.[70] Thus, with the assumption that structures are webs of social relations, social structures are "social relations among preexisting social positions." They are institutionalized social relations, which are the products of networks of relations. As structures are made by individuals, and not of individuals, social structures are made of relations.[71] Christian Smith gives an elaborate definition of social structures.

> Social structures are durable patterns of human social relations, generated and reproduced through social interactions and accumulated and transformed historically over time, that are expressed through lived bodily practices, which are defined by culturally meaningful cognitive categories, motivated in part by normative and moral valuations and guides, capacitated by and imprinted in material resources and artefacts, controlled and reinforced by regulative sanctions, which therefore promote

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[70] Daly, *The Structures of Virtue and Vice*, 73.

[71] Daly, Daly, *The Structures of Virtue and Vice*, 75.

cooperation and conformity and discourage resistance and opposition.[72]

Simply put, social structures are "patterns of human social relations" that promote cooperation, and through which social interactions are capacitated. Using the example of the relations, positions and interactions between a professor, the students and administrators, in a school setting, which is structured in a pattern, Daniel Daly explains that each position enables its inhabitants to carry out specific actions and constrains them from other actions, as expected. Students are empowered to complain to and about, but not terminate, the appointment of a given professor. Professors are required to execute certain practices and can be dismissed if they failed to do so; and the administrators are in a position to demand that the professor does her duties or face a query, etc.[73]

Thus, social structures become structures of sin or evil when, rather than serve as mechanisms for progress and flourishing of human society, they become avenues of exploitation and oppression.

Understood from the above background, the situations in Nigeria assume similar pretexts. The structural framework operating therein inhabit the human agencies acting in ignorance. To use the words of the council fathers, "the society has the potential to both strengthen authentically human qualities and enable persons to sin," in that, "the social order profoundly influences moral agents, for better and for ill.[74] It is a fact that "society is a human product," an objective reality, and man/woman is a social product,[75] so that in the development of the human person, experiences,

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[72] Christian Smith, *What Is a Person? Rethinking Humanity, Social Life, and the Moral Good from the Person Up*, 6. print (Chicago, Ill.: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2011), 326.

[73] Daly, *The Structures of Virtue and Vice*, 76.

[74] Daly, 35.

[75] Daly, 49.

actions and reactions are observed and naturally internalized, and over time, become strong dispositions for subsequent actions and reactions.

Nigeria and Social Structures

In discussing socio-structural issues that impede the efficiency of the political authorities in Nigeria, I would start with the judiciary. While it will not be easy to point out the origins or precursor to the problems associated with the legal system, it is an obvious reality that the system of the judiciary in Nigeria is corrupt. What Ogudiya calls "a weak legal framework and low opportunity cost for corruption."[76] It simply explains the fact that because there are no stringent measures or penalties meted to public offenders, who, especially steal public funds, the rate of crime keeps rising. This is because, since the benefits of such offence greatly outweigh the punishment, there is no hindrance to impunity.

In an example cited by Ogudiya (2009), while an 18-year-old Samson Atayero was sentenced to three months imprisonment by an Osogbo (the capital of Osun state in Nigeria) magistrate court for stealing clothes and sandals valued at five thousand three hundred Naira (5,300), Tafa Balogun, the former Nigerian police boss who stole a whopping sum of 17 billion naira was given six months imprisonment.[77] The idea is that the government officials continue to defraud the nation because the existing legal structure "makes corruption easy and profitable."[78] In other words, because the

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[76] Ogudiya Ilufoye, *Political Corruption in Nigeria: Theoretical Perspectives and Some Explanations*. Ibid

[77] Ogundiya Ilufoye, *Political Corruption in Nigeria: Theoretical Perspectives and some Explanations*. Ibid.

[78] Achebe, *There Was a Country*, 249.

structure does not hold stiff and uncompromising laws against accountability, crimes are enabled and perpetuated.

Again, since Nigeria operates on a system, where only those individuals with the means of capital and who can both pay the exorbitant application fee and fund a political campaign can vie for political posts, the structure of "godfatherism" is inevitable. A situation where very wealthy and influential people sponsor politicians into a political position. The effect is that the beneficiaries remain somewhat relatively indebted to the people or persons by whose sponsorship they occupy such sensitive positions.[79] Ogudiya agrees that "to godfathers, electoral politics is one huge investment opportunity with a considerable promise of massive returns.[80] In that case, political office holders may likely be ceremonial leaders, while being invisibly manipulated by their godfathers and king-makers, who may not have the best interest of the society at heart. Thus, while trying to satisfy possibly the greed or insatiability of these godfathers, society and social institutions suffer. The obligation to pay back and maintain the friendship, which the structure imposes on the beneficiary makes crimes and fraudulent activities easy.

Furthermore, Julius Ihonvbere rightly noted that a major impact of the military rule in Nigeria has been the erosion of all structures of federalism. So that the concentration of power in the federal government and the commanding nature of the military rule turned Nigeria into a federal state nominally. Thus, although the 1999 constitution (which was indirectly arranged by the military who were handing over to civilians) pays much attention to power, it is still lopsided in favour of

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[79] Achebe, 245.

[80] Ogudiya Ilufoye, *Political Corruption in Nigeria: Theoretical Perspectives and some Explanations*. Ibid.

the centre. Consequently, the states of the nation do not have control over their resources. All resources belong to the federal government, with a guarantee of only 13 per cent of the generated revenue to the state where the resources are generated.[81]

One would readily imagine here that in such a situation, where power lies on the leaders, especially, the federal, other state and local actors would readily like to pay their "dues" to the centre to retain their friendship, cover up their injustices and then "deal" with their subjects, as they please. This may also explain why there are little or no developments or impact on the people at the state and local government levels, whereas the few elites who are in control of power at the federal level have more than enough to loot and squander.

Having x-rayed some of the states of affairs that point to the agency of social structures in the achievement of qualitative and effective leadership, it should be noted that these instances do not undermine or excuse individual and personal faults or sins in the discharge of the obligations of leadership. Our goal in this section is to highlight that social structures, if they are not built on good moral templates, may enable or constrain human actions in the assessment of virtues or vices.

A recurrent observable phenomenon, which falls within the purview of critical realism, is that while these faulted social structures remain seeds of inequity or inequality in the society, their modes of oppression are inaptly perceptible, and the fact that individual actions and intentions are either enabled or constrained constitutes such situations a structural phenomenon. For example, in the instance cited above regarding the "weak legal system," it is agreeable that if the succession of

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[81] Julius O Ihonvbere, "How to Make an Undemocratic Constitution: The Nigerian Example," *Third World Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (April 2000): 343–66, https://doi.org/10.1080/01436590050004382.

crimes committed by those in political authorities are not duly convicted, legally condemned and punished, the injustice of siphoning public funds will continue. If there are no structures or policies to deter such incidents, future occurrences are inevitable.

Thus, Pierpaolo Donati argues that involuntary, illegitimate inequalities must be seen as the product of a relationality among actors that lacks reflexivity in the mechanisms that distribute life opportunities, even if those who participate in the exchanges are individually honest.[82] Also, as Daniel Daly highlighted, while some structures are not created with evil intent, they become vicious when they fail to account for the well-being of all who are affected by the structure.[83]

From these arguments, it is clear that leadership or social problems, to a greater degree, is a problem, not only attributable to individual preferences and intentions but also and more significantly, to their social-structural framework. Although the "sinfulness" is sometimes from individuals or group, it is nonetheless real. The "sin" is social, in that, the structural formulation of the society, in varying degrees, is responsible.

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[82] Donati Pierpaolo, Globalization of Markets, Distant Harms and the Need for a Relational Ethics." in *Rivista Internazionale di Scienze Sociali* (2017): 13-42. Accessed March 20, 2021, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Pierpaolo-Donati/publication/315786080_Globalization_of_markets_distant_harms_and_the_need_for_a_r elational_ethics/links/58e4c4d1aca2727858c533f1/Globalization-of-markets-distant-harms-and-the-need-for-a-relational-ethics.pdf.

[83] Daly, *The Structures of Virtue and Vice*, 187.

CHAPTER II

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

A. Moral Principles for Contemporary Leadership

In the previous section, we tried to show how the social structures constitute enabling or constraining mechanisms in the evaluation of human society and the developments therein, recognizing that structures are frameworks for political action. We have also noted that for a 21st-century evaluation of social theories, which likely inform political leadership, the impact of theological foundations, for the realization of the common good and other goals of leadership, cannot be over-emphasized.

Pope Paul VI, in his encyclical on *The Development of Peoples*, *Populorum Progressio* (March 1967), highlighted that "the progressive development of peoples is an object of deep interest and concern to the church;"[84] recognizing that the whole of creation is for the human person, who is charged to give it meaning by her intelligent activity, to complete and perfect it by her efforts and to her advantage.[85] It can be recalled that, earlier, the Vatican II Council asserted that "man's social nature makes it evident that the progress of the human person and the advance of society itself hinge on one another, and that from the beginning, the subject and the goal of all social institutions is and must be the human person."[86] Thus, over time, Catholic Social Thought has committed herself to contemporary social concerns; guiding Christians and policymakers to arrive at a gospel

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[84] Paul VI, Encyclical on the Development of Peoples *Populorum Progressio* (March 26, 1967): 1, at the Holy See. Accessed, March 20, 2020, http://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum.html.

[85] Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, 22

[86] *Gaudium et Spes*, 25

understanding of issues affecting human society.[87] It is important, therefore, to consider the impact of Catholic Social Thought on contemporary leadership, by evaluating how her Christian moral principles can foster "actions that enact" social justice and the common good.

In this section, drawing resources from Catholic Social Teaching and other relevant Christian perspectives, I want to present moral principles that will enable a deconstruction of "structures of vices" in the political context. And to show how their application in the course of leadership can reconstruct the society into an environment where social relations and interactions, that enhance the dignity of humans, are harnessed, towards the common good and individual fulfilment.

Here, we will feature the principle of human dignity, the principle of subsidiarity and the common good.

I.   __Principle of Human Dignity__

Human Dignity or dignity of the human person are mostly used interchangeably. It is a principle that is intrinsically identical to human life and existence. By way of definition, a "principle" is "an underlying faculty or endowment; an ingredient that exhibits or imparts a characteristic quality."[88] In this connection, the principle of human dignity is an underlying faculty of human existence, as well as a natural endowment of every human person.

Over time, the question of human dignity has been a matter of debates in various disciplines, and in most part, in the areas of ethical and theological reflections. This assumption is also highlighted

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[87] Thomas M Kelly and Bob Pennington, *Bridge Building: Pope Francis' Practical Theological Approach*, 2020, 206.

[88] Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "Principle" (Merriam-Webster Inc., 2019), accessed March 9, 2021, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/principle.

when James Keenan, professor of theological ethics, noted that human dignity, which is grounded in the "*imago Dei* tradition, expands and offers guidelines for personal and communal flourishing through the virtue ethics tradition."[89]

Historically, there have been various interpretations informed by different religious and cultural perspectives, in an attempt to underscore a universality in the characteristic qualities and features that define the dignity of the human person. However, most contemporary arguments, both in religious and secular contexts have been centred on the Christian anthropology of the historical/biblical account of the creation of man in the image of God. An image that fundamentally confers on her, the quality of life that is sacred, inviolable, and as well, distinguishes it from all other creation. In the Catholic understanding, every human person enjoys an inherent dignity that must be respected and in no way violated, under any circumstances.[90]

The distinguishing factor of this human dignity from its classic notion of "worth," lies in the fundamentality and transcendence of the reality to human life, such that while its description is elusive, defying a systematic definition and ambiguous in its understanding, its veracity is recognizable and inherent.[91] Therefore, "being in the image of God the human individual possesses

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[89] James Keenan F., "Linking Human Dignity, Vulnerability and Virtue Ethics,"
Interdisciplinary Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society 6, no. 1 (July 2, 2020): 57–73, https://doi.org/10.30965/23642807-00601004.

[90] Edward James Furton and Veronica McLoud Dort, *Ethical Principle in Catholic Health Care* (Boston, Mass.: National Catholic Bioethics Center, 1999), 6.

[91] Susan Haack M., "Christian Explorations in the concept of human dignity." *Dignitas* 19, no. 3(2012): 4-7, 10-13. Accessed February 27, 2021, https://cbhd.org/sites/default/files/premium_content/Dignitas_V19_N3_Fall_2012_Haack.pdf.

the dignity of a person, who is not just something but someone."[92] "He is the only creature on earth that God has willed for its own sake, and he alone is called to share, by knowledge and love, in God's own life. It was for this end that he was created, and this is the fundamental reason for his dignity."[93] As Susan Haack posited, to "define human dignity is ultimately to describe the meaning of being human."[94]

 Luiz Carlos Susin made a stunning analysis bothering on Christian perspectives with the Genesis creation account. According to him,

> With Christian foundation: each human being has the transcendent status of a substance that can be inhabited by the divine, which in turn expresses itself in a privileged manner in all that is truly human. The "scandal" of divine *kenosis (1 cor. 1:22-25)* and *theosis* in humans conferred a higher dignity on each human being, at least in principle, beyond the status of creatures of a God according to the narrative of Genesis.[95]

Susin's analysis stresses the transcendental nature of human dignity, hinged on its foundation on the image of God. His contention is that the creation account is expanded and given more clarity through Christological reflections.

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[92] Catechism of the Catholic Church, (*Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Citta Del Vaticano*, 1993), 357, accessed February 27, 2021, http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/__P1B.HTM.

[93] CCC, 356.

[94] Susan Haack, "Christian Explorations," Ibid.

[95] Boodoo, World Forum on Theology and Liberation, and World Forum on Theology and Liberation, *Religion, Human Dignity and Liberation*, 171.

We can infer from the above understanding that God, taking the human form in the person of Christ, did not "impart dignity and worth to that form," but only revealed that reality through the mysteries of the birth and death of Christ. So that, what originated at creation, was accentuated at the incarnation. In this connection, Regis Duffy and Angelus Gambatese, agrees, that the creation account affirms the dignity of the human person, while the story of the incarnation reaffirms the dignity.[96]

Thus, "from the first moment of existence and conception, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person,"[97] since "it is never a human if it were not human."[98]

By implication, Human dignity is the recognition that human beings possess a special value intrinsic to their humanity and as such are worthy of respect simply because they are human beings. It is an inherent quality in all human beings in virtue of being created in the '*image of God*.' Thus every human being, regardless of age, ability, status, gender, ethnicity, etc., is to be treated with respect.[99] He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons."[100]

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[96] Regis A. Duffy and Angelus Gambatese, eds., *Made in God's Image: The Catholic Vision of Human Dignity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1999), 13.

[97] CCC, 2270.

[98] John Paul II*, Encyclical letter* on T*he Splendour of Truth Veritatis Splendor* (August 6, 1993): 60. Accessed March 13, 2021, http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_06081993_veritatis-splendor.html.

[99] Article on "Human Dignity"- from The Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity (Trinity International University) accessed March 9, 2021, https://cbhd.org/category/issues/human-dignity.

[100] CCC, 357

Darlene F. Weaver distilled four inter-related meanings of human dignity based on Catholic moral tradition. First, she maintained that human dignity is inherent because it is something that humans have, regardless of abilities or aptitudes. Second, persons can possess consequent dignity when they flourish. Third, dignity is normative because it entitles humans to the conditions necessary for a manner of life consistent with that dignity. Finally, it is emblematic because it operates as a moral expression of Christian humanism.[101]

Now, although dignity has political, legal and judiciary consequences, it ultimately has an eminently ethical character. In other words, even with an adequate ethical foundation, human dignity "is vulnerable and exposed to the fragility of breath. It is always the first victim of any form of violence, from the most spontaneous to the most sacred institutional violence.[102] Hence, anything that will insult or exploit human dignity or violate the sanctity of life, such as, slavery, trafficking, murder, abortion, and indeed euthanasia, violates God's purpose for human existence (cf. Ps 8:5; Lev. 19:16, Sirach 34:22).

Expanding on this notion, the congregation for the doctrine of faith, in her instruction on "*The Dignity of the (Human) Person*, -*Dignitas Personae,*" maintained that,

> At every stage of his existence, man, created in the image and
> likeness of God, reflects "the face of the only-begotten son…this
> boundless and almost incomprehensible love of God for the human

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[101] Darlene Weaver, "Christian Anthropology and Health Care," in *Health Care Ethics* (*chausa.org/hceusa*) 2018: 1-6. Accessed March 9, 2021, https://www.chausa.org/docs/default-source/hceusa/christian-anthropology-and-health-care.pdf?sfvrsn=2.

[102] Boodoo, World Forum on Theology and Liberation, and World Forum on Theology and Liberation, *Religion, Human Dignity and Liberation*, 168.

being reveals the degree to which the human person deserves to be loved in himself, independently of any other consideration- intelligence, beauty, health, youth integrity, and so forth. In short, human life is always good, for it is a manifestation of God in the world, a sign of his presence, a trace of his glory.[103]

In other words, God is the sole author and Lord of life (cf. 1 Sam. 2:6; Eccl. 8:8), and the meaning of human life is undermined if the sanctity and dignity inherent in it are not recognized, no matter the circumstance. The Catholic Social Teaching, in recognizing this paramount reality, believes, teaches and proclaims it at all times.

Furthermore, the divine image, by which the human person is dignified, is an innate reality; a truth that is not earned or acquired by any works or qualification, but merely merited by God's creative will and love. Thus, it follows that every human person, regardless of colour or ethnicity, must enjoy this underlying divine gift, without interference or "infringement" from any human activity or diversity.

Many thinkers point to the reality of human dignity as an inseparable basis for conventional human rights theories. For example, Pope Benedict XVI asserts that the "Church's social doctrine is based on man's creation "*in the image of God*" (Gen. 1:27), a datum which gives rise to the inviolable

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[103] Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Instruction on Certain Bioethical Questions *Dignitas Personae* (September 8, 2008), 8 accessed March 9, 2021, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20081208_dignitas-personae_en.html.

dignity of the human person and the transcendent value of the natural moral norms."[104] Richard Neuhaus, a bioethicist, observed that "the meaning, content, and foundations of human dignity are never explicitly defined," but he maintained that human dignity "serves as a placeholder for whatever it is about human beings that entitles them to basic human rights and freedoms."[105] Karin Sporre, a Swedish professor of Educational works underscored that reference is made to human dignity when human rights are formulated. It is the foundation for rights,[106] in that, human dignity needs rights for its realization, and human rights seems to need human dignity as their legitimation.[107] Little wonder then, at the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Right, the United Nation pointed out this fundamental connection, in her recognition that "the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.[108] Indeed, the present consciousness and keener sense

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[104] Benedict XVI, Encyclical on Integral Human Development in Charity and Truth *Caritas in Veritate* (June 29, 2009), 45 (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2009) accessed December 7, 2019, http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html.

[105] Edmund Pellegrino D. et al., eds., in *Human Dignity and Bioethics*, Notre Dame Studies in Medical Ethics (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 218.

[106] Jeff Astley, ed., *Values, Human Rights and Religious Education: Contested Grounds*, Religion, Education and Values 14 (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2018), 268.

[107] Astley, 269.

[108] United Nations, "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (Copyright; United Nations), accessed March 23, 2021, https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights.

of human dignity has given the rise in many parts of the world to attempts to bring about a politico-juridical order which will give better protection to the rights of the person in public life.[109]

We can deduce from the foregoing accounts, that all basic human rights draw their foundation on the inherent dignity of the human person, and her freedom, sanctity and inviolability derives from this transcendental nature, which has been bestowed on her by her creator. It implies freedom of association, "formation of relationships,"[110] and essentially, interdependence. So that, the enjoyment of the fundamental human rights, akin to human dignity, is a natural consequence, or benefit of her state as free, human and God's image.

II.   The Common Good

Understanding the relationship between society and the common good is an issue of national and global concern, especially as it raises questions on the implementation of policies and regulations within the purview of justice, equality, options for the poor and human needs.

In speaking about the common good, it is worthy of note that while there may not be a universal systematic definition of the common good, there are complexities of understanding which are relative to varying contexts. The common good literarily implies any "good (something

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[109] Catholic Church, ed., *Readings on Catholics in Political Life*, Publication, no. 5-703 (Washington, D.C: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006), 42.

[110] David Hodge R. and Terry A. Wolfer, "Promoting Tolerance: The Imago Dei as an Imperative for Christian Social Workers," *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought* 27, no. 3 (August 2008): 297–313, https://doi.org/10.1080/15426430802202203.

desirable),” material or structural, that benefits an average person or group in the society. It is *“the advantage or benefit of all people in society or a group.”[111]*

The notion of the common good has been recurrent in different works, both of the ancient era and contemporary times. Many of these works, while, not giving a specific definition, distinguish the common good from the private good of individuals. Simon Lee points out that most ancient uses of it were in the context of political philosophy.[112] Michael Novak agrees that “in the classic tradition of speech about the common good, the mind is led to conceive of the common good as the terminus of a tendency, purpose, aim, intention. It is the fulfilment towards which human society tends.[113] Drawing from Aristotle’s ethics, Novak buttresses thus,

> For even if the end is the same for the individual and for the state, the good of the state is manifestly greater and more complete, both to attain and to preserve. Though it is worthwhile to secure the good merely for one man, it is nobler and more godlike to attain it for a nation or city-states.[114]

In other words, the common good in the classical period, assumes primacy over the individual good, without prejudice to the importance attached to the latter.

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[111] Collins English Dictionary, “Common Good,”*Dictionary.Com* (HarperCollins Publishers: 2012), accessed March 18, 2021, https://www.dictionary.com/browse/common-good.

[112] Simon Lee, “Common Good,” *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 2016), accessed March 18, 2021, https://www.britannica.com/topic/common-good.

[113] Michael Novak, *Free Persons and the Common Good* (Lanham, MD: Madison Books, 1989), 22.

[114] Novak, Ibid.

The notion of the common good, while influenced by the ancient views, assumes a broader meaning. It draws largely from Christian perspectives, developed in the thoughts of and insights from Thomas Aquinas, who evaluated the common good in connection to the human person and her transcendental nature. According to him, "everything by its natural appetite and love, loves its proper good on account of the common good of the whole universe, which is God."[115] Thus, placing God at the centre of his theology and the concept of the common good, Aquinas maintains that God is the reality to be experienced and enjoyed uniquely by each person, and at the same time, the good enjoyed by many.[116] Therefore, as intrinsically social beings, who exist and flourish only within the context of a community, the human person is obligated to do whatever is necessary for the preservation and flourishing of human society.[117]

Notably, many subsequent deliberations, as well as the Catholic social teaching on the common good, are predicated on this Thomistic assumption, in that, the common good of every society is not an end in itself; it has value only about attaining the ultimate ends of the human person and the universal common good of the whole of creation."[118] So that, everyone has the right to enjoy the conditions of social life brought about by the quest for the common good.[119]

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[115] *ST*, I-II, q. 109, a.3.

[116] Susanne DeCrane M., *Aquinas, Feminism, and the Common Good*, Moral Traditions Series (Washington, D.C: Georgetown University Press, 2004), 59.

[117] DeCrane, 60.

[118] Catholic Church, ed., *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Publication (USCCB Publishing), no. 5-692 (Cittá del Vaticano : Washington, D.C: Libreria Editrice Vaticana ; [Distributed by] United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2004), 75.

[119] Catholic Church, 74.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church maintains that by the common good is understood "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily."[120] It presupposes "respect for the person as such;"[121] requires the social well-being and development of the group/society itself;[122] it requires the stability and security of a just order,[123] and it is in the political community that its most complete realization is found.[124] Therefore, the common good consists of the process of developing the social, economic, and political aspects necessary for human wellbeing in a global context.[125]

From the emergence of the 1891 papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum* of Pope Leo XIII, down through the ages, the Catholic social teaching has reflected on and advocated for the common good of all the people; and by the common good are included all issues of human flourishing in the society, the political and socio-economic well-being, which is viewed as concerned with human rights.[126] Thus, the human right is presented as the authentic and practical expression of the common good, which reflects the fundamental respect due to the human person, informed by the stability of a just order and fully realized in the political community. In essence, the human person has the right to

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[120] CCC, 1906.

[121] CCC, 1907.

[122] CCC, 1908.

[123] CCC, 1909.

[124] CCC, 1910.

[125] Maina Wilson Muoha. "The Common Good and/or the Human Rights: Analysis of some Papal Social Encyclicals and their Contemporary Relevance." *Journal for the Study of Religious and Ideologies* 10, no. 29 (2011): 6. Accessed March 19, 2021, file:///C:/Users/Henry/AppData/Local/Temp/525-1048-2-PB%20(1).pdf.

[126] Maina Wilson Muoha, "The Common Good and/or the Human Rights," 5.

live; the right to bodily integrity and the means necessary for the proper development of life; the right to be looked after[…]etc.[127]

Similarly, Jacques Maritain, a French philosopher, observed that the "adage of the superiority of the common good is understood in its true sense only in the measure that the common good itself implies a reference to the human person."[128] This implies that the common good is evaluated by the measure at which it satisfies the basic needs of the human person. Thus, Maritain adds that the common good "is the good human life of the multitude of persons; it is common to both the whole and the parts into which it flows back and which in turn must benefit from it; it is the recognition of the fundamental rights of persons and those of the domestic society in which the persons are engaged.[129] It is not only a system of advantages and utilities but also the rectitude of life, an end, good in itself; it is something ethically good.[130]

Drawing from the above assumptions, it is apparent that all positions and arguments concerning the common good emphasize the primacy of the common good over the private good. And at this instance, one can argue that any "good" that does not put the human person and his basic rights, not as an individual entity, but as a collective whole, into consideration, does not serve as the common good.

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[127] John XXIII, Encyclical on Peace in the World *Pacem in Terris*, (April 11, 1963): 11, (*Libreria Editrice Vaticana*) accessed April 28, 2020, http://www.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem.html.

[128] Jacques Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1946):29-30.

[129] Jacques Maritain, Ibid: 51

[130] Jacques Maritain, Ibid: 53

Furthermore, Aquinas's arguments on the common good were in his evaluations on legal principles; he contended that "every law is ordained to the common good,"[131] and that the making of the law belongs to the whole people or to a public personage who has the care of the whole people."[132] Aquinas observes that the reason or essence of the law is the common good and that although the law is established either by a group of people or by one in authority, it is binding on all, not for the good of an individual, but the good of the entire group or society.

This assumption buttresses the preeminence of the common good amongst the principles that characterize the aims and purpose of leadership, as well as the mechanisms that engender the progress of the political society. In this understanding, Novak reiterates that "the common good is the good estate of the civil community or state, responsibly shared in by those who belong to it, who are called citizens.[133] He maintained that "the people are sovereign over their public good," and that the common good must make central to its conception, the protection of individual rights so that a society so constituted would inculcate a new range of human virtues, achieve unparalleled prosperity through innovation in every field of human industry, and flourish under the blessings of unprecedented liberty.[134]

Caution must be taken in digesting the above evaluations of Maritain, Aquinas and Novak. They highlight the importance of persons, who constitute the political environment, and their private goods, which by legal standards is their sovereign right. Their advocacy is not a portrayal of what Robert K. Vischer refers to as "dominant right-driven political theory," in which persons are

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[131] *ST* I-II, q. 90, a. 2

[132] *ST* I-II, q. 90, a. 3

[133] Novak, *Free Persons and the Common Good*, 27.

[134] Novak, 41.

conceived as "free and independent selves, unencumbered by moral or civic ties they have not chosen."[135] In other words, the common good does not entail a situation of self-autonomy or individualism within the society; since just as "a single source of authority is inimical to the common good, so also is the opposite extreme of casting each individual as a self-sufficient, atomistic sovereign."[136]

On the contrary, the common good is common because "it is received in persons, each one of whom is a mirror of the whole."[137] It is not the collection or summation of private goods; nor is it the good of the whole, such that the good of the components are sacrificed to the goods of the whole. Rather, it is "the shared life of a political community of free persons living oriented toward justice, friendship and the transcendent."[138] And on this presupposition, any "political authority, whether in the community as such or institutions representing the state, must always be exercised within the limits of morality and on behalf of the dynamically conceived common good, according to a juridical order enjoying legal status."[139]

To end this section, it will be worthwhile to note that the common good characterizes those goods, infrastructural or structural that serve all members of a given society and her institutions. They include both goods that serve no identifiable particular group, as well as those that serve

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[135] Robert Vischer K., *Conscience and the Common Good: Reclaiming the Space between Person and State* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 102.

[136] Vischer, 103.

[137] Jacques Maritain and John Fitzgerald J., *The Person and the Common Good*, 2015, 49, http://www.myilibrary.com?id=1015904.

[138] Vischer, *Conscience and the Common Good*, 103.

[139] Catholic Church, *Readings on Catholics in Political Life*, 115.

posterity.[140] Examples include health care delivery, the right of franchise, fair distribution of the resources of the society, and social amenities, etc.

III.   The Principle of Subsidiarity

In his work, *Conscience and the Common Good,* Robert Vischers analyzed that the common good does not lend itself to easy definition or fixed criteria, but have different perspectives, informed by philosophy, theology and sociology, that help fill out its content and clarify its connection with human conscience. He further noted that these perspectives aim to justify the decentralization of power, including moral authority, and underscore the extent to which the common good requires us to recognize the social dimension of freedom. Of the five perspectives he mentioned, the principle of subsidiarity is one, and it is important for our consideration since it offers materials in our discussion about the common good and the ways or means of its realization.[141]

Subsidiarity is a "principle in social organization holding that functions which are performed effectively by subordinate or local organizations belong more properly to them than to a dominant central organization." It is "an element of the Catholic social doctrine, which holds that what can be done at a lower level in a social system shouldn't be done at the higher one.[142]

Rightly so, although the principle of subsidiarity has now become popular and embraced across the political spectrum, "it was first articulated explicitly in the late 19th century by the Catholic

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[140] Etzioni Amitai, Common Good. *The Encyclopedia of Political Thought* (2014): 603-610. Accessed March 21, 2021, https://icps.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs1736/f/downloads/Common%20Good.Etzioni.pdf.

[141] Vischer, *Conscience and the Common Good*, 104.

[142] Merriam-Webster Dictionary, Subsidiarity, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/subsidiarity.

church as it struggled to define its vision of the social order in a way that avoided the problems of collectivism and individualism."[143] It is among the most constant and characteristic directives of the church's social doctrine and has been present since the first great social encyclical- the *Rerum Novarum* of Pope Leo XIII.[144] It was pope Pius XI, who, celebrating the fortieth anniversary of this great encyclical in 1931, explained elaborately, this "most weighty principle," which he considers as a very important principle of "political philosophy." According to him,

> Just as it is gravely wrong to take from individuals what they can accomplish by their own initiative and industry and give it to the community, so also it is an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and disturbance of right order to assign to a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate organizations can do. For every social activity ought of its very nature to furnish help to members of the body social, and never destroy or absorb them.[145]

On this premise, the supreme pontiff further maintains that,

> The supreme authority of the state ought, therefore, to let subordinate groups handle matters and concerns of less importance, which would otherwise dissipate its efforts greatly…Therefore,

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[143] Vischer, *Conscience and the Common Good*, 104.

[144] Catholic Church, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 81.

[145] Pius XI, Encyclical on the Reconstruction of the Social Order, *Quadregessimo Anno* (May 15, 1931): 79, at the Holy See. Accessed march 28, 2021, http://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19310515_quadragesimo-anno.html.

those in power should be sure that the more perfectly a graduated order is kept among the various associations (in the state/community), in observance of the principle of "subsidiary function," the stronger social authority and effectiveness will be the happier and more prosperous the condition of the state.[146]

Throwing more light on these assumptions, the Catechism of the Catholic Church expands on the necessary connection between the nature of the community or state and the reality of the human person. According to the Catechism, "each community is defined by its purpose and consequently obeys specific rules; but the human person is and ought to be the principle, the subject and the end of all social institutions."[147] This position is informed by the pastoral constitution of the church in the modern world, *Gaudium et Spes*, which explicitly stated that "man's (woman's) social nature makes it evident that the progress of the human person and the advance of the society itself hinge on one another. For the beginning, the subject and the goal of all social institutions is and must be the human person which from its part and by its very nature stands completely in need of social life.[148]

Recent analyses regarding the place of human persons, as moral actors for social transformation and the attainment of the common good in human societies, have highlighted the significance of the principle of subsidiarity, as Romanus Cessario observed, that "the important connection

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[146] Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*, 80.

[147] CCC 1881

[148] Gaudium et Spes, 25,

between the human person and the common good raises several important questions such as subsidiarity."[149]

In this understanding, Vischer notes that "subsidiarity is premised on the empowerment of individuals and groups to meet the needs around them, with the state acting, not as the primary locus of social action, but in a supportive, secondary role."[150] He further argues that subsidiarity repudiates the temptation to see the infidel as a decontextualized rational agent, but rather, and above all, as relational. He/ she is "realized in various intermediary groups, beginning with the family and including economic, social, political and cultural groups which stem from human nature itself and have their autonomy, always with a view to the common good."[151]

Also, in Luca Badini Confalonieri's evaluations, the principle of subsidiarity suggests two dimensions. On the one hand, every decisional level of the society (from the individual upward) has an inalienable responsibility to decide and act within its operational range. Secondly, only those actions which cannot be achieved by the individual or a smaller group alone, can be appropriately achieved through recourse to the higher level of structured community.[152] Confalonieri supposes that, in matters of delegation, the self-determination by delegates (individuals or group) of both their own decisional/operational range and, consequently, also of the limited competence of the delegated, is an unavoidable presupposition for the responsibility of

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[149] Romanus Cessario, *The Virtues, or, The Examined Life*, AMATECA Handbooks of Catholic Theology (London ; New York: Continuum, 2002), 136.

[150] Vischer, *Conscience and the Common Good*, 104.

[151] Vischer, 105–6.

[152] Luca Badini Confalonieri, *Democracy in the Christian Church: An Historical, Theological and Political Case*, Ecclesiological Investigations 16 (London: T&t Clark Ltd, 2012), 144.

any delegation. In other words, all authorities are created and determined in their limits through delegation. [153]

He further argues that the healthy understanding of community which subsidiarity promotes must always presuppose the subsidiary role of any community vis-à-vis the individual. In his opinion, he agrees that one of the best expressions of this insight remains that of Abraham Lincoln, who held that, "the legitimate object of government is to do for a community of people, whatever they need to have done, but cannot do, at all, or cannot, so well do, for themselves in their separate, and individual capacities. In all that the people can individually do as well for themselves, the government ought not to interfere. [154]

Therfore, understanding social action or contribution as the responsibility of those who are in the closest proximity to a given problem reconfigures the modern citizen as proactive moral agents rather than acting simply as reactive subjects of a higher authority.[155] In other words, their initiative, freedom, contributions and responsibility must not be supplanted or absorbed.[156] So that, in the principle of subsidiarity is affirmed the truism that all moral agents of the society have roles and responsibilities, which they must play, without interference from any other quarters, in the exercise of their freedom and dignity, and good conscience, for the realization of the common good.

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[153] Badini Confalonieri, 145.

[154] Badini Confalonieri, 145.

[155] Vischer, *Conscience and the Common Good*, 106.

[156] Catholic Church, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 82.

Care must be taken here. Subsidiarity does not automatically entail decentralization, as it is sometimes mistakenly asserted.[157] It is only opposed to certain forms of centralization, bureaucratization, and welfare assistance and the unjustified and excessive presence of the state in public mechanisms.[158]

Subsidiarity merely asserts that it is each decisional level's responsibility to evaluate what it can do and what it can instead only achieve through delegation and cooperation with the higher level.[159] And as the compendium of the social doctrine of the church underscored, "it is impossible to promote the dignity of the person without showing concern for the family, groups, associations, local territorial realities. And also, for that aggregate of economic, social, cultural, sports-oriented, recreational, professional and political expressions to which people spontaneously give life and which make it possible for them to achieve effective social growth."[160]

From the aforementioned, the church considers the social community or society as an "ordered whole" that can exist in diversely interdependent ways while at the same time, it is important to recall that subordination does not spell obliteration.[161] Therefore, "a community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in case of need and help to coordinate its activity with the activities of the rest of society, always with a view to the common good."[162]

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[157] Badini Confalonieri, *Democracy in the Christian Church*, 146.

[158] Catholic Church, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 82.

[159] Badini Confalonieri, *Democracy in the Christian Church*, 146.

[160] Catholic Church, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 81. Also, see CCC 1882.

[161] Cessario, *The Virtues, or, The Examined Life*, 136.

[162] CCC, 1883.

The principle of subsidiarity, well-understood, enhances the common good and gives character to the dignity of the human person. It reiterates the inalienable dimension of human nature as a social creature, whose fulfilment is realized in the community.

B. Promoting Human Dignity and the Common Good in light of Virtues

In the previous chapter, I slated some of the moral principles that I suggest will create avenues towards social transformation. I agree with Pope Pius X, that making these principles bedrocks for policymaking in any political structure, fans the attainment of the common good into flame. And their practice "not only bestows on the human intellect the light by which it attains the truth but from it, the human will draws that ardour by which it is raised to God and joined with him in the practice of virtue.[163]

Now, "the goal of virtue" Cessario has noted, "is to achieve the truth of life, and this happens only when the person brings his or her activity into a right conformity with the supreme norm for all human conduct, which, as St. Augustine has instructed (the Christian theological tradition) remains the eternal law."[164] Daly, on his part, agrees that "personal virtues can create new social structures," and that personal virtue must accompany structural change for the attainment of stability in the structures.[165]

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[163] Pius X, Encyclical on Teaching Christian Doctrine, *Acerbo Nimis* (1905): 4, accessed March 10, 2021, http://www.vatican.va/content/pius-x/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_enc_15041905_acerbo-nimis.html.

[164] Cessario, *The Virtues, or, The Examined Life*, 181.

[165] Daly, *The Structures of Virtue and Vice*, 46.

In this section, therefore, I focus on virtues; which, in my consideration, collaborate with the afore-mentioned moral principles, and should characterize contemporary leadership. Here we evaluate justice, especially distributive justice; regnative prudence and solidarity.

I.   DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

Distributive justice is a branch of Justice and will be better understood in the light of a systematic definition of justice and its implications.

The word justice is an equivalent of the Latin '*Justitia*,' which is derived from the Latin noun '*Justus,*' meaning just, lawful, rightful, true, due, proper and moderate.[166] The term justice, therefore, is "the quality of being just; practical conformity to the laws and principles of right dealing; the rendering to every one of that which is his due; the ethical idea of just conduct, either of individuals or communities; the moral principle which determines such conduct.[167] All the different components of the etymology "*Justus*" reflects in the different definitions of the word "*Justice.*"

Many contemporary uses and accounts of justice are traced to the ingenuity and influence of great scholastics, especially, Thomas Aquinas, who in turn draws from, but distils the ideologies of ancient thinkers like, Aristotle.

Thomas Aquinas in his definition developed a wider evaluation of justice as a cardinal virtue. According to him *"justice is a habit whereby a man renders to each one his due by a constant and*

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[166] The "Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia" (New York: The Century Co., 1897):3257.

[167] The "Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia" Ibid, 3258

perpetual will."[168] The components of "habit" and "will" as applied in Aquinas' definition have

ethical implications and relative relevance to our study of justice, in that for an action to be just or

be reckoned as a virtue, it has to be measured under the spectacle of "habit" and "will." Suffice it

to mention that a survey of Aquinas analyses of "habit" and "will" is necessary at this juncture for

our consideration.

 First, about habits: Aquinas considers "*habit"* as a "*necessary quality*." Gotten from the Latin

noun *"habitus"* as derived from the verb "*habere, to have,"* he contends that habits (and

dispositions) belong to the first "species of quality," wherein the action of a subject is regarded as

disposed of well or ill, concerning the suitability of the action to the nature of the subject.[169]

Consequently, the evaluation of an act as good or evil follows the same paradigm; thus, "when an

act is suitable with the nature of the subject, it is in the aspect of good, but when it is unsuitable

with the nature of the subject, it is in the aspect of evil; nature is the first object of consideration

in everything."[170]

In the above connection, Lucas Chan, a contemporary virtue ethicist expatiates that, "in ordinary

life, we are continually adopting practices that later become habits, which, as Aristotle understood,

in turn, become a kind of irremediable condition or "second nature."[171] Chan reiterates here that a

constant and consistent practice of an act habituates in the subject such that he acts readily, freely,

easily, and repeatedly. In this understanding, the new advent catholic encyclopedia aptly defines

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[168] *ST*, II-II, q .58, a. 1,

[169] *ST* I-II, q. 49, a. 2.

[170] *ST* Ibid

[171] Yiu Sing Lucas Chan, *The Ten Commandments and The Beatitudes*, (Maryland: Rowman and
Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2012):10.

"habit" as "an effect of repeated acts and the aptitude to reproduce them; a quality whereby an agent whose nature it is to work one way or another indeterminately, is disposed easily and readily at will to follow this or that particular line of action."[172]

The second component in Aquinas' definition of justice is the "Will." Aquinas contends that the will is in the reason, and so the content of the rational appetitive faculty, rather than the irrational (sensitive) appetitive faculty, that is, the irascible and the concupiscible appetites. Now, justice is an act of reason, it cannot proceed from the irrational faculty, since the irrational appetites cannot go as far as to consider the relation of one thing to the other, and since the will is in the rational appetite, it means that the will is a subject of moral virtue (justice). [173]

Notably, Aquinas' judgment follows a logical enterprise. Since the will belongs to the rational appetite, it is a subject of justice; since justice can only emanate from a faculty of reason, other than from a sensitive faculty. Hence, logically, justice is a product of the will as the will is a product of reason. "The will executes what reason proposes,"[174] and "its object is the good in general (*bonum in communi)*; its prerogative is freedom in choosing among different forms of good."[175]

From the above background, one may infer that the understanding of the virtue of justice in particular, and virtues in general, following Aquinas elaborations, takes into account the

[172] Charles Dubray, "Habit" *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910) accessed November 1, 2019, http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07099b.htm#I.

[173] *ST,* II-II, q. 58, a. 4.

[174] Daniel Daly, *The Three Powers of the Soul,* (Unpublished Lecture Note, October 3, 2019).

[175] Maher, Michael, and Joseph Bolland. "Will," *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912) accessed March 24, 2021, http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15624a.htm.

components that qualify an action as a virtue, namely, that the action must be a repeated and continuous practice (habit) and it must be a product of reason(will). In other words, justice is a continuous act of the reason by which one gives to another whatever is due.

Now, Distributive justice is a branch of justice. The term "distributive" from "distribute," is used to refer to the supply or sharing of goods. Hence, distributive justice would ordinarily mean a just supply or sharing of goods that are due to another or others.

Aquinas's evaluation of distributive justice is based on the arguments he earlier established, that "justice is directed to others,"[176] and that "there are two species of justice,"[177] namely,

> In the first place, there is the order of one part to another, to which corresponds the order of one private individual to another. This order is directed by commutative justice, which is concerned about the mutual dealings between two persons. In the second place, there is the order of the whole towards the parts, to which corresponds the order of that which belongs to the community concerning every single person. This is directed by distributive justice, which distributes common goods proportionately.[178]

The Thomistic notion of distributive justice is precise and direct. It underscores the proportionate sharing of the common good, thus he concludes his twofold order by the assertion that distributive justice "distributes the common goods proportionately." This assertion evokes a very important

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[176] *ST*, Ibid, II-II, q. 58, a. 8

[177] *ST,* Ibid, II-II, q. 61, a. 1

[178] *ST* Ibid.

factor that is of ethical significance, and worthy of note, that is, the idea of "proportionality."

Aquinas contends that,

> In distributive justice, something is given to a private individual, in
> so far as what belongs to the whole is due to the part, and in a quality
> that is proportionate to the importance of the position of that part in
> respect of the whole. Consequently, a person receives all the more
> of the common goods, according to as he holds a more prominent
> position in the community…in distributive justice, the mean is
> observed, not according to equality between a thing and thing, but
> according to the proportion between things and persons: in such a
> way that even as one person surpasses another so that which is given
> to one person surpasses that which is allotted to another.[179]

Here the idea of proportionality in no way approves of partiality in the system of distribution, but merely factors the idea of distribution based on the geometrical evaluation, whereby individual members of the community benefit duly from the common good in the proportion that justice upholds.

Arguments on distributive justice based on proportionality and standards have also attracted the interest of most contemporary authors. Paul Glenn, for instance, expatiates the Thomistic position; distributive justice is administered according to "proportion of equality" so that the person of

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[179] *ST* Ibid, II-II, q. 61, a. 2

higher merit or state receives more than the person of lower merit or state.[180] David Hollenbach agrees that "in a market economy, it is appropriate that income distributions be related to productivity and that rewards provide incentives for work needed to produce well-being."[181] Michele Maiese, reiterating the position of Robert Buttram *et al*, maintains that equality, equity, and need should constitute the criteria for such distribution. For her, "equal distribution is thought to give people a sense of full-fledged membership. Equity fosters the motivation to produce, to be rewarded for one's productivity. Distribution according to need ensures that everyone's basic and essential needs are met. [182]

Interestingly, the article of Kailyn Champlin and her group of legal professionals, best explains distribution according to need. Using an example of college scholarship grants, they illustrated how a simple, equal division of resources is likely to result in an unequal outcome. In a college, where an offer of a scholarship of $500 has been decided to help all freshman students whose GPA is 3.0 or higher in their tuition of $4,000 per semester; Oldham et al argued that, on the surface, giving such offer to every qualified student seems to be a fair distribution, but on the other hand, while the offer of $500 will certainly help pay part of the expenses of students whose family can afford the rest of the tuition, it has no value at all to those whose families cannot afford the additional monies. In their analyses, this offer appears to reward students according to their efforts

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[180] Paul Glenn, "A Tour of the Summa"(Catholic Theology Info.) accessed, November 5, 2019, http://www.catholictheology.info/summa-theologica/summa-part2B.php?q=418paul.

[181] David Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: University Press, 2002):197.

[182] Michelle Maiese, "Distributive Justice," *Beyond Intractability*, eds. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess, (University of Colorado, Boulder: June 2003) accessed March 24, 2021, https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/distributive_justice.

or abilities, without putting their individual needs into consideration. Thus, for the Champlin School, this contradicts distributive justice; a more just method of distribution may take into account the financial needs of each student, otherwise, the qualified, but poor students may never go to college by that offer.[183]

Rightly, Oscar Schachter highlights that "we are led more deeply into the analysis of human dignity when we consider its relation to the material needs of human beings and the idea of distributive justice." He observed that "Only few will dispute that a person in abject condition, deprived of adequate means of subsistence, or denied the opportunity to work, suffers a profound affront to his sense of dignity and intrinsic worth." In his assessment, he opines that "Economic and social arrangements cannot, therefore, be excluded from a consideration of the demands of dignity. At the least, it requires recognition of a minimal concept of distributive justice that would require satisfaction of the essential needs of everyone."[184]

Now, since the factor of proportionality and need is paramount in distributive justice, it evokes the importance of competence, authority, and trust in its implementation. Thomas Aquinas iterates that the "act of distributing the goods of the community, belongs to those who exercise authority over those goods."[185] Without delving into the criteria for deciding competence or authority, it is worthy of note that Aquinas' virtue theory, as well as other contemporary theories on the common good and resource management, propose criteria devoid of "respect of persons*," but advocates for

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[183] Champlin Kailyn et al, "distributive justice" (internet) (legal dictionary, 2016), accessed March 24, 2021, https://legaldictionary.net/distributive-justice/

[184] Oscar Schachter, "Human Dignity as a Normative Concept," *American Journal of International Law* 77, no. 4 (October 1983): 848–54, https://doi.org/10.2307/2202536.

[185] *ST* Ibid, II-II q. 61, a. 1

"respect of the cause." Aquinas analyzes that respect of persons is opposed to distributive justice, whereby equality consists of allotting various things to various persons in proportion to their dignity.[186]

Drawing an inference from the aforesaid, distributive justice is a virtue whereby the common good of the society is justly distributed to individual members of that society by one in authority, and proportionately. Thus we conclude here that distributive justice is a leadership trait. It is a virtue that guarantees the competence of one in authority as a leader whose mission and action promote the common good.

II.   **REGNATIVE PRUDENCE**

Prudence is one of the cardinal virtues and a vital necessity in evaluating moral actions as well as principles. And as James Keenan aptly wrote, "the virtue of prudence places the entire discussion on moral reasoning into an anthropological context."[187]

Interestingly, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, and other authors of both ancient and contemporary periods elaborately argued on the virtue of prudence, as well as gave enormous evaluations on its various dimensions. Roche Donal, for instance, throws light on Aristotle's notion of prudence. According to him, Aristotle saw prudence or practical wisdom as "a virtue of thought that is

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[186] *ST* Ibid, II-II q. 63, a. 1

[187] James Keenan K., The Virtue of Prudence (IIa.-IIae, qq. 47-56) in Stephen J. Pope, ed., *The Ethics of Aquinas*, Moral Traditions Series (Washington, D.C: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 259.

practical rather than theoretical and deliberative rather than intuitive. It is the intellectual virtue that perfects reasoning regarding decision making in the realm of human action."[188]

 The new advent Catholic Encyclopedia expounds prudence from its etymology to its relation to the other virtues; "prudence is from the Latin "*Prudentia*" contracted from "*Providentia*," meaning "*seeing ahead*." It has a directive capacity concerning the other virtues. It lights the way and measures the arena for their exercise. The insight it confers makes one distinguish successfully between their mere semblance and their reality, thus, without prudence bravery (fortitude) becomes foolhardiness; mercy (charity) sinks into weakness and temperance into fanaticism.[189] Simply put, Prudence is "knowledge of how to act, how to conduct one's life rightly."[190]

Different thinkers take cognizance of the display of good conduct, as an attribute of prudence. Keenan, for example, observes that the "ability to develop a well-ordered personality depends not only upon the intended exercise of well-ordered actions but also on the prudential determination of those intended exercises." Thus he agrees that "prudence functions to perfect a person's natural inclinations through integrating them into a coordinated way of acting and living in a right manner."[191] Cessario notes that prudence establishes what he calls "*recta ratio agibilium*, a right norm or measure for human conduct." He further postulates that "without the active direction of prudence, human conduct remains supine and prone to miss the mark;" whereby a person's actions

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[188] Donal Roche, "Prudence in Aristotle and St Thomas Aquinas" (Ireland: National University of Maynooth, 2005) accessed March 26, 2021, http://mural.maynoothuniversity.ie/5204/.

[189] Joseph Delany, "Prudence," The Catholic Encyclopedia (New York: Robert Appleton Company: 1911) accessed November 6, 2019, http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12517b.htm.

[190] Paul Glenn, Prudence: *A Tour of the summa* (Catholic theology. Info) accessed March 26, 2021. http://www.catholictheology.info/summa-theologica/summa-part2B.php?t=19.

[191] Pope, *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 259.

"inevitably manifest either excess or defect concerning embracing the proper ends that compose human well-being."[192]

Notably, in the second part of his Summa, Aquinas enlisted the various categorical parts of prudence, which he itemized as *"quasi- integral*," *"subjective*" and *"quasi-potential parts"* of prudence. "Regnative" prudence is one of the subjective parts, by which he distinguishes the part of prudence which "belongs to a king who is charged with the government of a city or a kingdom."[193] It is evident that Aquinas' thoughts on regnative prudence hinge on his earlier propositions that it "belongs to prudence to counsel, to judge and to command, and to seek not only the common good of the individual but the common good of the multitude."[194] Thus, on this evaluation of the acts of prudence and their manifestation through seeking the common good, he develops his analysis on the subjective parts of prudence. so that, while "ruling and governing" belongs to reason, they also logically belong to prudence.[195] and as Keenan helpfully notes that if the object of the other cardinal virtues, justice temperance and fortitude is not prudential, the action of an agent will not just, temperate or fortitudinous, and the agent will not be perfect.[196]

Popular opinions are that in his writings, Aquinas reflects on, and in fact, advances the thoughts of Aristotle, among other authors. In that, while Aristotle considers as a good citizen and a good person, any good ruler who possesses practical wisdom (prudence)[197], for Aquinas, a special kind

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[192] Cessario, *The Virtues, or, The Examined Life*, 108.

[193] *ST* , II-II, q. 50,a. 1

[194] *ST* II-II, q. 47, a. 10

[195] *ST* II-II, q, 47, a. 12

[196] James Keenan, in Pope, *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 262.

[197] Sparknotes Editors, "Aristotle's Politics"(Sparknotes LLC. N.D, 2019), accessed March 9, 2021, https://www.sparknotes.com/philosophy/politics/section3/.

of prudence is regnative, for it belongs to prudence to govern and to command.[198] Paul Glenn, reflecting on this treatise of Aquinas, comments that, "reigning prudence belongs to those that legislate and exercise government."[199] For John Urh, "the classical virtue of prudence is the excellence of good judgment which leadership thinkers since Aristotle have aligned with excellent rulers or excellent public leaders."[200]

Again, Keenan attributes three functions to prudence which can be considered as special characteristics of one who commands or governs. According to him, prudence, perfects actions, prudence directs to proper action, and prudence integrates one to his or her rational actions. He observes that "to attain its proper perfection, moral virtues must attain the rule of reason,"[201] "prudence in establishing this rule or mean of reason makes virtues good since the good in acquired virtues is good as defined by reason."[202] The directive function of prudence is in connection to the natural law and the ends. Keenan underscores that prudence determines "the means and thus directs the practical reason and inclinations toward the end to be attained." With this assumption, he acknowledges with Aquinas that prudence, used in the political sense, is directed to the common good.[203] Finally, he postulates that prudence integrates, in that, in

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[198] *ST* Ibid, II-II, q. 50, a. 1

[199] Paul Glenn, "The Subjective Parts of Prudence," Ibid,

[200] John Uhr, "Prudential Leadership: The Power of Practical Reason," in "Prudential Public Leadership- Promoting Ethics in Public Policy and Administration" (New York: Palgrave, 2015): 43-59, cited from Springer Link (Switzerland: Springer, 2019), accessed March 23, 2021, https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9781137506498_3.

[201] Pope, *The Ethics of Aquinas*, 262.

[202] Pope, 264.

[203] Pope, 264.

prudence, an agent's operation, her or his practical reason and personality are perfected simultaneously." Since the agent becomes what she or he intentionally does.[204] Thus he concludes that "prudence in its special and most perfect sense, belongs to a king who is charged with the governance of a city or kingdom."[205]

In the same line of reasoning, Riggio, Zhu, Reina, and Maroosis contend that prudence is a strong hallmark of a leader. In their argument, they maintained that it has a "directive capacity" above the other virtues. It lights the way and measures the arena for their exercise. Without prudence, they opined, the exercise of fortitude can appear a lot like foolhardiness, temperance may become fanaticism, and justice may turn into a weakness. It is, therefore, necessary that leaders be prudent to possess any of the other three cardinal virtues [206]

From the above suppositions, it is perceivable that Aristotle, Aquinas, and other authors are convinced that a special kind of knowledge or habitus is needed to effectively undertake the task of leadership, which goes beyond a mere personal enterprise, to something more relational and goal-oriented.

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[204] Pope, 265.

[205] Pope, 264.

[206] Ronald Riggio et al, "virtue-based–Measurement–of-Ethical-Leadership: The Leadership Virtues Questionnaire" *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research* (American Psychology Association, 2010): 237 accessed march 22, 2021, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ronald_Riggio/publication/232478242_Virtue-based_measurement_of_ethical_leadership_The_Leadership_Virtues_Questionnaire/links/552fca440cf2f2a588a9dc03/Virtue-based-measurement-of-ethical-leadership-The-Leadership-Virtues-Questionnaire.pdf.

At this juncture, we can recall with Patrick Dobell, a renowned political analyst, and author, about the historic incident between the United States and the Soviet Union. An incident that I consider captures prudence as a mark of leadership.

Dobell underlines that when George Shultz, the U.S Secretary of State (1982-1989) recognized the fundamental shift (of administration) in the Soviet Union, with the advent of Mikhail Gorbachev (1985-1991), he began the arduous task of changing the ideological hostility of President Ronald Reagan (1981-1989) toward the Soviet Union. Shultz worked to persuade a recalcitrant administration to change 40 years of unremitting enmity towards the Soviet Union to one of cautious support of reform.[207] Dobell judges this as a prudential act, and considers that "prudent judgment identifies salient moral aspects of a political situation which a leader has a moral obligation to attend to in making a decision." Therefore, he concludes that a consistent enemy of prudent judgment is ideological rigidity, which interprets all information within one frame of reference and drives to one outcome regardless of costs. Thus, "to be driven by emotion, vengeance, anger, ambition, or pride violates the responsibilities of leadership and the requirements of prudence." [208]

Summarily, the idea is that a certain power (of reason) is significantly relevant as an accompanying trait to those who are in the position of authority. Thus, regnative prudence is a sort of mental

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[207] Patrick Dobell, "Political Prudence and the ethics of leadership" in *Public Administration Review* (Wiley: Jstor.Com, 1998): 80, accessed March 24, 2021, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/976892.pdf?casa_token=v6LQiMMibdUAAAAA:R_4tHxSFPc86r9dKO8y7xRKDkVyfiKyYxSgds4lhSQy15Cg590TWMyZtWK94krUX5zwchk4jxO764dQwqlX8SOq12qV2jmHCnU9JXFA5wmnyxc1Gpj8.

[208] Patrick Dobell, Ibid.

empowerment, by which one, under the direction of reason and rectitude of the will commands, judges and acts in conformity to a special position which has the achievement, not of his gain or interest, but the common good as its goal.

III.   <u>SOLIDARITY</u>

Solidarity is a popular language in the world of Christian ethics, as well as in politics. It reflects the universal orientation of the 'interdependence' of the human person in all aspects of life and existence. Solidarity is a term that can be used interchangeably with friendship.

Etymologically, it is a Mid-19th century word derived from the French '*solidaire*' meaning 'interdependent', 'complete', 'entire.[209] Solidarity means 'unity (as of a group or class) that produces or is based on a community of interests, objectives, and standards.'[210]

Micheal Hornsby-Smith, emeritus professor of sociology at the University of Surrey, recorded fraternity, otherwise, solidarity, as one of the three characteristics of citizenship which emerged out of the French revolution of 1789. The other two are freedom(liberty) and equality.[211] He acknowledges that although it has important secular roots, it has been much stressed and broadened in modern Christian perspectives, especially, in Catholic social teaching,[212] although recent studies of non-official catholic social thought have also added useful insights into the discussions. For

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[209] Online Etymology Dictionary, "Solidarity" (Douglas Harper, 2019) accessed November 20, 2019, https://www.etymonline.com/word/solidarity.

[210] Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "Solidarity" (Merriam-Webster Inc., 2019) accessed November 18, 2019, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/solidarity.

[211] Michael Hornsby-Smith P., *An Introduction to Catholic Social Thought* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 62.

[212] Hornsby-Smith, 81.

example, he agrees with Boswell,[213] that solidarity was at the peak, and other values, which includes relationships of community, sociability, conviviality, civility, fraternity, social consciousness and public spirit, are found to inter-penetrate and inter-relate in the light of solidarity.[214]

This assumption brings to light the place of solidarity in its historical evaluations and accounts for the pride of place it enjoys in discussions bothering on the social and relational nature of the human person who essentially is situated in the community. As Bishop Fulton Sheen noted, that "a true social order can be built only based on fraternity."[215]

In the light of this important foundation, Pope John XXIII, in his encyclical, made remarkable advocacy for solidarity that permeates diversity. He argues that 'there are many parts of the world where we find groupings of people of more or less different ethnic origin.' 'Nothing,' he maintains, "must be allowed to prevent reciprocal relations between them."[216] Also, the Second Vatican Council, at the start of its Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, expresses this interconnectedness of the human species when it states that, "by his innermost nature man is a social being, and unless he relates himself to others he can neither live nor develop his potential."[217]

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[213] Boswell J. 2000. 'Solidarity, Justice and Power-Sharing: Patterns and Policies', in Boswell *et al.* (eds.):93-114.

[214] Hornsby-Smith, *An Introduction to Catholic Social Thought*, 83.

[215] Fulton J Sheen, *Justice and Charity.* (Rockford, IL, UNITED STATES: ACS Books, 2017), 64, http://www.myilibrary.com?id=1010478.

[216] John XXIII, Encyclical on Peace in the World *Pacem in Terri* (April 11, 1963): 100, at the Holy See, accessed November 19, 2019, http://www.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem.html.

[217] *Gaudium et Spes*, 11.

Pope Paul the VI took these points of view further, he noted that "the development of an individual necessarily entails a joint effort for the development of the human race as a whole. He maintained that "Man must meet man, a nation must meet nation, as brothers and sisters, as children of God, and in that understanding and friendship, begin to work together to build the common future of the human race,[218] in the light of solidarity, social justice and universal charity.[219] He advocated that changes can be made and conditions are improved if the spirit of the gospel is infused into and made to permeate the laws and structures of civil society.[220]

Similarly, John Paul II, underscored that "movement of solidarity in a sphere of work can be necessary also concerning the conditions of social groups." He believes that such "worker solidarity, together with a clearer and more committed realization by others of workers' rights, has in many ways brought about profound changes.[221] He further argued that however much society worldwide shows signs of fragmentation…their interdependence remains close. And that when this interdependence is separated from its ethical requirements, it has disastrous consequences for the weakest. Here, "One can certainly speak of selfishness and shortsightedness, of mistaken political calculations and imprudent economic decisions."[222]

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[218] Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, 43.

[219] Paul VI, *Populorum progressio*, 44.

[220] Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, 80.

[221] JohnPaul II, Encyclical on Ninetieth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum *Laborarem Exercens* (September 14, 1981): 8, at the Holy See, accessed March 20, 202, http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html.

[222] John Paul, *Solicitudo Rei Socialis,* 36.

Also, Francis addressed issues regarding "fraternal openness that allows us to acknowledge appreciate and love" one another, regardless of such grounds as physical proximity, and nativity.[223] He maintains that "human beings are so made that they cannot live, develop and find fulfilment except in the sincere gift of self to others., nor can they fully know themselves apart from an encounter with other persons. Life, for him, exists where there is bonding, communion, fraternity; and is stronger than death when it is built on true relationships and bonds of fidelity.[224]

Observably, the general analysis on these various accounts of solidarity is based on the assumption that since the human person is naturally created as relational and social, her flourishing is characterized by her ability to interact meaningfully and purposefully in her social milieu. In this connection, we recall the position of the constitution of the church in the modern world, *Gaudium et Spes*, that "solidarity must be constantly increased until that day on which it will be brought to perfection."[225] By this position, the council affirms the universal knowledge that man, in essence, is a relational being and that his fulfilment as a being in the community lies in this relation.

Thus John Paul II aptly iterates that solidarity is not a "feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far," it is "a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all responsible for all.[226] It highlights the intrinsic social nature of the

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[223] Francis, Encyclical on Fraternity and Social friendship *Fratelli Tutti* (October 3, 2020): 1, at the Holy See, accessed March 31, 2020.
http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html.

[224] Francis 87, Ibid.

[225] *Gaudium et Spes*, 32.

[226] John Paul II*, Solicitudo Rei Socialis*.

human person, the equality of all in dignity and rights, and the common path of individuals and peoples towards an ever more committed unity.[227]

Solidarity is about valuing our fellow human beings and respecting who they are as individuals.[228] It is a virtue that enables one to bear the burden of another in ways that can lead to the flourishing of both parties when possible.[229] It "must be seen above all in its value as a moral virtue that determines the order of institutions."[230] Little wonder then, John Paul II always stressed the importance of solidarity, which he argues is a veritable agency for structural and human development. "It should be obvious," he once noted, "that development either becomes shared in common by every part of the world (or society) or it undergoes a process of regression even in zones marked by constant progress."[231] Likewise, The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace consider solidarity as one of the principles and values that engender the sustenance of the society worthy of the human person, as well as one of the basic components of the Christian view of social and political organization.[232]

On these bases, the unjust social structures, "structures of sin" or "structures of violence" that dominate relationships between individuals and peoples must be overcome. They must be purified

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[227] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Ibid: 192

[228] Catholic Social Teaching, "Solidarity as a Christian Virtue," (Internet), accessed December 16, 2019, https://www.catholicsocialteaching.org.uk/themes/solidarity/resources/solidarity-christian-virtue/.

[229] Tisha Rajendra, "Burdened Solidarity: The Virtue of Solidarity in Diaspora" in *The Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* (Philosophy Documentation Center*,* 39, no.1, 2019):109.

[230] Catholic Church, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 85.

[231] John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, Ibid: 17

[232] Catholic Church, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 253.

and transformed into structures of solidarity through the creation or appropriate modification of laws, market regulations, and juridical systems. This is because "solidarity rises to the rank of fundamental social virtue since it places itself in the sphere of justice."[233] A virtue directed per excellence to the common good and is found in the commitment to the good of one's neighbour, with the readiness, in the gospel sense, to lose oneself for the sake of the other instead of exploiting them, and to serve them instead of oppressing them for one's advantage.[234]

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[233] Catholic Church, 85.

[234] Catholic Church, 86. Also, *Solicitudo Rei Socials*, 38.

CHAPTER III:

ANALYZING THE STRUCTURE OF LEADERSHIP: DIRECTIONS TOWARDS A JUST SOCIAL ORDER

a. **Dialogue for Moral principles and Virtues: Pathways towards the Common good in Nigeria**

The thesis of this paper began with a description of the problem of leadership in Nigeria. Using critical realist social theory, I demonstrated that the problem of leadership in Nigeria is, among other factors, a structural problem.

Of important note is that attempts to answer the question as to 'what is the problem with Nigeria'? or 'what is/are the genesis of the problems,'? has always ended without tangible answers. Yet daily experiences and investigations show that Nigeria is gradually becoming inhabitable, ranging from the height of corruption, insecurity, injustice, terrorism, banditry, unemployment, poverty, etc., which has become the order of the day. The reality is that the problem of Nigeria is hydra-headed and generally spell out an environment of injustice and corruption.

Some indigenous authors consider that the foundation upon which the seed of injustice was sown, thrived, and continues to thrive in Nigeria is connected to tribal and ethnic inclinations and divisiveness, which is blamed on the colonial masters.[235] Others, like Gerald Mcloughlin and Clarence Bouchat, think that, since its discovery around 1956, oil rose to dominate the Nigerian

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[235] Eliagwu J. Isawa, 2005:24; Okpalaonwuka James-Micheal, 1997:27; Chinua Achebe, 1983:5.

economy, politics and society, and that the scale of corruption that has grown alongside the revenues collected from oil affects other sectors of human development, even until today.[236]

Here, rather than deliberating on the historical development or stages of Nigerian problems, my interest is to address the generality of the existent anomalies, using the principles and virtues, which we have introduced in previous sections. My claim is that the problematic developments in Nigeria society all border on leadership, and the solution must also be founded on good governance.

I argue that the traces of tribal and ethnic affiliations and the economic inconsistencies which have grown alongside the "oil boom," and other developments, have contributed, and in recent developments, boosted the sustenance of injustice in the Nigerian nation. But more importantly, I opine that institutionalized corrupt leadership has sustained its existence. And over time, has become a style of government.

Beginning his work, *The Trouble with Nigeria*, our renowned author, Achebe, noted thus:

> The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian character. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of the personal example which is the hallmark of true leadership.[237]

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[236] McLoughlin and Bouchat, *Nigerian Unity*, 31.

[237] Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria*, 1.

This opinion is shared by Adeniran Aluko, who argued that "The task of founding a new Nigeria devoid of corruption demands a transformational leadership-one that has the moral and intellectual capability of changing the characters of the Nigerian state from one that oppresses her citizenry to one that promotes their well-being of her citizens." He further buttressed that "by transformational leadership is meant a sort of leadership that can earn trust and loyalty of citizens through selflessness in terms of credibility and impactful performance.[238]

With these backgrounds, I will evaluate the political leadership of Nigeria under the lens of the theories we earlier mentioned. I propose that to build a true society marked by an experience of peaceful coexistence and human fulfilment, the social structures and constitutional structures must be infused and informed by distributive justice, solidarity, regnative prudence, subsidiarity, respect for human dignity, etc. I submit that it is in the consideration of this context where moral principles and virtue ethics intersect with political leadership, that the importance of theological perspectives to contemporary politics, on account of the common good, is recognized.

Indeed, as Pope Pius X advanced, "take away God, and all respect for civil laws, all regard for even the most necessary institutions disappears; justice is scouted; the very liberty that belongs to the law of nature is trodden underfoot; and men go so far as to destroy the very structure of the family, which is the first and firmest foundation of the social structure."[239]

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[238] Albert, Eselebor, and Danjibo, *Peace, Security and Development in Nigeria*, 464.

[239] Pius X, Encyclical on Pope Gregory the great*, Iucunda Sane* (March 12, 1904): 19. Accesed march 10, 2021, http://www.vatican.va/content/pius-x/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-x_enc_12031904_iucunda-sane.html.

Recall that in Chapter two of this paper, I presented the values, virtues and principles which I claim should inform social structures and characterize positions of authority in government. Here, I argue that for there to be virtuous leadership, that fosters the common good, where justice and equality, fairness and flourishing will exist, those principles must be benchmarks for socio-structural transformation and the virtues should be leadership traits and hallmarks.

This chapter, therefore, both discusses notable structures that I consider immoral, and then dialogues with them in light of the values, virtues and principles of Catholic Social Teaching, proposing possible ways in which these structures can be transformed.

a. The Judicial Structure

For any society to thrive adequately, the legal system must be effective. The efficiency of the judicial or legal structures lies in its being incorruptible and uncompromising. It must be an objective entity, which has fairness, justice and the rule of law as its operating system. Unfortunately, the legal system of Nigeria, for over decades, has been unjust. Like the allegorical "toothless bulldog," it has a tough and firm feature but is weak to act when it is necessary. Nigeria's judicial system features all the necessary dimensions of any standard legal system, but without power and authority, in matters concerning especially, those in government.

The many and recurring occasions of theft of public funds by those in authority and political leaders, without a justifiable or appropriate process of legal prosecution, punishment and possible restitution, are glaring evidence of the inefficiency of the legal system in Nigeria. For instance, I was a witness to the state media broadcasts of the government of Imo state, in Nigeria, when in 2010, under Governor Ikedi Ohakim, it was announced that the government, budgeted and commissioned N8billion, to construct a seaport along Assumpta Avenue, to ease transportation

and reduce traffic jams along that road. In 2015, under the administration of Owelle Rochas Okorocha, the same media broadcast announced that the government used N500million for Christmas decoration. In the case of Ohakim, the seaport was never realized, and in the case of Owelle, the budget was a whopping sum for that project. In both cases, none of the details of the expenses or project cost was accounted for, upon the rate of stark disaffection expressed by Imo people.

Also, Okpalaonwuka, in the work, *Morality and Politics in Nigeria*, cited a few examples of news headlines in Nigeria, "N3m kick-backs Land Minister in Police Net;" Attempt to get N2.5m: Commissioner nabbed in Paris; Fraud at Net: Officials Hinder investigations, etc.[240] Furthermore, as I noted earlier from the report of Ogundiya Ilufoye, the fraudulent activities of Mr Adolphus Wabara, Atiku Abubakar and other government officials. The articles from Nuhu Ribadu, (2009:4) and Achebe (2012:249) highlighting a report from the world bank, indicating that about $400 billion has been pilfered from Nigeria's treasury since independence, etc. In the long run, these reports begin and end with mere newspaper and media headlines, without any strong judicial consequences.

Allegedly, as Okpalaonwuka noted, it seems that many Nigerians holding public offices are virtually above the law of the land.[241] The effect, as we earlier noted is that it gives impunity to the corrupt leaders and even go as far as encouraging further fraud and theft of public funds since the law neither prosecutes nor punishes them. Indeed, the crumbled nature of the Nigerian judiciary

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[240] Okpalaonwuka, *Morality and Politics in Nigeria*, 109.

[241] Okpalaonwuka, 121.

is best explained by the popular assumption that "not all who are in prison are criminals and not all known criminals are in prison."[242]

I argued earlier that some of the institutions of government, like the EFCC, etc, established to monitor transparency and ensure accountability, have been hijacked by leaders for their political gains. And as McLoughlin and Bouchat also observed that "weak institutions and mobilization of identity groups are often exploited by Nigeria's ruling class for their selfish benefit,"[243] the legal system of the Nigeria nation also appears to have been hijacked and politicized, to the advantage of the ruling class or party.

This inefficiency or better put, disrobing of authority to act, of the Nigerian legal system, works against the tenets of justice and the common good. Recall that Aquinas, as I earlier noted, evaluated the common good on legal principles and that he contended that "every law is ordained to the common good." It is important, therefore, to note that if Nigeria must cub corruption and the fraudulent appetite of her leaders, which hinders the realization of the common good, there must be a strong legal system in place to check their excesses, no matter their positions or party affiliations. The law must be powerful and just enough to hold them accountable.

Pope Pius XII has rightly observed that "to safeguard the inviolable rights of the human person, as well as to facilitate the fulfilment of his duties, should be the chief duty of every public authority."[244] And Christopher McCrudden, among other thinkers, agrees that the legal methods

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[242] Okpalaonwuka, 159.

[243] McLoughlin and Bouchat, *Nigerian Unity*, 38.

[244] Radio message of Pius XII, Pentecost, June 1, 1941. P 200

have been a primary mechanism by which "human rights values are protected and furthered."[245] Thus, a compromised, unjust and ineffective legal structure is a threat to the promotion of human rights, and by extension, human dignity.

I would, therefore, recommend a separation of the judiciary from the executive branch. In other words, the judiciary should be an independent entity, which operates with its mechanisms, as provided by conventional legal standards, not constrained by the presidency. Otherwise, If, for example, as the constitution provides (chapter VII, part I) the president, together with his judicial council appoints the Chief Justice of the nation, and the State Governors appoint the Chief justice of the State, chances are that these would appoint people who have the same party affiliation with them (whether pronounced or subtly), given the human instinct of self-preservation. In which case, one would already presume the outcome of such "marriage," as it may be difficult for the judge to hold the President or Governor accountable when they err or go contrary to the law; as is the case at present.

If therefore, the law which serves to protect the rights of persons in the society is compromised, injustice continues to thrive and the dignity of the poor and defenceless, in such a context, is undermined. Indeed, when the legal system, which is supposedly the succour of the victims of injustice, no longer has a strong deterring capability against fraudulent and unjust activities of the political leaders, then the society in its entirety becomes arbitrarily enslaved.

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[245] Christopher McCrudden, "A Common Law of Human Rights: Transnational Judicial Conversations on Constitutional Rights." In *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 20, no. 4 (2000): 499-532. Accessed April 18, 2021, https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/20468339.pdf?casa_token=-FUxvE3xUNUAAAAA:IrQLefQrfvGQBWAS7jBs3LsRCFAMvvl_41MhTlNiafnUlu5r0osdHN93pUcoEV5JFKDP4sitGn9TwQqK9xjb1hzDzvW_SCK8H9bcmCFxwQ-LciHHlR8.

b. **Systemic Tribalism**:

By systemic tribalism, I mean the influence and impact of tribal inclinations and affiliation on the social and political structure of the country. In the course of this paper, I have noted that tribalism has eaten deep into the fabrics of Nigeria, and its influence has been felt right from the time of the independence. The antecedents to the Nigerian/Biafran civil war from 1967-1970 is a clear evidence.

Achebe aptly noted, "nothing in Nigeria's political history captures her problem of national integration more graphically than the chequered fortune of the word tribe in her dictionary."[246]

Ordinarily, the term tribe or tribalism itself is not a bad concept. It is a common belief of anthropologists and political theorists on Africa that it is a common phenomenon to interpret Africa politics in tribal terms. Also, it is common knowledge that there are dimensions of "tribal culture" that are valuable, like dressing, food or language peculiarities, etc., many of which confer richness on our national culture.[247]

One may wonder how tribal affiliations can constitute enabling structure for corruption or theft or injustice on the part of leaders. In the Nigerian context, Okpalaonwuka traced the origins of tribalism in Nigeria to the 1953 political party tussles between the National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons (NCNC), Action Group (AG) and Northern People's Congress (NPC), wherein, these parties were in the long run associated with the three major ethnic groups, Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa, and the three regions of the country, East, West and North respectively.[248] According to him, the

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[246] Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria*, 5.

[247] Okpalaonwuka, *Morality and Politics in Nigeria*, 116.

[248] Okpalaonwuka, 116.

evil thing about tribalism is the wrong use made of it by politicians to capture power and votes from their people. Thereby promoting nepotism, encouraging mediocrity, paternalism, sycophancy and opportunism.[249]

Observably, the inclination to ethnicity or tribe provides a fertile ground for antagonism or "disagreement" among people from different backgrounds, and in such a scenario, the social and political arena is disrobed of the social principles and values that should engender the common good. In the Nigerian case, Mcloughlin and Bouchat, for example, agree that the ultimate cause behind the tribal or regional rivalries may be the struggle for control over Nigeria's wealth. Referencing Paul Collier, of Oxford University, they explained that the primary motivation for such ethnic divide are the opportunities to be gained from them, and that identity affiliations can be 'instrumentalized' by political leaders to protect or enrich themselves through political power and economic resources.[250]

Furthermore, they highlighted that the allocation of resource revenues from the federal government is probably the central point around which ethnic and tribal groups contend, shifting the distribution of the economy and goods of the nation based on who holds power. Their observation is that the political leaders consider that Nigeria's political economy is a lucrative resource so that access to power and control over the distribution of revenues can be maintained through regional antagonisms. Therefore, political elites exacerbate these ethnic or tribal differences for their gain

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[249] Okpalaonwuka, 117.

[250] McLoughlin and Bouchat, *Nigerian Unity*, 35.

and deflect attention from overall poor governance and economic conditions.[251] Tribalism is a structure that leaders are enabled to exploit for power, and not for the common good.

In my discourse on solidarity, I referenced bishop Fulton Sheen that "a true social order can be built only based on fraternity."[252] I agreed with Pope Francis that fraternal openness allows us to acknowledge, appreciate and love one another, regardless of such grounds as physical proximity and nativity.[253] I also agreed with John Paul II that solidarity "must be seen above all in its value as a moral virtue that determines the order of institutions."[254]

Furthermore, in my assessment of the virtues of distributive justice and regnative prudence, I highlighted that equality, equity and need should be the yardstick for the distribution of goods of the society. I agreed with Maiese that equal distribution gives people a sense of full-fledged membership, equity fosters the motivation to produce, an incentive for one's productivity, and distribution according to need ensures that everyone's basic and essential needs are met. I drew from Aquinas that regnative prudence, in essence, belongs to a king who is charged with the government of a city or a kingdom.

As Lisa Schirch rightly argued,

> Structures that foster disparity and satisfy the needs of people from one ethnic group or such other religious, class, age, language or gender group at the expense of others propagate violence. Societies

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[251] McLoughlin and Bouchat, 38.

[252] Sheen, *Justice and Charity.*, 64.

[253] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 1

[254] John Paul, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, 36.*

that permit or encourage economic and social disparity, exclude

some groups from full participation in decision-making and public

life, or direct harm toward some people, suffer more from all forms

of violence, both public and private. [255]

In other words, in such an environment of disparity based on affiliations to tribe, injustices and the consequent outbursts of conflict and violence are inevitable.

My submission is that that structure of tribalism enables favouritism, nepotism and injustice. It violates the virtue of solidarity and the common good, as well as destroys the spirit of unity and oneness that Nigeria professes.

As I hinted earlier, I suppose that the emergence of leaders at all levels, in a pluralistic society, like Nigeria, especially through elections, appointments or selection, institutes them as the men/women for the people. Their position morally obligates them to treat all equally. They are to operate without preferences or alienations to particular tribes or groups but establish mechanisms that foster unity, equality and solidarity, which they pledge to uphold while taking their oath of allegiance.

Therefore, since Leadership, by its essence entails that the leader is vested with the legitimate power to uphold and push into effect the values that work for the common good of all, Nigerian political leaders at all levels must be constrained, in carrying out their personal or bigoted goals, and enabled to promote the common good. They must anchor their propositions and activities on

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[255] Lisa Schirch, "Strategic Peacebuilding: State of the Field." Women in Security Conflict Management and Peace, 2008. Accessed March 11, 2021, http://wiscomp.org/pubn/wiscomp-peace-prints/2-1/Lisa%20Schirch.pdf.

laws and principles that recognize human dignity and solidarity. Since Nigeria has pledged to be one united nation, they must live and exist in unity. Intent on satisfying distributive justice, they must ensure that the society's resources must be proportionately shared, to satisfy the basic needs of the citizenry. With prudence, they are to adjudicate fairly, take rational decisions, and execute their policies objectively, in conformity to moral standards, for the realization of the common good.

c. The Nigerian Constitution

With the 'judicial structure' and the 'systemic tribalism' mentioned above, there is no gainsaying that the Nigerian government has to go back to the drawing board to locate the foundation of its structural quandary, which in the assumption of many is traceable to the national constitution. Indeed, "things fall apart when the centre cannot hold."

Currently, Nigeria operates with the 1999 constitution, with amendments in 2011. A document handed over by the military to their civilian successors, at the inception of the present civil democratic government in May 1999, popularly regarded as Nigeria's fourth republic. This Constitution, like any other constitution supposedly guides and informs most of the policies and decisions of the country, as far as politics and power, fundamental rights and legislatures are concerned.

Many Nigerians have faulted this constitution, from various angles and for various reasons. For example, Julius Ihonvbere, strongly argues that the constitution lacks people's participation. He contends that the 1999 constitution did not emerge from what could be defined as a process-led or participatory constitution-making approach. Rather, it is a product developed by handpicked committee members, whose mandates "have been defined in such a way that consultation,

mobilization, education, dialogue and debates on the nationwide process was never on the agenda."[256]

He further claims that given that the constitution is a handover document from the military government to the civilian government, it assumes "excessive concentration on regime survival and elite control of the larger society by any means."[257] It offers much less on civil society and completely ignores all critical issues common to all opposition demands across the country.[258]

His understanding is that the military has always been scared of opening up the political process for fear that a widespread national engagement would turn against the military, and that it would lose out in national deliberation of contentious issues.[259] Thus, the constitution is a reflection of the military pattern.

In a lecture delivered at a forum organized by the Lagos State, Nigeria, Paul Ekeh of the State University of New York, decried that the constitution centralizes power to the federal government, thereby rendering the positions and the powers of the state minimal and that of the local government, insignificant. He posits that the military system of a centralized government is still at play in the new constitution. Thereby creating false uniformities of functions for local governments.[260]

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[256] Ihonvbere, "How to Make an Undemocratic Constitution," 349.

[257] Ihonvbere, Ibid.

[258] Ihonvbere, 351.

[259] Ihonvbere, 349.

[260] Paul Ekeh, Millitary Rule and Damage to the Spirit of the Nigerian Constitution." Lagos State Nigeria, 2010, accessed, April 20, 2021, https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Peter-Ekeh-3/publication/271217083_Military_Rule_and_Damage_to_the_Spirit_of_the_Nigerian_Constitut

Thus, Ekeh's argument here affirms our earlier report in chapter I, that because all resources belong to the federal government, with a guarantee of only 13 per cent of the generated revenue to the state where they are generated, development and proper distribution of the resources are lopsided to the favour of the leaders and their cohorts.

Our argument here is that the current constitution, which was a brain-child of the military juntas, who were handing over to the civilian administrators, still possesses a totalitarian framework. It constrains the powers of the local actors (which includes States and Local governments) to impact meaningfully and effectively in the lives of the common people. It enables the federal government to have excessive power to manipulate the national revenue and resources, and in a situation like Nigeria's, where even the judiciary is under the control of the same central government, accountability is hardly achievable.

Ihonvbere has noted that in liberal political discourse, issues concerning the constitution of any society revolves around issues of individual rights and limited powers of government. According to him, because it defines the nature, structure and use of political power, emphasis is made on the democratization of the environment in which the constitution is developed, adopted and proclaimed. Thus for any constitution to be valued and legitimate, it should also serve as a basis for controlling state power and involving the people in the political process. It must operate beyond merely asserting the sovereignty of the state, or defining powers and rights, as well as setting the basic law of the land.[261]

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ion/links/54c2f4e20cf256ed5a900c46/Military-Rule-and-Damage-to-the-Spirit-of-the-Nigerian-Constitution.pdf.

[261] Ihonvbere, "How to Make an Undemocratic Constitution," 343.

From the above deliberations, we recall the significance and suppositions of the principle of subsidiarity and distributive justice. The principle that allows or promotes people's participation in the government of the society. The current constitution violates this principle. In other words, since, as Ihonvbere hinted, there is no people's participation or consultation, and as Ekeh rightly noted, power is excessively given to the federal, at least two of the many important tenets of the principle of subsidiarity are violated. One, the view that all moral agents of the society have roles and responsibilities, which they must play, without interference, in the exercise of their freedom and dignity, and good conscience, for the realization of the common good. Two, the view that a community of higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving them of their functions and responsibilities, but should support and help coordinate its activities, always with a view of the common good.

As Ihonvbere rightly noted, emphasis is laid on the democratization of the constitutional process. The people must be part of the development and adoption of the constitution since it will be the guide upon which they will be governed. Possibly, this assumption has influenced various positions and arguments regarding the principle of subsidiarity and the common good, since democracy, as it is popularly defined, is "the government of the people, by the people and for the people."

At this juncture, the values and principles of Catholic Social Teaching are very relevant and important. In his 1985 world day of peace, Pope John Paul II warned about "the consequences of denying participation, seen now as a basic right, not only in the workplace but also in a broader context."[262] He iterated that "future violence and injustice cannot be avoided when the basic right

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[262] Hornsby-Smith, *An Introduction to Catholic Social Thought*, 66.

to participate in the choices of society is denied."[263] In his encyclical, Centesimus Annus, he affirmed that "the church values the democratic system in as much as it ensures the participation of citizens in making political choices, guarantees to the governed the possibility both of electing and holding accountable those who govern them, and of replacing them through peaceful means when appropriate." He warned that "authentic democracy is possible only in a state ruled by law, based on a correct conception of the human person;" and that "structures of participation and shared responsibility" must be based on a respect for the truth and objective morality because "a democracy without values easily turns into open or thinly disguised totalitarianism."[264]

Okpalaonwuka, on his part, emphasizes that "any political system which deprives individuals of a potential voice in their destiny, undermines the basic human dignity, threatens social justice and denies the best circumstances for humans to enjoy the greatest amount of beneficial consequences deriving from their activity."[265]

Maria Pilar Aquino agrees with Lisa Schirch that "justice exists when people can participate in shaping their environment so that they can meet their needs. Justice exists when people respect the human rights of others, and when there are processes in place for holding people who violate the rights of others accountable to their victims and to that wider community." She maintains that actors "committed to justice understand that, from one's context and social location, the principles of cooperation, solidarity and interdependence must characterize our common initiatives. The

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[263] John Paul II, World Day of Peace, 1985, paragraph 9.

[264] JohnPaul II, Encyclical on the Hundredth Anniversary of *Rerum Novarum Centessimus Annus* (May 1, 1991): 46, at the Holy See, accessed, march 30, http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus.html.

[265] Okpalaonwuka, *Morality and Politics in Nigeria*, 201.

uniting factor of such initiatives is the pursuit of justice because "justice is a creative calling to be accomplished by people as a community in their desire to become human."[266]

In sum, because the national constitution, does not enable political participation, and because of its stringent and centralized structure, true federalism and accountability are unrealizable.

To end this section, I agree with the words of the Vatican II that, "There is no better way to establish political life on truly human basis than by fostering an inward sense of justice and kindliness, and service to the common good, and by strengthening basic convictions as to the true nature of the political community and the aim, right exercise, and sphere of action of public authority."[267]

I suggest to Nigerian leaders to make our own, the recommendations of Pope John XXIII, who advocated that those in public authority should try to eliminate or reduce societal imbalances. They should ensure that the less developed areas receive such essential public services as their circumstances require, to bring, or at least improve the living standard in the areas in line with the national average. In this development, a suitable economic and social policy must be devised which will take into account the supply of labour, the drift of population, wages, taxes, credit and the investing of money, etc. it should be a policy designed to promote useful employment, enterprising initiative and the exploitation of local resources.[268]

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[266] Boodoo, World Forum on Theology and Liberation, and World Forum on Theology and Liberation, *Religion, Human Dignity and Liberation*, 285.

[267] Gaudium et Spes, 73.

[268] John XIII, Encyclical on Christianity and Social Progress *Mater et Magistra* (May 15, 1961): 150, at the Holly Sea, accessed march 20, 2021, http://www.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_15051961_mater.html.

Furthermore, Justice is to be observed not merely in the distribution of wealth, but also regarding the conditions under which men engaged in productive activity have an opportunity to assume responsibility[269] since the dignity of the human person involves the right to take an active part in public affairs and to contribute one's part to the common good of the citizens.[270] Thus, I recommend that governments, at all level of the state and local dimensions should be empowered and enabled to distribute the common goods of the nation, according to the needs, demands and nature of their various contexts. This will serve the demands of justice and subsidiarity.

It should be noted that disparities in income and wealth between the rich and the poor are the most powerful predictors of homicide rates in any city, state, or country. Structural inequities are statistically linked to higher levels of societal violence, which includes civil wars, terrorism, and all sorts of crime.[271] This is, arguably the state of affairs in Nigeria, where insurgency, terrorism, agitations, protests and intertribal conflicts have become the order of the day. People are no longer free to legitimately demand their constitutional rights; where the rich keep growing rich and poor become poorer and the government leaders are neither accountable nor do they have anything to offer to the masses as remedies for the injustice.

We developed earlier that social structures make certain actions easy or difficult for the human agent; in other words, the human actor is enabled or constrained by structures. I have shown that

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[269] Hornsby-Smith, *An Introduction to Catholic Social Thought*, 66.

[270] John XIII, Encyclical on Peace in the World ***Pacem in Terris*** (April 1, 1963):26, at the Holy See, accessed March 30, 2021, http://www.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem.html.

[271] Lisa Schirch, "Strategic peacebuilding: state of the field." Women in security conflict management and peace, 2008. Accessed March 11, 2021, http://wiscomp.org/pubn/wiscomp-peace-prints/2-1/Lisa%20Schirch.pdf.

the constitutional structure makes participation difficult, given the concentration of power in the hands of the federal leaders. This theory agrees that unless the structure is redirected or restructured for the better, it practically affects the human agent, who is caught within the dilemma of action and consequence.

The common good should be the target of every social structure, but evidently and unfortunately, structures of injustice, inequity and inequality are strong hindrances. I argue that transformed social institutions, in which individual actions are directed by Christian virtues and principles, as moral obligations and parameters of judgment, will propel the realization of the goal in view.

Since there is a huge connection between moral character and social institutions,[272] and "structures make it easier for agents to habituate vicious behaviours," we submit with Daly that, the moral development of individual persons, leaders and people alike, are insufficient for justice or virtues in general to flourish, "structures, due to their agency, also must change."[273] And with Boodoo, we maintain that the movement for and task of social transformation demands a unison devoid of personal inclinations or interests, but constitutes a "shared articulation of visions, values, goals for transformative thought and practice."[274]

Indeed, if Nigerian leaders and people will cultivate and integrate such values and virtues as solidarity, justice, prudence, respect for human dignity etc., as the *modus operandi* of the social

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[272] Daly, *The Structures of Virtue and Vice*, 34.

[273] Daly, 45.

[274] Boodoo, World Forum on Theology and Liberation, and World Forum on Theology and Liberation, *Religion, Human Dignity and Liberation*, 285.

structures, it will enhance the vivacity of Nigerian democracy and revitalize the already proposed agenda for transformation, on account of social justice and the common good.

CONCLUSION

Many citizens in every country or state and most other circular institutions build their response to government on the actions and output of their leaders. Patriotic citizens have the impression that every political system needs some measure of moral fibre, beginning with the leadership; since the moral life of any community is very often kept alive and guided by its political leaders who are expected to express it by words and actions and lay down worthy examples of public morality.[275]

Achebe considers a patriot, "one who loves his country."[276] He maintained that "true patriotism is possible only when the people who rule and those under their power have a common and genuine goal of maintaining the dispensation under which the nation lives." And that it can "only happen if the nation is ruled justly and if the welfare of the people rather than the advantage of the few become the cornerstone of public policy."[277]

Bishop Fulton Sheen on his part, considers patriotism as an expression of charity, observing that the treatise on patriotism in the writings of Thomas Aquinas, is to be found under the subject piety. According to him, although piety is thought of as only about the love of God, once it is remembered

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[275] Achebe, *The Trouble with Nigeria*, 118.

[276] Achebe, 15.

[277] Achebe, 16.

that love of neighbour is inseparable from love of God, it is seen that love of fellow citizens is a form of piety.[278]

Now, having expounded on the idea of leadership and the common good, and having highlighted moral principles and virtues as behavioural dimensions of a virtuous leader who seeks the common good, I consider that patriotism, which is an act of piety, and an expression of love of neighbour (charity) is a leadership characteristic.

"A public authority, as the means of promoting the common good in civil society, is a postulate of the moral order, and the moral order likewise requires that this authority be effective in attaining its end."[279] Also, while I have argued that leadership structures need to be transformed, individual leaders should be virtuous. The true test of qualitative leadership lies in the ability of the agent to make correct judgments, offer solutions and demonstrate practical wisdom that remains invincible under the scrutiny of ethical standards and reason.

I would imagine that the virtuous and ethical standards may contain within their ambit, first, what Kyrian Echekwu regards as "visionary leadership" which, according to him, "implies knowledge and ability to look beyond the immediate circumstances and project ahead into the future; it equally implies the right intention to direct the society towards achieving its goals of government."[280] Secondly, they may also encapsulate Patrick Dobell's seven overlapping dimensions of political achievement; namely, disciplined reason and openness to experience; foresight and attention to

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[278] Fulton Sheen J., Justice and Charity (ACS Books, U.S: Rockford, IL, 2017), 77.

[279] John XIII, *Pacem in Terris*, 136

[280] Echekwu K., Ibid

long term; deploying power; timing and momentum; the proper relation of means and ends; the durability and legitimacy of action; and the consequences for the community.[281]

This simply means that in the evaluation of leadership, these virtues and dispositions must constitute hallmarks, watch-words, or modes of operation.

Summarily, throughout this paper, I have tried to display an experiential account of the injustices and anomalies that have, for over decades, bedevilled Nigeria as a sovereign society and Nigerians as a people. I have also tried to show that a greater percentage of these problems is attributable to the structure of leadership and administration in Nigeria. I have deliberated on certain salient situations therein that need to be addressed, such as, insecurity, poverty, inequality and injustice, from various leadership quarters. I have also shown how their inattention to the moral standards and virtues, that should characterize leadership, has caused and sustained the backwardness of the society, on account of social justice.

Finally, I tried to highlight the agency of social structures and how they can influence moral judgements over the human agency, whose actions are either enabled or constrained by them. Human actors, I maintained, can best be effective through good social structures. And if that is so, it means that structure itself should be established based on such moral agency for action which is obligatory to the human agents. Thus using Aquinas's virtue theories and the moral principles expounded by the Catholic social teaching and other great thinkers, I inferred that leadership established on such moral norms inspire the common good, accentuate human dignity and serve to help humans and society to flourish.

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[281] Patrick Dowel, Ibid

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