The Crisis of the Fisheries in Newfoundland and Labrador and the Notion of the Common Good in David Hollenbach

by

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Abstract

This thesis offers an extended theological reflection on the notion of the common good, in light of the decimation of the world’s largest cod fishery in the waters off the northeast coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. Drawing on Church and local political history, this thesis argues that the theological notion of the common good would have provided the theological perspective for Catholic Church-local leaders to see this socio-economic-ecological crisis as a spiritual crisis, a one which summoned the active engagement of the Church.

The destruction of the northern cod fishery in the latter half of the twentieth century is considered through the lens of David Hollenbach’s reinterpreted notion of the common good in Catholic social tradition. Hollenbach’s common good re-envisioned, offers a way of articulating and reflecting on the theological-ethical insufficiency of the local Church’s response to this socio-economic-ecological-political-spiritual tragedy.

Despite the long-standing tradition of the Catholic Church to interpret, define and advance the needs of the common good of all humanity, that Vatican II had happened, and was followed by more than fifteen years of Canadian Catholic Bishops social justice statements, Newfoundland Church leaders in the late twentieth century, did not see it
appropriate to become involved in this immense political, socio-economic-ecological, cultural-spiritual travesty of justice.

Hollenbach’s common good reinterpreted presses this Church-local to be the people of God, and awaken to the spirit of aggiornamento, affirmed at Vatican II. Active commitment to Catholic social teachings on respect for human dignity, love, solidarity, sharing, and mutual responsibility, can only empower this Church by the sea to unite its aspirations with the needs of the common good of these maritime people.
To the memory of

my father Augustine Yetman - the fisherman, my brother Ray, my sisters
Mary St. Croix and Monica Yetman, my niece and Godchild, Janet Winter,
my nephew John A. St.Croix, and my three friends and mentors, Katherine
Bellamy RSM, K. Janet Ritch, and John M.W. Scott.
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Most of all, thank-you God, our Mother Mary and all the angels and saints, especially St. Jude, St. Anthony and St. Kateri Tekakwitha, for freeing me to respect and hold human dignity in the highest regard, and to value the human right of all people to participate and share in the common good.
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<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td><em>Centesimus Annus</em> (On the Hundredth Anniversary of <em>Rerum Novarum</em>); Pope John Paul II.</td>
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<td>CCC</td>
<td><em>Catechism of the Catholic Church.</em></td>
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<td>CV</td>
<td><em>Caritas in Veritate</em> (Charity in Truth); Pope Benedict XVI.</td>
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<td>DCE</td>
<td><em>Deus Caritas Est</em> (God is Love); Pope Benedict XVI.</td>
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<td>EG</td>
<td><em>Evangelium Gaudium</em> (The Gospel of Joy), Pope Francis I.</td>
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<td>FR</td>
<td><em>Fides et Ratio</em> (Faith and Reason); Pope John Paul II</td>
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<td>GS</td>
<td><em>Gaudium et Spes</em> (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World); Vatican Council II.</td>
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<td>LS</td>
<td><em>Laudato Si.</em> <em>(On Care For Our Common Home).</em> Pope Francis I.</td>
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<td>LF</td>
<td><em>Lumen Fidei</em> (Light of Faith); Pope Francis I.</td>
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<td>LG</td>
<td><em>Lumen Gentium</em> (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church); Vatican Council II.</td>
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<td><em>Laborem Exercens</em> (On Human Work); Pope John Paul II.</td>
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<td>MM</td>
<td><em>Mater et Magistra</em> (On Social Progress); Pope John XXIII.</td>
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<td>OA</td>
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<td><em>Populorum Progressio</em> (On the Development of Peoples); Pope Paul VI.</td>
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<td>PT</td>
<td><em>Pacem in Terris</em> (Peace on Earth); Pope John XXIII.</td>
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<td>QA</td>
<td><em>Quadragesimo Anno</em> (On the Reconstruction of the Social Order); Pope Pius XI.</td>
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<td>RN</td>
<td><em>Rerum Novarum</em> (On the Condition of Workers); Pope Leo XIII.</td>
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<td>RH</td>
<td><em>Redemptoris Hominis</em> (The Redeemer of Man); Pope John Paul II.</td>
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<td>SRS</td>
<td><em>Sollicitudo Rei Socialis</em> (On Social Concern); Pope John Paul II.</td>
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<td>VS</td>
<td><em>Veritatis Splendor</em> (The Splendor of Truth); Pope John Paul II.</td>
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Introduction

This theological thesis is shaped largely by its context: the fisheries crisis in Newfoundland and Labrador, of 1986-1992. It is motivated by my own faith reflection on the common good, my own personal experience as a member of a long-established fishing family and fishing community, and my later involvement with The Newfoundland Inshore Fisheries Association (NIFA). In 1986, NIFA, a province-wide conservation movement forewarned a crisis looming in the Newfoundland and Labrador cod fishery. Even with this intensive, committed effort to save the cod fishery, this once bountiful fishery was reduced to near extinction. Consequently, in 1992, the Government of Canada imposed a moratorium on fishing all cod inhabiting the waters off the northeast coast of Newfoundland and Labrador. With it, almost an entire province of working people became unemployed.

My personal memory of home, childhood and growing up in a fishing family in a fishing outport¹, and then as executive director of NIFA, is vital to this critical examination, theological interpretation, and retelling of the story of the collapse of the cod fishery. As Canadian theologian, Douglas Hall establishes:

All theology is contextual – a conscious attempt to engage the historical moment from the side of faith; … it is consciously reflective of a given situation. It involves entering into the depth of one’s own personal experiences with one’s own people. [It deals with who we are as] persons engaged in this thinking, at this time in this place.”²

¹ An outport refers to a Newfoundland coastal community. I was born and raised in St. Mary’s, St. Mary’s Bay on the Southern part of the Avalon Peninsula, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Time and place consciousness is intrinsic to rethinking the reasons for the collapse of the Newfoundland and Labrador cod fishery, which marked a profound change in the socio-economic, political and cultural character and structure of the province. The account of this catastrophe is framed and expressed in a maritime historical-political-ecclesiological context that reached a critical stage in mid-1980. In 1986, NIFA warned the people that their staple— their primary food source and leading export was endangered. NIFA brought together inshore fishers, inshore plant owners, plant workers and concerned citizens. They had a common problem - no fish. The basis and purpose of their common lives and livelihood, the fate of their five hundred year old fishery, was at stake. The cod fishery, a primary source of their common good, from which everyone could benefit, was depleting rapidly. NIFA blamed both foreign factory freezer trawlers and Canadian offshore draggers for overfishing the cod stocks.

In 1984, in his address to Newfoundland and Labrador fishers, Pope John Paul II warned about the dangers of overfishing and big industry takeovers of small-scale

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3 Harold Innes, Professor of Political Economy at the University of Toronto helped develop the staples thesis. The staples thesis holds that Canada’s culture, political history and economy have been decisively influenced by the exploitation and export of a series of staples such as fur, fish, wood, wheat, mined metals and fossil fuels. Staple products induced an enduring economic dependence among the European immigrants who settled in the new colony and ultimately shaped Canada’s political destiny. See Harold Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 386-392.

4 The author was the executive director of this province-wide conservation and awareness movement founded in August, 1986, forewarning an imminent fishery disaster. Against the expectations of skeptics, old differences were set aside, and inshore fishers, plant workers and plant owners under the umbrella of NIFA proposed its own management plan for the northern cod stocks inhabiting the waters of the 2J3KL North Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) fishing zone, off the Northeast coast of Newfoundland and Labrador.

5 Thomas E. Best, *Address to the Newfoundland Inshore Fisheries Association and All Concerned Citizens* (St. Kevin’s School, Goulds, Newfoundland on Aug. 24, 1986), 1. Photocopy. Unpublished. Tom Best, co-chair of NIFA, in his opening address at this first NIFA public meeting, accused not only the foreign trawlers but also the large Canadian fishing vessels belonging to the Newfoundland based companies, *Fisheries Products International* and *National Sea Products Ltd* for overfishing the cod stocks.
businesses. Two years later, the cod fishery that sustained Newfoundlanders and Labradorians for five hundred years was visibly disappearing. The fishery, since the founding years of Newfoundland and Labrador, permeated nearly all aspects of community life: economic, social, political, and religious. The identity of small-scale fishing communities in this easternmost Canadian province was birthed, fashioned, adapted and developed according to the organization and proceedings of fishing activities. When the core of this working population can no longer continue in its most traditional and primary livelihood and distinctive way of life, a review of this socio-economic-ecological-spiritual disaster is demanded. This thesis is committed to searching and researching what the official Catholic Church-local did and did not say at the time.

While other Christian Churches were involved in the fisheries crisis, their contributions or non-contributions, although important, are not a focus of this study. This thesis focuses on the Catholic Church-local and the extent to which its understanding of the common good is judged to be inadequate to the crisis at hand. At the time of the fisheries collapse, the moral voice of the leadership of the Catholic Church, which for more than two hundred years spoke through the sacramental, socio-economic and educational-cultural life of Newfoundland and Labrador, was overwhelmingly silent. While Church leaders had access to and read Catholic social encyclicals, stressing the universal significance of the common good, they were not so inclined to “engage in faithful Christian praxis. … to enter into [their] own historical destiny, to suffer the critical dimensions of a new consciousness, to alter the direction of the society in ways

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consistent with the gospel that are brought to bear in and through discriminating encounters in their own context.”

There are contextual reasons for the institutional Church’s failure to “enter into working solidarity with the most vulnerable of its citizens.” An earlier history of overstated political involvement, may have tempered later relations between Church hierarchy to this fishing society and the state itself. The collapse of the moral authority of the Church with the revelations of clerical sexual abuse scandals in the late twentieth century is also a contributing factor to their muted response to the crisis. As well, there are prior theological reasons to do with a clergy too tied to a classicist worldview; they were not so inspired to encourage continuous dialogue with the Church’s tradition, namely its long-standing teachings on the common good. This context sets the foundation for the thesis question.

I. THESIS QUESTION

During the fisheries crisis, why did the Catholic Church in Newfoundland and Labrador fail to engage its own social teachings on the common good and thus fail to treat the crisis of the fisheries as a crisis of the common good?

This thesis is not about human sinfulness, especially the sins of the clergy. Although very significant, it is not about the vital issues of the environment. This is a thesis about a particular crisis of the common good. This thesis works with the

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7 Hall, *Thinking the Faith*, 20 and 21.

8 Ibid., 117.


10 Hall, *Thinking the Faith*, 117.
theological reflections of American theologian, David Hollenbach. His notion of the common good provides a strong theological resource for assessing and examining the official Church-local’s response to the fisheries crisis, and offers a way of articulating the problem and opening up to a better way for the future. While his writings pose certain contextual limitations and challenges, given that his theological perspective emerges from the experiences of disadvantaged peoples of urban America and Africa, in my judgment, his reinterpreted notion of the common good is adequate; it provides an appropriate frame of reference for assessing how the Church viewed its own teachings on the common good at the time of the collapse of the cod fishery. His reflections cast light on the situation in the province and reveal the shadows there.

A. Thesis Statement

The purpose of this thesis is to establish that David Hollenbach’s theological understanding of the notion of the common good offers an appropriate articulation of the notion of the common good in Catholic social tradition that is helpful in examining and assessing the relation of the Catholic Church in Newfoundland and Labrador to the fisheries crisis of 1986-92.

Hollenbach’s reconstructed common good, thought-out in light of the development of the understanding of common good throughout the major periods of Catholic social tradition, allows for an intelligent and affirming motivation for the local Church hierarchy along with the faith community to come to a newly awakened sense of itself as the “people of God”. 

11 His common good reinterpreted, is not applicable only to

the local geographies and cultures of urban America and Africa. His articulation of the common good is suitably diverse and pliant to relate to the needs and experiences of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians suffering the loss of their 500 year old primary industry and way of life, which deprived them of their right to work and live in their own home. His common good re-envisioned presses this Church-local to apply its own social teachings to suffering fishing populations, so as to restore their right to live in dignity.

But to anticipate that Hollenbach’s treatise on the common good is appropriate for determining the adequacy or inadequacy of the level of response of the Catholic Church-local to the fisheries crisis, necessitates providing a brief overview of the challenges posed to defining and interpreting the common good in the history of Catholic social tradition. It also requires an examination of the intrinsic relationship between the community and the common good in light of the existing context which helps determine the way the Church is called to engage in the needs of the common good.

**B. Defining the Common Good**

Both Catholic social tradition and the writings of David Hollenbach have been unable to offer a conclusive, lasting, unchanging definition of the common good. The understanding of the notion of the common good fluctuates according to cultural, societal, economic and political shifts and changes throughout history. Catholic social teaching, therefore attempts to explain its meaning by placing the higher value on love, justice, human compassion, respect for human dignity, human rights and equality of all peoples. These virtues or values, although not irrevocably defined for all time, summon the individual and collective consciousness into the lived experience of the common good, one which can only be experienced in the shared life of community.
C. Community and the Common Good

The shared experience in community is quintessential to understanding and experiencing the common good.\textsuperscript{12} The common good is exercised in and for a community, whether large or small, religious or secular. The needs of the common good can only be met through commitment to the right of all people, regardless of race, geography, clime or culture, to live in dignity in the human family.

The writings of David Hollenbach summon the Church as a faith community and people of God to be the forerunner, herald and advocate of the common good so as to enter deeply into relationship with the present-day world community.\textsuperscript{13} He looks to Catholic social tradition as the way to ensure that the poor, the unemployed and disadvantaged, regardless of religious orientation, ethnicity, culture or socio-economic background are treated justly and with dignity.\textsuperscript{14} Hollenbach’s emphasis on community and the right of all people to access the common good is well suited for the praxis capable of integrating the issues of the common good, in the context a modern day socio-economic, ecological and spiritual disaster - the collapse of the east coast cod fishery.

He turns to the doctrine of the \textit{imago dei} to draw the analogy between the relation of the common good in Catholic social thought with the terrestrial common good. Created in the image of the triune God, human beings are gifted with the ability to love not only themselves and neighbor, but to extend this love to all that God has created into


\textsuperscript{14} Hollenbach, \textit{The Common Good and Christian Ethics}, 3-22, 70, 77, 78, 81, 83, 84 and 85.
being. The social nature of the tri-person God frees humans to work creatively and in solidarity with one another, for the sake of their own good, the good of the global environment, and the good of the entire world. This theological framework sets a basis for humans to assume the responsibility of not just “caring about the time but also the place”, especially at a time in history when a fisheries has failed, and in a place almost totally dependent on this vital food source.

**D. Contemporary Context for Engaging the Common Good**

Hollenbach’s common good reconstructed has particular significance for a province of people enduring the largest lay off in Canadian history. The destruction of this vast cod fishery unemployed masses of working people and played havoc on community life; it also put the food supply in Newfoundland and Labrador in jeopardy and destabilized the biodiversity of the marine ecosystem.

Reading Hollenbach on the common good and reflecting on it in terms of decimation of the Northern cod stocks, shows the unreadiness of the Catholic Church-local leaders and members of the faith community to treat the crisis in the fisheries as a moral crisis, a crisis of the common good. The collapse of the fishery may have been avoided had the decision-makers (governments, fish companies, the fishers union and the Catholic Church) sought and encouraged the “cooperation of many people working

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15 Hall, *Thinking the Faith*, 122.


17 The 1992 moratorium unemployed 40,000 fishers and plant workers. See Joseph Gough, *Managing Canadian Fisheries: From the Early Days to the Year 2000* (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2007), 419. The extensive damage of the collapse of the fisheries will be addressed in chapters one and two.

18 The northern cod stocks refers to the once abundant cod fish habitat in the waters extending from the northeast coast of Labrador and stretching along the entire east coast (north to south) of the island of Newfoundland.
towards a common goal. Pope John Paul II recognized this type of mutual collaboration as the moral precondition for the development of ever more extensive working communities [bound together by] a progressively expanding chain of solidarity.”¹⁹ To strengthen this principle/virtue of solidarity, Hollenbach invokes the principle of subsidiarity in Catholic social teaching. Subsidiarity requires those in positions of authority to recognize that people have a right to participate in decisions directly affecting them, in accord with their dignity and their responsibility to the common good.²⁰

To augment the reciprocal relationship of solidarity-subsidiarity, Hollenbach puts forward the disposition of “intellectual solidarity”, which encourages “real engagement” with dissenting sides of an argument. ²¹ NIFA had already set such a precedent with the unlikely coalition of fisher and fish merchant, agreeing to cooperate for the sake of the fate of their common livelihoods. Instead of merely “tolerating”²², or accepting without question the annihilation of their fisheries, they agreed to put differences aside and together take up the cause of an endangered fisheries. Hollenbach’s intellectual solidarity, similarly gives venue to institutional Catholic Church leaders and the faith community, and all major participants, to lay aside their differences, and come together with genuine benevolence, to rethink a way to deal with a fishery and society in crisis.


²⁰ Hollenbach, The Common Good and Christian Ethics, 102. Cf Pope Pius XI, Quadragesimo Anno #79.

²¹ Ibid., 32.

²² Ibid., 58.
E. Status Questionis

This dissertation on the relation of the Catholic Church to the common good of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador is considered from the theological-ethical perspective of David Hollenbach. While Hollenbach’s central text on the common good, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics* is published approximately ten years after the collapse of the Atlantic cod fishery, he had already made major theological contributions to issues of the universal common good, reinforcing Catholic social teachings on matters of human rights and justice and peace, while the fishery was declining. 23 His *Common Good and Christian Ethics* and later works actually reaffirm the Church’s teachings that commitment to and concerns for the common good are unending. Hollenbach’s theology of the common good, thus offers ways for the Catholic Church to reflect on how the needs of the common good are met or not met in concrete situations.

Hollenbach is the current University Chair in Human Rights and International Justice, and Director of the Center for Human Rights and International Justice at Boston College. He also teaches at Hekima College of The Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi, Kenya. He has been visiting professor at the Jesuit Philosophy Institute in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, and the East Asian Pastoral Institute in Manila, Philippines. He serves as a consultant to the Jesuit Refugee Service in their work of advocacy on behalf of the human rights of displaced persons. 24


Hollenbach is the author and editor of several books and numerous articles and essays on Christian social ethics. His *Common Good and Christian Ethics* is driven largely by his concern for the fate of the common good as articulated in Catholic social tradition with roots in Thomas Aquinas and Ignatius Loyola. *The Global Face of Public Faith* addresses the role religion should play in politics. Religious engagement in public life, he argues, can strengthen civic life and the common good by encouraging an active citizenry. These texts build on his earlier works. *Justice, Peace and Human Rights* concentrates on how such social-ethical concerns as economic justice and human rights might become more fully integrated into the pastoral life of the Church. *Claims in Conflict* focuses on how the Catholic faith community can learn from the moral and political debate surrounding human rights, particularly with respect to the disparity between rich and poor nations. Hollenbach is also the editor of and contributor to two collections of essays, *Driven From Home* and *Refugee Rights: Ethics, Advocacy, and Africa*. Both propose a human rights framework for political policy and advocacy on behalf of refugees and displaced persons, as they fall within the ethical requirements of human dignity. His 1989 Chancellor’s Lecture to Regis College, *For the More Universal Good: Recovering the Idea of the Common Good* stresses that these groups and all people are community.  

Based on more than a hundred years of papal social encyclicals and teachings, the series of critical essays, *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: Commentaries and Interpretations* of which Hollenbach is an associate editor and a contributor, help build on his assessments of the theological and philosophical foundations of Catholic social

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25 See full citations in “David Hollenbach” section of the *Bibliography*, 293-295.
teaching. They also address the doctrinal issues that arise in the context of each encyclical from *Rerum Novarum* to *Centesimus Annus*. Hollenbach, as well is greatly influenced by John Courtney Murray’s work on religious freedom. Murray is a major contributor to *Dignitatis Humanae (DH)*. *DH*, a central document of Vatican II substantiates that religious freedom is compatible with Catholicism, that one could be both a good Catholic and a good citizen. Murray’s insistence that the Church reposition itself “into the world of history”26, gives consent to Hollenbach’s proposal for the Church to end its tendency to operate as if it were outside history.27

These theological writings are pertinent when taking into account the body of literature on the ecclesial, political and social history of Newfoundland and Labrador. Some of these include Brother J.B. Darcy, *Fire Upon the Earth: The Life and Times of Bishop Michael Anthony Fleming*. Archbishop Michael Howley, *Ecclesiastical History of Newfoundland*; the numerous *pastoral* correspondences and *homilies* of Archbishops P. J. Skinner (1951-1979) and Alphonsus L. Penney(1980-1989); articles in the Archdiocese of St. John’s newspaper, *The Monitor*; historical records acquired from the archives of Memorial University and the Presentation Sisters, St. John’s; local media - *CBC* and *Evening Telegram* coverage of the fisheries; Joseph Gough, *Managing The Canadian Fisheries: From the Early Days to the Year 2000*; W.J., Kirwin, G. M. Story and J.D.A. Widdowson’s *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*; Cabot Martin, *No Fish and Our Lives*; Shannon Ryan, *History of the Newfoundland Cod Fishery: The

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Newfoundland Cod Fishery in the Nineteenth Century: Bertha Yetman, “The Catholic Church and the Fishery Crisis of 1986-92 in Newfoundland and Labrador: Seeking Pastoral Insights in a Time of Changing Ocean Resources” (unpublished thesis); and the personal memories and experiences of Bertha Yetman as a fisher’s daughter and executive member of NIFA.  

However, there are limitations, given that there is not a preponderance of academic sources available on Church history and Church history makers in the province. Only in more recent years has the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Memorial University of Newfoundland, and the Archdiocese of St. John’s engaged such local historians, sociologists and religious studies scholars as Jerry Bannister, Barbara Crosbie, Hans Rollman and Jeff Webb to research the historical contributions of bishops, clergy and religious to the society and culture. Although, available only on-line, these resources give further insight to the on-going state of relation of the Catholic Church-local to the fisheries, the culture and way of life.

This collection of Newfoundland and Labrador writings with their stress on the socio-economic, eco-cultural, and religious context are important references to help reassess Hollenbach’s conviction that Church/state relations can be contentious for the leadership of the Catholic Church. The mission of Church as the “people of God” is to be continuously attentive to the needs of the human community and all God’s creation. The overall well-being of a community of people suffering the loss of their principal food source, their means of earning a living and ways of living with the sea, compels the

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28 See full citations in “Newfoundland and Labrador” section of the Bibliography, 295-305.

29 The Church” as “the people of God” articulated in Gaudium et Spes, remains an enduring emphasis from Vatican II.
Church in Newfoundland and Labrador to address the moral and religious dimensions of political questions. Hollenbach foresees the church of today as playing a more participatory lead role in the political arena. He is convinced that the church as a religious community “can make distinctive and perhaps unique contributions to the strength of civic life and the good of democratic self-government.” He stresses that “religious contributions to the common good are possible and should be taken seriously.” Hollenbach contends that “where the state has the authoritarian pretentions, religious communities have the capacity to energize opposition.” Active witness to the needs of the common good, he argues, cannot be taken to mean “unjustified meddling in politics.” History, past and present attests to Church intervention in such matters of the state as education, abortion, euthanasia, and homosexual unions. A Church attentive to its own social teachings can help offer critical reflection that affects its practice not only in its own life of faith, but also in its ability to address the moral and religious dimensions of issues that insist on indirect engagement in the political arena.

II: METHODOLOGY

I have approached this topic by setting the context with a historical-political and historical-sociological analysis of the place of the Catholic Church in Newfoundland and

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Labrador. An epigrammatic, summarizing treatment of the historic significance of the fisheries to the way of life of these maritime people segues to a summary of events, identifying and explaining the relations of the major participants to the fisheries crisis - NIFA, industry, governments, the fishers union and the Catholic Church leaders and faith community. This is followed by a brief historical outline of the relation of selective Catholic metropolitans to the state, namely the fisheries, beginning with the founding years of the Church in the new British colony, up to and including the post-Vatican II episcopacies in place at the time of the crisis.

An understanding of the relation of the Church to the fisheries catastrophe and further interpretation of its collapse as a crisis of the common good requires a delineation of the distinct interpretative levels of the common good, arising throughout the major periods of Catholic social tradition. The concrete human experiences of the common good, and analysis of the particular context in which they are interpreted is a crucial hermeneutic for developing this thesis. The notion of the common good with its beginnings in the early Church changes or enlarges over this two thousand year tradition.

Despite multiple and diverse situations and circumstances giving rise to newer gradations of interpretations of the common good, the common good has been traditionally addressed under the rubric of natural law. Thomas Aquinas first conceived natural law as participation of free and rational human beings in the eternal law of God, as an intelligible command, “a dictate of reason…nothing other than the light of understanding placed in us by God; through it we must know what we must do and what
we must avoid.”

This natural law paradigm moves through the emergent methodologies of Catholic social teaching, starting with the Leonine and post-Leonine period.

The classicist world view of Pope Leo XIII through to Pope Pius XII is shaped by natural law. Where natural law applies to all humanity and is in itself the same for all, the Church as a universal, hierarchical institution is viewed as the same for all. The social teachings of this period focus on the eternal and the unchanging, and see reality primarily as static, unchallengeable and interminable. A methodological shift occurs with the convening of Vatican II, allowing the papacy “to make greater use of natural law theory … [thus providing for] more expansive claims to papal authority in the affairs of the world.” With the pontificates of Popes John XXIII and Paul VI, the ultramontane Church prevailing for more than a century moves to a historically-conscious worldview. The historically-conscious Church attempts to reinterpret traditional Christian teachings, as the Church faces new challenges in a rapidly changing world.

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37 See Bernard Lonergan, Method in Theology , xi.


40 See Lonergan, Method in Theology, xi and xii.
The papacies of Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, to some extent reposition themselves towards neo-Thomism. Neo-Thomism rejects individualism and collectivism and advocates for *solidaris* based on the principle of Christian love for neighbour (Mk. 12:30). These teachings uphold respect for human dignity as a precondition to justice, equality, solidarity, subsidiarity. They sustain the human right and responsibility to work and live in harmony with one another and all God’s creation. They invoke the spirit of *aggiornamento* or “updating”, so as to speak with relevance to the “signs of the times.” These methodologies, therefore do not really qualify as a major shift. The continued use of natural law stresses continuity. *Laborem Exercens*, for example emphasizes that humans “as images of God though their possession of both reason and freedom… give them capacity for self-determination and moral responsibility”. Although encyclicals, statements and messages of the later Pope John Paul II through to Pope Francis are promulgated beyond the years of the demise of the cod fishery, all continue to validate and reinforce the primacy of the common good. Pope John Paul’s 1998 *Message for World Peace* restates from his 1979 *Homily at Yankee*

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43 Pope Paul VI, *Gaudium et Spes*, # 4.

Stadium that “Jesus … gives us his Peace accompanied by his Justice”. Pope Benedict XVI’s Caritas in Veritate (CV) reaffirms the consistency of Catholic social teaching by quoting from all previous social encyclicals, starting with Rerum Novarum. Francis I gives further surety to the long-standing import of the common good by supporting Paul VI’s claim that

Love for society and commitment to the common good are outstanding expressions of a charity which affects not only relationships between individuals but also ‘macro-relationships, social, economic and political ones.’ That is why the Church set before the world the ideal of a “civilization of love”. Social love is the key to authentic development.

For this reason, the Church as a faith and as a human/divine community is ever obligated to bear moral witness to the work and activities of social systems, institutions, and environments on which we all depend. As Douglas Hall pronounces, “the community that is moved by the gospel … inevitably finds itself moved by the world’s suffering ones. [This may require a certain] shaking up of a worldview.”

That said, David Hollenbach’s theological approach is viewed in some quarters as a transition from traditional moral thought. A revisionist theologian, his reinterpretation


48 Hall, Thinking the Faith, 28-29 and 43.
of the common good is considered to fall largely within the category of revisionist ethics, a philosophy emerging from the historically-conscious worldview.\(^49\) The emphasis on historical consciousness sees the world of reality as historical, dynamic, continually evolving, and ever-developing.\(^50\) As noted earlier Hollenbach’s theology of the common good is guided to a great extent by the writings of John Courtney Murray. Murray’s writings provide a prism through which to rethink the Church’s doctrinal heritage articulated at Vatican II. The Council’s openness to his thought on the relationship between church and state is reflected in the “Church’s willingness to learn from secular society …[so as to] be influential in engagement in public life.”\(^51\)

Hollenbach employs the Thomistic natural law approach, arguing that where the basis of natural law is God’s law and is based in human nature, the foundational aspects of the common good are derived from natural law. He concludes that since human beings are created in the image of God, “their good-only by being united with God, a union which also unites them to each other and with the whole created order, [consequently] God’s own goodness … is the good of the whole universe.”\(^52\) Because the Christian imperative to love unconditionally and respect for the dignity of the human person is crucial to the understanding of the common good, Hollenbach is concerned that humans

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relate to one another in a way that countenances better relationships, not only with each other but with all that God has created.

The school of revisionist or proportionalist thought to which Hollenbach belongs, in the case of conflicting moral norms, provides a norm or proportionate reason to assess the proportion of good or proportion of evil in a particular act, whereby “the moral judgment would depend on the balance.” Proportionalist reasoning intends to minimize the harm and maximize the benefits to persons; it does not justify morally wrong actions by a good intention.

The uniqueness of the historical conscious approach envisaged by Bernard Lonergan and advanced by Hollenbach, calls for a Church-local to deal with the problem of a collapsing fishery as endangering maritime people’s unique historical, cultural, religious and socio-economic identity. His common good revisited entreats the leadership of the Catholic Church, along with the faith community in Newfoundland and Labrador to incarnate the Church’s social teachings, in the reality of the moment. These teachings give permission to the Church-local to fully participate in the needs of these people, weathering the storm of evident mismanagement of their ocean resources. A Church open to facing these challenges is more disposed to be an active participant in helping order the fruits and resources of the sea to the good of these ocean people.

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III: PROCEDURE

This Introductory Chapter sets in place the intention of the thesis and the method for approaching its successful completion. An overview of the political-socio-economic-historical factors giving rise to the collapse of the fisheries in Newfoundland and Labrador is featured in tandem with the relation of the Catholic church-local to this catastrophe. The emergent understanding of the notion of the common good in Catholic social tradition treated alongside David Hollenbach’s re-envisioned common good, evokes a way forward for the Catholic Church-local to accept that in its reluctance to participate in and respond to the fisheries disaster, it was unable to recognize that this crisis was a crisis of the common good.

Chapter One sets the historical context for the thesis question: “During the fisheries crisis, why did the Catholic Church in Newfoundland and Labrador fail to engage its own social teachings on the common good and thus fail to treat the crisis of the fisheries as a crisis of the common good?”

First, a brief historical outline of Newfoundland and Labrador from its discovery days in 1497, through its years as a British Colony and beyond Confederation with Canada, shows that the cod fishery dominated the lived story of these maritime people.\(^5\) In the fishery, they shared a common great tradition distinguishing their cultural-religious, economic and social identity as a maritime people. From the beginning, European fishers, largely of English Catholic and Irish-Protestant descent fished these

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waters and set up their homes along the coastline.\textsuperscript{56} Their history of dominance by colonial powers and local fish merchants from founding days to the time of Confederation, were conceivably persuasive factors in 1949, for Newfoundland to surrender to Ottawa the management and control of this ocean abundant in renewable and non-renewable resources. In fifty years, this new government management system oversaw the demise of the vast and rich cod fishery in these same waters.

The second part outlines briefly, the events leading to the fisheries crisis, while noting the relation of the major participants to the catastrophe: industry, governments, the fishers union, NIFA and the institutional Catholic Church-local. The 1992 moratorium anticipated that the cod population would recover in two years. To this day, this fishery has not rebounded and remains closed. The overfishing of the fish stocks, the heart of their common livelihood not only had great implications for the community’s economic and cultural, but also its religious identity. Where religion bore such a permanent mark on the cultural identity and character of these fishing people, chapter two explores the historic relationship of the official Church-local with this maritime society and culture.

\textit{Chapter Two} consisting of two parts, attempts to make connections between the preconciliar and conciliar Church’s relationship to this fishing society. Part A traces the historic relation of selective Catholic Church-local episcopacies to the people, to the state and to the fisheries itself. From the more foundational years of the colony to the decades following Confederation, bishops held the highest ecclesial rank among Catholics in the land. Until 1950, religion and ethnicity and not so much the fisheries largely informed

\textsuperscript{56}Ryan, \textit{History of the Newfoundland Cod Fishery}, paras. 5 and 6.
episcopal decisions. They also marked tense debates between the local ordinary and colonial government.

Where a history of episcopal-clerical dogmatism provoked explosive exchanges with government, Part B reflects on an official Church-local much less disposed to political controversy. Church leaders were also unready to authentically receive and implement Vatican II’s mandate to be the people of God and to interpret the signs of the times at home.\footnote{Pope Paul VI, Lumen Gentium (Rome: Nov. 21, 1964), 33, accessed Mar. 5, 2014, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.} Despite efforts to set up an Office of Social Action, consisting of religious and lay people, the home Church largely persisted as a clerically-centered institution. Pope John Paul II’s 1984 commissioning of fishers to take action was not followed up in the daily work and mission of the institutional church-local. And the 1988 revelation of clerical sexual abuses of minors largely discredited the Church’s voice in either temporal or religious matters. The pillage in the fishery went unchecked, destroying a primary food source and way of life. Where the common good of the people was not prioritized in the Church’s work at the time of the collapse of the fisheries, this begs the question as to how the common good was understood in the local ecclesia. The next chapter, thus focuses on the development of the understanding of the common good in Catholic social tradition.

Chapter Three consists of two parts. It sets parameters for assessing the thesis question. By tracing the various meanings and understandings of the common good in the history of Catholic social tradition, this chapter brings to light that for two thousand years the theme of the common good, has been foundational to Catholic social thought; it was well developed at the time of the fisheries crisis. Part A outlines the trajectory of the
development and understanding of the notion of the common good in Catholic social tradition. A full delineation of the development of the common good in early Catholic social tradition, however would be more than this thesis intends. Therefore, beginning with the early Christian monastic communities, attention is given only to the more significant contributions to the interpretation of the common good as it emerges throughout these major periods, prior to *Rerum Novarum* (RN).\(^{58}\) These include: the early Church - pre-modern period (1\(^{st}\) Century B.C.E – 19\(^{th}\) Century C.E), the Leonine to post-Leonine period (1878-1939), Vatican II-Post-Vatican II (1958-1978)\(^{59}\) through to the pontificates of Popes Benedict XVI (1978-2012) and Francis I’s *Evangelii Gaudium*.\(^{60}\)

Part B examines the strengths and weaknesses of the methodologies used to interpret the common good, from the pontificates of Leo XIII through to Benedict XVI. Although the later encyclicals of Pope John Paul II, Benedict XVI and Francis I were issued in the years following the fisheries crisis, they reaffirm and continue to strengthen the common good as a central theme in Catholic social thought. It would be premature, however to order the pontificate of Francis I to a specific methodological category.

Against this background, chapter four focuses on David Hollenbach’s reinterpretation of the common good in Catholic social thought.


\(^{59}\) None of the encyclicals of Pope Pius XII (1939 to1958) are regarded principally as social encyclicals.

Chapter Four in its three parts, attempts to further situate the thesis question. Part A introduces Hollenbach’s common good reinterpreted in light of history and challenges posed to the understanding of the notion of the common good in Catholic social tradition. While noting the advantages and disadvantages of his methodology, this part also concentrates on the significance of the tradition of natural law in light of his offering of “intellectual solidarity”, which allows for integrating the transcendental worth of human persons with their existential response to their particular, socio-economic, cultural and political settings.  

Part B takes up Hollenbach’s recognition of a healthy, stable community as central to the common good. Respect for human dignity is explored in terms of the right to work, to work in an ecologically-environmentally responsible manner, and live in solidarity with one another and the environment.

Part C highlights Hollenbach’s contention that the Church by virtue of its own social teachings is obligated to be the agent of the common good in the community it serves. But the clerical sexual abuse scandals diminish the Church’s capacity to be a moral agent in the lives of its people. Hollenbach is adamant that the Church name and own these sins, so as to address outright the spiritual-ethical questions of church and state, to continue to work in its mission of Christ on earth. His common good rethought provides the framework to reassess the Catholic Church-local’s response to the decimation of the Newfoundland and Labrador fishery, which is addressed in chapter five.

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61 Hollenbach, The Common Good and Christian Ethics, 158.

Chapter Five attempts to weigh Hollenbach’s reinterpretation of the notion of the common good in light of the relation of the official Catholic Church-local to the crisis in the Newfoundland and Labrador cod fishery. Hollenbach’s confidence in the necessity of church engagement in public life brings to scrutiny, the customary manner of the local Catholic faith community to reify and pedestalize Church leaders. Despite the clerical-centered character of the Church, his disputation that the Church must not be perceived as separate and apart from the everyday life of community, holds deep theological-ethical implications for the Church’s relationship to the fisheries crisis. Hollenbach’s focus on community, human dignity, justice and human rights, the right to work and work in solidarity with the environment, suggests a new way for the Church-local to redefine its role in relation to the socio-economic-eco-environmental and workplace issues of these maritime people.

Chapter Six revisits the thesis question, reflecting on why the Catholic Church in Newfoundland and Labrador failed to treat the crisis in the fisheries as a crisis of the common good. The substantial body of Church teachings on the common good, re-examined in light of Hollenbach’s theological reinterpretation of the common good, sheds new light on the inadequacy of the response of the Church leadership and faith community to a fishery in crisis, and the common good of those dependent on this fishery. This chapter recommends that for this Church to renew its relationship with these people, it must resolve to reclaim its social teachings and actively commit itself to the common good of these fishing communities, stagnating in their post-fisheries years.
Chapter One

The Fishery And Fisheries Crisis Of 1986 – 1992
And The
Newfoundland And Labrador Community

1.0 Introduction

This Chapter situates the socio-economic, ecological, political and ecclesial factors implicated in the decimation of the Newfoundland and Labrador fisheries. Delineating these factors, as well serves to prefigure the thesis question: “During the fisheries crisis, why did the Catholic Church in Newfoundland and Labrador fail to engage its own social teachings on the common good and thus fail to treat the crisis of the fisheries as a crisis of the common good?” The chapter is divided into two parts: Part A and Part B. Part A provides a brief historical outline of the relationship of the fisheries and fisheries crisis to the five hundred year old community and way of life in Newfoundland and Labrador. Part B includes two sections. Section I outlines the events leading to, causes of and actions taken in response to the fisheries crisis of 1986-1992. Section II examines the relations of the major participants to the crisis: inshore and offshore sectors of the industry, federal and provincial governments, the fishers union, and the official Catholic Church-local.

PART A: NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR-A COMMUNITY OF THE SEA

1.1 Brief History of a Maritime People

The history of Newfoundland and Labrador located on the north-east tip of North America is inextricably intertwined with the sea. Their history exemplifies and embodies the lived reality a maritime worldview of a people whose diet, work, leisure and way of life is
fish and fishing. (See map below): ¹

¹ Atlas of Canada – Newfoundland and Labrador, accessed Jan. 22, 2014, https://www.google.ca/search?q=Map+of+Newfoundland+and+labrador&client=firefox-a&hs=z31&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&channel=pp&tbn=isch&source=iu&imgi=ZfvLCq728ZywnM%253A%253Bhttps%253A%252F%252Fencrypted-tbn3.gstatic.com%252Fimge%253Fq%253Df%25253Df%25253DAANd9GeRYZQZ2zNw9aj-hXQttTefZNB-eEmQNi1sdYZeOGo1L9316w8ta%25253A%25253B418%25253B328%25253B53B5gAmR1bSFIGqEMM%25253Bhttp%25253A%25252F%25252Fwgp.greenwichmeantime.com%25252Ftime-zone%25252Ftimezone%25252Ftimezone%25252Fnorth-america%25252Fcanada%25252Fnewfoundland%25252Fmap%25252Fmap%25252Fsa=X&ei=ZiThUqHxJvHSyQsSyq4CgCg&ved=0CDUQ9QEwBQ&biw=1150&bih=631#facrc=_&imgdii=_&imgrc=quqjvJio1chFNM%253A%3B600%3B719.
Since 1497 when John Cabot discovered its ice-cold waters teeming with cod, the cod fishery has dominated the story of these maritime people.\textsuperscript{2} Cabot, an Italian explorer guarantored by the English monarch reported that “the sea there is full of fish that can be taken not only with nets but with fishing-baskets”.\textsuperscript{3} The cod-filled waters to which Cabot referred were most likely part of the $2J3K3L \text{NAFO}$ fishing zone which includes the legendary $\text{Grand Banks of Newfoundland}$. This discovery set the stage for more than five hundred more years of enthralling tales and dramatic accounts of the annihilation of a race of people [Beothic], taking possession, colonization, piracy, mercantilism, smuggling, action-packed fishing expeditions, harassed, bullied and starving settlers, ship wrecks, lives given to and taken by the sea, a colony becoming a province and adding to a nation, the extinction of a species and with it an assault on a way of life.\textsuperscript{4}

Following Cabot’s first sighting of the new-found-land, from the early Spring to Fall, European fishermen from England, France, Portugal and Spain crossed the North Atlantic to fish these waters rich in marine life. English fishing captains reported cod shoals “so thick by the shore that we hardly have been able to row a boat through them” \textsuperscript{5} The sighting of an ocean bountiful in cod opened up such a great source of food and wealth for Europeans that by the early seventeenth century they began to permanently settle there.\textsuperscript{6} Fishers fished daily from small boats with hook and line, and returned to shore each evening. “They set up operations on sites that were closest to the nearby fishing grounds, and then built their stages

\textsuperscript{2} Peter Firstbrook, \textit{The Voyage of the Matthew:John Cabot and the Discovery of North America} (San Francisco, CA: Bay Books and Tapes, 1997), 128-129.


\textsuperscript{4} Yetman, \textit{The Catholic Church and the Fishery Crisis}. The annihilation of a race refers to the extinction of the first inhabitants, the indigenous Beothuck peoples.

\textsuperscript{5} Editors, “A Run on the Banks”, para. 3.

\textsuperscript{6} John Guy began the first British settlement at Cupids, Trinity Bay in 1610. Prior to this settlement, fishers came to fish and returned home to Europe at the end of the fishing season. They were forbidden to legally settle in Newfoundland from 1492 until the early 1700’s. Cf. Government of Canada, \textit{Newfoundland: An Introduction to Canada’s New Province}, (Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, in collaboration with the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Ottawa, 1950), 15-41 and 142ff.
for splitting and salting the fish; their cook rooms and bunkhouses for the crews; and the
drying racks or flakes on which the fish were dried. These sites eventually became a string of
settlements extending all around the island and along the coast of Labrador.”⁷

These first immigrants did not have the opportunity to get rich quickly as the fishery
was random and unpredictable. Sometimes fish were plentiful and at other times they were
very scarce. For five hundred years, the people of Newfoundland struggled with the way of
the ocean beyond human control.⁸

In his address to the members of the Newfoundland fishing community, Pope John
Paul II acknowledged the immeasurable resilience it takes to live and survive in this
precarious environment:

Long before they settled on these shores, Europeans fished these Banks. From fishing
villages along these coasts you and your ancestors have set out in all kinds of weather
to wrest a living from the sea, often at the risk of your lives. Your wives and families
have shared the uncertainty and fear your way of life involves.⁹

This remarkable human saga from its birthplace on one of the world’s richest fishing
grounds, in part also forms the larger story of the country of Canada. In 1949, Newfoundland
brought with it into the Dominion of Canada not only a large island surrounded by an ocean
abundant in renewable and non-renewable resources but also the distinct northerly mainland
region of Labrador, rich in mineral deposits. As the 1949 Terms of Union dictated, the ocean
resources would be managed and owned by Canada. In turn, the new province would receive

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⁷ Ryan, History of the Newfoundland Cod Fishery, paras. 5 and 6.
⁸ Yetman, “The Catholic Church and the Fishery Crisis”, Chapters One and Two.
⁹ Pope John Paul II, Address to Members of the Fishing Community, #2.
the security and comfort of social security benefits, subsidized incomes, better health care and a government financed denominational education system for one and all.  

Two years after joining Canada in 1951, a 280 ft. long, 2,600 gross ton ship flying the British flag arrived on the Grand Banks. The *Fairtry* with its tall funnels and numerous portholes suggesting a passenger liner was in fact a fishing vessel. The ship’s large nets “were sometimes filled with so many tons of fish that when hauled over the stern all at once, the gear sometimes gave way under the strain.”  

11 By the 1960’s the *Fairtry* was joined by factory freezer trawlers from Europe and the Soviet Union. This new world technology could not only catch great quantities of fish but could process them on board immediately.  

12 The *Fairtry*, an early symbol of Confederation not only marked the beginning of the end of a prosperous fishery but also foreshadowed the demise of small fishing communities.

### 1.2 Communities: Catholic and Protestant

Before joining Canada, the *Dominion of Newfoundland* was already home to many smaller communities or outports and yet this Dominion was a community in itself.  

13 The people, who live in these small places by the sea generally share the same culture. Any simple description of Newfoundland and Labrador communities of European descent would be misleading. Religious affiliation largely distinguishes respective community cultures. Most residents are descendants of immigrants from either Ireland or the West Country.

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12 Ibid.

England. These outports were and are either completely Irish or completely English with a few religiously mixed populations (Irish-Catholic/English-Protestant) residing in the larger urban centers of St. John’s, Grand Falls, Corner Brook and Labrador City. A few small French communities on the West coast and Mikmac communities on the western portion of the province and at Conne River on the South coast largely comprise the balance of the Catholic population in the province.\textsuperscript{14}

Data from the 2001 census reveals that Newfoundland and Labrador has remained overwhelmingly Protestant and Catholic in make-up. The largest single religious denomination by number of adherents, according to this census is the Roman Catholic Church at 36.9\% of the province’s population. The major Protestant denominations make up 59.7\% with the largest group being the Anglican Church of Canada at 26.1\%. The United Church of Canada constitutes 17.0\%, the Salvation Army 7.9\% and the Pentecostal Church comprises 6.7\%, while non-Christians form 2.7\% of the total population, with the majority of those latter respondents indicating no religion at all.\textsuperscript{15}

Religion largely moulded the cultural dynamic. In these either Catholic or Protestant settlements, religious prejudice carried forward from old country English-Irish hostilities was pervasive. The Protestant was the stranger to an exclusively Catholic community predominantly of Irish descent. Geographic boundaries demarcating religious following gave


rise to Catholics solely populating such regions as the whole Irish Loop, extending from St. Mary’s Bay through to the Southern Shore of the Avalon Peninsula. (See maps below):

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Even in the larger centers, Catholics and Protestants clustered according to creed. This sectarian division may also be attributable to the denominational education system instituted in 1856 by the government of the colony. The system sanctioned government financed Church run education but with certain government controls. “The Churches used these funds in the nineteenth century, or at least a portion of them to build and run schools for their adherents in the outports that became... increasingly denominationally homogeneous. This increasing local homogeneity was due in part to the system of education and increasing religious tensions and prejudices”.  

It must be noted that the all-Catholic communities inhabiting the Irish Loop, stand facing the Grand Banks of Newfoundland and Labrador, the portion of the North American continental shelf forming the greater part of the spawning and feeding grounds of the plentiful Northern cod. And it was their work, namely on the ocean that defused their religious differences. The ocean commons became a healer and reconciler as Catholic and Protestant fishers together lowered their nets into the deep. The collapse of the fishery almost ended this way of life and with it the disappearance of the berths on their five hundred year old fishing grounds. A berth is a particular station on the fishing grounds, handed down by custom or lot to a vessel, boat, crew or family. 

These time-honored and respected berths benefitted from unconditional public consent. Since settlement days, a man fished with his brothers and sons on their berth or

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ocean property, passed down from their immediate ancestors. No one ever really owned them, but families harvesting fish on their inherited ocean acreage, constituted communities onto themselves. Before Confederation, the sea was their sanctuary and mutual commons. After Newfoundland joined Canada, the fishing berths became more privatized, more controlled by fishing quotas and regional allocations. The casualty of the fishery not only spelled death to these floating communities but the fishing grounds became an unusable, conventional commons, open to all but of no real advantage to anyone.

And the once, self-sufficient coastal communities were simultaneously reduced to near politico-socio-economic insignificance. In some cases where their entire economies were based on fishing, these communities ceased to exist. Throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s, some of the more isolated outports agreed to closing down. Enticed by Provincial-Federal Government lump-sum payments of up to CAD $270,000, they packed up for good to become strangers in a new town.

Fishing communities in Newfoundland and Labrador were virtually devastated by the ambitions of big governments and industry to produce wealth without delay. The exploitation of the fishery caused almost irreparable damage to the social, cultural, economic and environmental health of community.

1.2.1 Gathered Community

Today, Church attendance is declining. The sexual abuse scandals among clergy and religious add force to the noticeable resistance to traditional church culture. A connection

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20 Note: the gender reference is male as women rarely if ever owned fishing boats and fished the ocean.

exists between frequency of Mass attendance and the sexual abuse of minors by priests. Attendees, infrequent or non-attenders consistently point out that they know someone who was abused or they know a priest convicted of pedophilia.\textsuperscript{22} Undeniably, low turnout also reflects modernity’s predilection for secularism. The Catholic populace today is as much dominated by a consciously anti-religious ideology as any modern western society. Many choose to “leave the security of their doctrinal sanctuaries; [they are disenchanted with a theology] of bygone years.”\textsuperscript{23} This trend may also be attributable to simple boredom during liturgies, lack of motivation or generational incompatibility of belief systems, and social changes reflective of the times.\textsuperscript{24} But the waning population as well contributes to the sparsely filled pews. Diminishing school enrolment attests to the population decline. As an example, through the 1970s and 1980s, school enrolment at \textit{Stella Maris Catholic High School}, Trepassy on the south of the Avalon Peninsula, approximated 550 students. Today it has 80 students.\textsuperscript{25}

Of the 111,000 Catholics in the Archdiocese of St. John’s, only about twenty percent attend Church.”\textsuperscript{26} This shrinkage in Church attendance impacts Catholic Church culture which for centuries ranged from fervent observances of sacraments and devotional practices to enthusiastic use of sacramentals, to the prayerful utterances of quiet reassurance, to help cope with the realities and struggles of everyday life.

\textsuperscript{22} Residents of St. Mary’s, interviews with author, January-April, 2014. These residents choose to remain anonymous; they recall St. Mary’s, once a bastion of Irish-Catholicity, and named the sexual abuse charges as a major factor for their disaffection with the Church.

\textsuperscript{23} Hall, \textit{Thinking the Faith}, 159.


\textsuperscript{25} Archbishop Martin Currie, interview with author, \textit{The Basilica}, St. John’s, Mar. 26, 2014.

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
1.2.2 Parish

The parish in Catholic Newfoundland and Labrador in practice, traditionally embodied Pope Pius XI’s image of a committed social body practicing the principle of subsidiarity through their availability to “furnish help to the members of the body social”. Through cultivating a closer sense of relations to their common values and emotional concerns, parishioners appeal to the virtue/principle of solidarity’s “firm and persevering determination to commit ... to the common good”.

Historically, church members volunteered their time, energy and contributed their monetary resources to the church’s mission and work. These builders and designers of schooners, fishing boats, houses and barns were the same nimble hands who designed and built the schools, rectories, halls and churches, so symbolic of and intrinsic to the sacred of their everyday lives.

Since this Church was first established in the colony, parish societies embodied a form of governance in the community. For example, the Holy Name Society, a confraternity [of lay men] in the Catholic Church was committed to such lay ministries as welcomers at

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27 In St. Mary’s, “the parish” was a common household conversation, engaged with neighbours and visitors. Such concerns as building schools, repairing Churches, fundraisers and even the attributes or aberrations of the parish priest - how involved he was in the parish, or how “fast he said Mass” dominated much of the discussion.


30 See Yetman, “The Catholic Church and the Fishery Crisis”.

liturgies, parish fundraising activities, building and maintaining parish buildings - church hall, school, convent, church buiding and rectory. The *Holy Name Society*, with the exception of its tradition of male membership, mirrored a municipal council of today. Its president was effectively the community mayor and quite often served as a school board trustee, a position appointed by the parish priest.\(^3^2\) It was not until the early 1970’s that the term “municipality” began to supplant the role of the parish. The absence of official municipalities throughout the province in 1956 stirred native son and Dalhousie law student, John C. Crosbie to write:

“The most startling fact about Newfoundland’s local government is that apart from the city of St. John’s, there were no local government bodies on the island until 1938.”\(^3^3\) Crosbie’s dream realized more than twenty years later, gave birth to the more formal implementation of community councils and later rural development associations across the province. The rise of these systems of government marked a differentiation between parish and civic responsibilities. In time, these councils in part began to erode the primacy of the parish in the everyday life of the community.\(^3^4\)

Although not so politically commended, women as well played a vital role. As members of *St. Anne’s Sodality*, they helped plan and prepare parish socials, organized

\(^3^2\) In 1965, Augustine Yetman, president of the *Holy Name Society*, St. Mary’s served also as trustee on the Placentia-St. Mary’s School Board. He was appointed by the parish priest, Father James Dunne. See F. R. Kennedy (St. John’s: Department of Education, May 11, 1960). A photocopy of this unpublished document verifying his appointment was provided by his widow, Anastasia Yetman. Augustine Yetman was the founding president of the *Holy Name Society*, St. Mary’s. Today, his picture is mounted in the local parish hall.


fundraisers, designed costumes for parish and school variety concerts and cleaned the Church regularly. While the men were away from home, either at sea or working in the far north, these women played dual roles in maintaining the household and parish community.  

For five hundred years women, men, children, inshore and offshore crews, and regardless of historical tensions, even fishers and fish merchants, in reoccurring acts of solidarity, assembled together in faith. Despite the centuries of conflicts between opposing sides, bonds of affection emerge. When parishioners worship in the Church and gather in the parish hall, these dangerous memories and animosities fade, at least for the time being. Created in the image of the triune God, they form a community of persons. “The mutual implication of their .... relationality [with its] highest exemplification in God’s own being” becomes validated in the commonality of their faith community.  

Yet, beyond the boundaries demarcating the sacred and secular, a rift in these relationships prevails. Stories of fishers exploited, intimidated and besieged by thrifty fish merchants, are as familiar to the community narrative as the Church and religion itself.

1.3 Fishers and Fish Merchants

Inshore - offshore resentments brewing during the fisheries crisis only added to age old embittered human relations in the community. Long-standing fishers and fish merchant rivalry to some extents was a spoiler to community morale. Memorial University anthropologist, Barabara Neiss writes that the Newfoundland class system has often been described as “a fishocracy. The primacy of fish in the Newfoundland economy marked the presence of a ruling class whose ascendancy was based upon their control of the fishery; and by extension, the existence of a class of oppressed and powerless fishermen. .... The power

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of the merchant class in relation to producers [in these outports] substantially affected the pattern of class struggle.  

But despite the distinguishing of the divine imprint not only in their spiritual but also in their social and relational human realities, the demands of everyday living seemed to coerce the Church hierarchy and government leaders to be pawns of the more financially solvent merchant class. By the 1980’s, their fishery, the basis of their means of earning a living and central to their way of life, faced an uncertain future.

PART B: THE FISHERIES CRISIS 1986-1992

SECTION I: CAUSES, EVENTS AND ACTIONS

1.4 Events Leading to the Crisis

In 1992, the once abundant cod stocks off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador collapsed and a moratorium was placed on fishing all Northern cod inhabiting the 2J3KL NAFO (North Atlantic Fishing Zone). (See map below):
The northern cod fishery by and large shaped the lives and fashioned the narrative and cultural identity of Canada’s east coast communities. The end of the region’s 500-year run on cod, not only marked the largest industrial closure in Canadian history but also effected an almost irrevocable socio-economic, political and cultural change in the province. A range of factors contributed to the demise of the cod including: overfishing, industry and government disregard for scientific uncertainty and political opportunism. Taken together, they inflicted untold harm on the interaction between the fishing communities and the cod fishery on which they depended.

For most Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, fishing although never financially prosperous was their primary means of earning a living. But by the early 1980s, summer after summer, inshore fishers reported more and more empty nets. With it the political wisdom

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40 Gough, Managing Canadian Fisheries, 419.
seemed thrown off balance. Elected representatives in Ottawa and Newfoundland were visibly in a quandary about how to come to grips with a seemingly unmanageable situation.

The distress with “diminishing catches” was already recognized in 1984 by Pope John Paul II when he addressed inshore fishers at Flatrock, Newfoundland. The pontiff noted that the cause of their misfortunes was mainly attributable to “the means of processing having become more technically sophisticated. The fishing industry has also been concentrated more and more in the hands of fewer and fewer people. … more small or family fishing concerns lose their financial independence to the larger and capital intensive enterprises.”

Big fish companies were steadily endangering a way of life. With fishing quotas set and allocated by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), the offshore fishing fleet was allotted the larger share of the quota. At the same time, inshore fishers were continually catching fewer fish. Consequently in 1982, federal civil servant, Michael Kirby was commissioned by the Federal Government to investigate the troubled Atlantic fisheries. Following a year’s investigation into the causes of the “widespread closures of processing plants, work stoppages” and fish companies in “financial crisis,” Kirby yet remained confident in a growing strength in numbers of the cod biomass. He predicted “a 1987 northern cod quota of 400,000 metric tons (mt) and a long term sustainable yield of 550,000 mt, which was twice as high as the long-term historical average.” Kirby recommended restructuring the industry. On September 26, 1983, an agreement was reached between

41 Pope John Paul II, Address to Members of the Fishing Community, # 4.

42 Setting quotas and fish allocations falls under Federal Government jurisdiction.

43 Michael J. Kirby, Chair, Navigating Troubled Waters: A New Policy for the Atlantic Fisheries (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1982).

44 Ibid., 21.

Ottawa and Newfoundland to “rebuild the deep sea fishery” through “plant closures” and “plant mergers,” and build one new company with Ottawa as a major shareholder. The agreement would unanimously say “yes” to the trawler fleet.\(^{47}\)

The trawler fleet was well on its way to bigger things with the *Declaration of Extended Fisheries Jurisdiction* put into effect January 1, 1977.\(^{48}\) The 1976 *International Law of the Sea Conference* held in Geneva, Switzerland, allowed Canada control over all waters within 200 miles off its coast. This decision was reached mainly because of overfishing by European stern trawlers in Canadian waters.\(^{49}\) Now, where the Europeans had been fishing year round, Canadians could edge them out. “Fleets were expanded, processing facilities were built or enlarged, and government financial support was increased.”\(^{50}\)

These Canadian vessels could outspeed, outcatch and outdistance the small inshore dories, skiffs and longliners.\(^{51}\) By the mid-1980’s, Canadian dragger and trawler fleets crowded the 2J3K3L northern cod habitat. Their cone-shaped nets scraped up tons of groundfish feeding near the ocean floor.\(^{52}\) These massive fishing vessels could fish to the edge and over the edge of the 200-mile limit; their sizeable catches swelled with the Total


\(^{51}\) Dory: a flat-bottomed skiff, about 15 feet long and 5 feet wide Skiff: 23 feet long, flat-bottomed open boat with square stern. They use hook and line fishing gear. Longliners: Forty-five foot long inshore and mid-distance vessels use longline fishing gear.

\(^{52}\) Groundfish are fish that are usually caught near the ocean floor, such as cod, haddock, pollock, redfish, halibut, and flounder. Cf. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Fisheries and Agriculture Department. *Fishing Gear Types: Trawler Nets*, accessed Jan. 25, 2015,  http://www.fao.org/fishery/geartype/103/en. 
Allowable Catch (TAC) set at more than 250,000 mts. Inshore fishers cry of ‘no fish’ while the offshore claimed huge profits, set the tone for tense inshore-offshore relations.

1.5. **Overfishing and the Newfoundland Inshore Fisheries Association (NIFA)**

The rush for fish had augured well for the more Goliath offshore fleet. During the January-March spawning season, the deep-sea trawlers or draggers concentrated their effort in the heart of the 2J3K3L NAFO fishing zone, the world’s largest cod fishery. “Draggers are named for the large nets that they drag along behind them, with tows on larger ones capable of netting 25,000 pounds of fish at once.” Their nets dragging deeply over the seabed caused large-scale destruction not only to the habitat but also removed the seaweed and shattered the coral on which cod along with other groundfish such as flounder, halibut, and turbot feed. The draggers scooped up fish much faster than the ecosystem could replenish them; they caught more fish in a few days than a small inshore boat could in a season. In a short time, fishing for profit replaced fishing for a living.

Soon, the papal forewarning became a regrettable reality. In 1986 the Archdiocesan Catholic monthly newspaper, *The Monitor* reported “two years almost to the day after Pope John Paul II stood at Flatrock and warned against the dangers of concentration of ownership and excessive profiteering in the fishing industry, the inshore sector appears to be in deep trouble.” With the livelihood of thousands of fishers, plant workers and others dependent on the fishery at stake, in August, 1986, NIFA was formed. This historic united front brought

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53 Hannesson, *Fisheries Management*, 89.
54 Draggers and trawlers are names often used interchangeably. In some outports, smaller trawlers were referred to as draggers.
together inshore fishers, small plant owners, plant workers and concerned citizens under one banner: *Save the Inshore.*\(^5^8\) They had a common problem: no fish. Against the expectations of skeptics, old differences were set aside, and inshore fishers and inshore fish merchants together proposed their own management plan for the northern cod stocks, inhabiting the 2J3K3L NAFO fishing zone.

At NIFA’s first public meeting in late August 1986, representatives of the inshore sector “blamed indiscriminate fishing by not only foreign factory freezer trawlers but also by Canadian offshore draggers, namely those of *Fishery Products International* [FPI] and *National Sea Products* [NSP] for another dismal failure year.”\(^5^9\) NIFA sought to lower the quotas and impose a ban on fishing during the spawning season. Cod, normally a deep water fish, in late winter and spring comes into shallow waters of the 2J3KL to spawn. Here

an adult female cod lays between 4 and 6 million eggs at a single spawning. The eggs are released into the water to become fertilized. They develop and grow without help from their parents. All but a handful of these millions of eggs will end up as food for other water creatures.\(^6^0\)

The greater percentage of these fish which survived to maturity were sold elsewhere in Canada and the United States.\(^6^1\) Despite the rewarding markets for a province with such little export capability, from 1986 to 1992, NIFA initiated an extensive province-wide public relations campaign warning that the stocks could not withstand the intensity of the offshore

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\(^5^8\) This logo was conceived by an inshore fisherman. From 1986-89, it was used on all NIFA publications.


\(^6^1\) In the early 1980s Newfoundland exported fish products primarily to the United States, Japan, the United Kingdom, the European Economic Community, Puerto Rico, Brazil, and Trinidad-Tobago. In 1981, approximately $122,000,000 of $253,000,000 in fish exports to the U.S. (accounting for almost 75 percent of total exports that year) consisted of cod products. Cf. “20\(^{th}\) Century Salt Fish Markets 1914-1992”, *Society, Economy and Culture*, accessed Jan. 25, 2015, [http://www.heritage.nf.ca/society/salt_fish_markets_1914.html](http://www.heritage.nf.ca/society/salt_fish_markets_1914.html).
effort. NIFA recommended that instead of “overfishing one or two areas: one third is to be caught in 2J, one third in 3K and one third in 3L, and all cod discarded be counted against their quota. They also asked Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) for an increase in scientific research devoted to the northern cod stocks.  

1.5.1 Keat’s Report

Many of the organization’s recommendations relied on the findings put forth in their own commissioned scientific report, dubbed The Keats Report. In 1986, NIFA engaged three Memorial University fisheries biologists, Professors Keats, Steele and Greene to review the methodology used by DFO to establish the TAC for the northern cod stocks. This report recommended that the TAC be set at no more than 185,000 metric tons (mts). DFO Minister, Tom Siddon called The Keats Report “stimulating and worthwhile” and said it would be “taken into account” in setting the quota for 1987. In December 1986 the TAC for the coming year was set at 256,000 mt, allowing overfishing of the stock by some 70,000 mt or 140 million pounds.

Constitutional lawyer, Cabot Martin was with the Canadian delegation at the 1976 Law of Sea Conference in Geneva. This former Senior Policy Advisor to Premier A. Brian

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62 At these rallies and meetings, NIFA repeatedly warned that these Canadian owned trawlers were dumping all undersized fish back into the waters. The greater portion of these fish never survived the trauma of being hooked up and thrown back into the ocean. Up to this point, they were not considered in the count against the quota, allowed in the annual TAC.

63 Derek Keats, D.H. Steele, and J.M. Green, A Review of the Recent Status of the Northern Cod Stock NAFO Divisions 2J, 3K and 3L: A Report To The Newfoundland Inshore Fisheries Association On Scientific Problems In The Northern Cod Controversy (St. John’s: Memorial University of Newfoundland, December 11, 1986). * Derek Keats is principal author of this document.

64 Ibid., 29.


66 Ibid., 4.
Peckford\textsuperscript{67} and subsequent legal advisor to \textit{NIFA} on many occasions reminded the NIFA executive that the 200-mile limit was negotiated on the compelling argument that if the foreign effort persisted, it would annihilate the small coastal Newfoundland and Labrador communities. These tiny outports\textsuperscript{68} for five hundred years were almost solely dependent on the inshore fishery for a living. Without it, they could face extreme privation.\textsuperscript{69} The inshore sector rescued in 1976 by virtue of this decision, however was now encountering a similar danger at home with the offshore fishery reporting substantial catches and incomes to match.\textsuperscript{70}

1.6 \textbf{Federal Government Commissioned Scientific Studies}

By mid-August 1987, pressure from \textit{NIFA} forced the Federal Fisheries Minister, Tom Siddon to commission internationally recognized fisheries scientist and former Director of the \textit{National Marine Fisheries Service Northwest and Alaska Fisheries Center}, Dr. D. L. Alverson\textsuperscript{71} to provide an independent analysis of the factors influencing the 1982-87 declines in the inshore catches. The \textit{Alverson Task Force or Task Group on Newfoundland Inshore Fisheries (TGNIF)} differed somewhat from the \textit{Kirby Report}. Among its conclusions was that

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{67}A. Brian Peckford was Premier of Newfoundland from 1979-89.
\item \textsuperscript{68}Originally the term, outport was just used for coastal communities on the island of Newfoundland. Later it has been adopted for the Labrador coast.
\item \textsuperscript{69}Cabot Martin, legal counsel to NIFA repeatedly cited these reasons for the Geneva Convention granting Canada the 200-mile limit. Cabot Martin was a member of the Canadian team which negotiated the 200 mile limit.
\item \textsuperscript{70}Fisheries and Oceans Canada, \textit{Enterprise Allocation Program} set the TAC according to the size of the operator. In this case \textit{Fishery Products International (FPI)} the largest fish company in the province was awarded the largest quota.
\end{itemize}
evidence of the growth of the total stock may have been overly optimistic … [while] the total stock has increased since 1977, it has not reached the expected levels. The efficiency of the offshore fleet probably has increased since the development of offshore fishing. The reduction in the inshore catches since 1982 cannot be totally explainable by natural factors.72

*TGNIF* recommended closely examining “the consequence of offshore fishing on the inshore fishery. … [that] the St. John’s DFO Centre should reexamine the stock recruitment adjacent to cod [and] distribute fishing effort on offshore spawning grounds relative to their biomass.”73

In December 1987, DFO marginally lowered the quota by setting the TAC at 235,000 mt from 256,000 mts. The failure persisted. From 1986-1992 per annum inshore fishery catches ranged from less than half to a little over half the total catch.74 Despite inshore fishers outpopulating the offshore fishers by some eighty percent, the inshore sector with their fixed gear and short season were unable to compete against the more sophisticated offshore capability.75 So, the Federal Government commissioned a third study into the recurrent failure of the fishery.

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72 D. L. Alverson, *Executive Summary From The Report of The Task Group On Newfoundland Inshore Fisheries: November 19, 1987*, conclusions #3, 8 and 101 and 2. Fisheries and Oceans Canada forwarded this summary unpublished document to the NIFA office when TGNIF report was first released.

73 *Recommendations From The Report Of The Task Group On Newfoundland Inshore Fisheries* (November 19, 1987). See Research #4 and 5; and Management #5: 1 and 2. Photocopy retrieved from Fisheries and Oceans Canada library, St. John’s.

74 John C. Crosbie, *Notes For A Statement by The Honourable John C. Crosbie*, Ibid, Note: Inshore catches in 1980 were 80,000 mts whereas the offshore landed 150,000 mts. In 1986 the inshore accounted for 72,000 mts of northern cod while the offshore reported 179,000 mts. The 1987 inshore catch totaled 79,000 mts while the offshore figured at 156,000 mts. This trend continued until 1990 when the year end catches declined considerably. By 1992, no record was made available for northern cod yields. See Claude Emery, “Quotas and Catches” *The Northern Cod Crisis* (October, 1992). Pages unnumbered, accessed July 12, 2014, [http://publications.gc.ca/Coll...](http://publications.gc.ca/Collection-R/LoPBdP/BP/bp313-e.htm#QUOTAS).

75 Fixed gear: Fishing nets and lines that are fixed in place in the ocean, as opposed to trawlers that drag their nets through schools of fish. The fish come to the stationary gear, which is checked and emptied frequently. Gill nets, cod traps and longlines are all fixed gear.
The newly appointed review panel chaired by Memorial University historian, Dr. Leslie Harris, conducted an *Independent Review of the Northern Cod Stock*. This dubbed *Harris Report* confirmed “that the proportion of spawning cod in 3L that move into inshore areas off Newfoundland is less than that in 2J and 3K." Harris concluded there was uncertainty about the relationship between the activity of the cod biomass, whether there was any or much “seepage” between 2J, 3K and 3L respectively. The report recommended the TAC for northern cod in 1990 should be 190,000 mt with the view that the TAC be reassessed annually.

In the span of seven years, three fairly extensive studies were commissioned by the Federal Government to examine the crisis in the fishery. The three studies differ appreciably, but for their common concern with a failing industry. Yet, Alan Christopher Finlayson writes “at the heart of the matter is the deceptively simple question: How many fish are in the sea?”

The question had been asked before. In the 1960s, two Memorial University marine biology professors, Fred Aldrich and Marshal Laird proposed “base line studies of local marine life … to estimate the number of each species present in the ecosystem”. Former Science Chair at Memorial University, Dr. J.M.W. Scott writes:

the reasons for the neglect of this timely suggestion was … [that it was considered] passé in comparison with the excitement for research in fundamental molecular (chemical) descriptions for genetics and evolution. Marine population studies meant

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77 Ibid., 6 –7.

78 Ibid., 38–39.


competition with the federal fisheries laboratory, and population studies in the North Atlantic are very expensive.\textsuperscript{81}

### 1.7 Catastrophe

Thirty years later and the question of fish population had not been answered. Hence, the 1990 TAC for northern cod was set at 199,000 mt.\textsuperscript{82} On February 19, 1990, Minister Siddon stated in the House of Commons, Ottawa that “scientists advise me there is no recorded evidence in the scientific literature or our own research which states that fishing on the spawning grounds does measurable damage to the cod stocks.”\textsuperscript{83} That year, the offshore landings declined and the inshore catch dropped even more substantially. It was not until 1992 when the offshore catch totalled 32,000 mt and the inshore saw a mere 12,000 mt in their nets, did the decision-makers take ownership for the fault. By this time D. L Alverson publicly admitted, “fish mortality was higher than estimated, that there was a mathematical fault in the model in use, which got expanded over the years. It took several years to find the mathematical fault and by then, the stocks were on a downturn.” \textsuperscript{84}

On July 2, 1992, Newfoundland’s own Federal Fisheries Minister, John Crosbie who since 1991 served the dual portfolios of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) declared a two-year moratorium on harvesting northern cod. Given that cod abundance had decreased substantially from 1990-92, the

\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{83} Cited in Cabot Martin’s No Fish and Our Lives (St. John’s: Creative Publishers, 1992), 37.

\textsuperscript{84} Michael Harris, Lament For The Ocean: The Collapse of the Northern Cod Fishery, A True Crime Story (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1998), 104.
Minister foresaw sudden recovery of the stock to be highly unlikely. Will the cod ever return? “They might never come back, at least not in their former abundance”, says Richard Haedrich, a fisheries scientist at Memorial University. “Once you start changing the whole ecosystem, the community structures and sizes, you’ve got a whole new ball game.”

How could this eco-theological, socio-economic and political cataclysm happen when both levels of government, the union, industry and the Catholic Church together had a common vested interest in this human and natural resource?

**SECTION II: MAJOR PARTICIPANTS IN THE FISHERIES CRISIS**

The Federal and Provincial governments, the NFFAWU and the province’s largest religious denomination, Roman Catholics were challenged with the division emerging between the inshore and offshore sectors of the fishing industry.

1.8 Federal and Provincial Governments

Despite public outcry, DFO was relatively optimistic about the health of the stocks. The exactness of the findings of the Keats Report commissioned by NIFA, an organization with categorical allegiance to the inshore was not only challenged by DFO scientists, but the 1982 Kirby Task Force Report had forecast a healthy future for the cod stocks. While Keats cast doubts on the long-accepted method of estimating the cod biomass, it did not mean traditional methods of scientific assessment of fish populations were without merit. Keat’s findings like all scientific theories were inconclusive and could not be attested to with absolute certainty. But the DFO projections were also based on theory, and hence, imprecise.

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The decision of the DFO minister to lower the TAC, solely on the basis of the recommendations of his own scientists and not consider outside scientific reports such as Keats, demands further scrutiny.

A drastic cut in quota could have untold political and socio-economic consequences for “188 plants and 12,226 federal licensed vessels”\(^{87}\) employing 40,000 workers.\(^{88}\) Both Federal and Provincial elected officials could not afford the gamble of dismissing almost an entire workforce to joblessness.

**1.8.1 Government of Newfoundland and Labrador**

Like its federal counterpart, the *Government of Newfoundland and Labrador*\(^ {89}\) needed at least enough work to help people get through the harsh winter months and thus keep unfavourable criticisms in check. In such an unpredictable climate, where the economies of scale shift and swing like the North Atlantic winds, elected officials seemed unprepared to face further conflict and exercise more restraints. A couple of decades had lapsed since Newfoundland first engaged in tense negotiations with Ottawa over jurisdiction of the ocean resources at the base of its continental shelf. (See maps below):

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\(^{87}\) This data is cited in Newfoundland Inshore Fisheries Association, *Presentation to the Placentia West Development Association* delivered at Marystown, Newfoundland, February 18, 1987. Photocopy, unpublished.

\(^{88}\) Gough, *Managing The Canadian Fisheries*, 419.

While fish had not been associated with wealth and affluence, it was and continued to be their socio-economic and dietary staple.91 Throughout the 1980s, Premier Peckford understood that where the world vied for a share in this valued ocean resource, as evident at the Geneva Convention, it needed the support of Canada to protect and defend its stake in the ocean. He proposed that “the federal government continue to exercise paramount jurisdiction over the international aspects of the fisheries and over important national aspects such as


conservation of the resource. However, other aspects of fisheries management which have an essentially local or provincial character should come under provincial jurisdiction.”

But with conservation an undisputed national responsibility, how could a maritime people have dominion over the earth when they are powerless at sea?

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador like the Federal Government was in a quandary. The inshore fishery employed the greatest percentage of workers, but only for a few months and for low wages. The offshore sector with a much smaller labour force, was the most financially profitable, operating all year round, and amassing greater revenues per annum. Hence, when NIFA raised the contentious issue of offshore overfishing by large Newfoundland based Canadian fishing vessels, it was prudent for the Premier to be circumspect. As well, a kernel of scientific evidence affirmed the stocks were not endangered; the summer fishery from time to time had failed before. But never before in the history of the fishery was the failure so massive.

By the early 1980s, Canadian trawlers were already plundering the northern cod habitat, winter, spring, summer and fall. Overnight profits were an attractive feature of the new, restructured fisheries. But this offshore activity severely undermined the intent and spirit of the 1976 Geneva Convention to protect small communities just managing to eke a living out of the inshore fishery. Canada negotiated a 200-mile limit to prevent the foreign fleets from exploiting the cod stocks within 200 miles of its shores. Now, Canadian owned draggers/trawlers were licensed to duplicate the foreign effort. More large vessels were purchased and by 1982


\[93\] See Cabot Martin, *No Fish and Our Lives*, 60.

many new entrants (approximately 50% according to senior fisheries officials) had purchased vessels at $400,000 or more. For these fishers the burden of mortgage payments as high as $70,000 - $80,000 per year threatened bankruptcies and a rash of insurance claims. Hence an expanding supply of groundfish …was crucial to the future of the dragger fleet. 95

Fishing zones became crowded with not only smaller draggers but larger ones costing “$600,000 -$800,000. … [They could] not remain viable at 15,000 pounds per day.”96 These offshore companies in their new shining identity proved cogent lobbyist where it mattered, that is in the halls and antechambers where major decisions were being made. In fact, in February 1988 DFO admitted they had to “compromise.”97

During Brian Tobin’s tenure as DFO Minister (1992-96),98 attempts are said to have been made to silence the outspoken DFO scientist, Dr. Ransom Myers. In August 1995, Myers told the Globe and Mail “what happened to the fish stocks had nothing to do with the environment, nothing to do with seals. It [was] simply overfishing.”99 At the September 1995 fisheries symposium held in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Myers and two other DFO scientists Alan Sinclair and Jeff Hutchings are alleged to have been prevented from distributing their research paper entitled Seal Predation: Is There Evidence of Increased Mortality on Cod? The report concluded, “the most likely cause of increased mortality is adult fishing.”100 Brian Tobin when interviewed by the Canadian Press denied any knowledge of such a paper.101 But Myers later told the Ottawa Citizen that pressure had been put on him “to prevent

96 Ibid., 37.
97 Ibid., 30.
98 Brian Tobin was a Newfoundland’s Liberal MP in Ottawa from 1984-1995 and from 2000-2002. Tobin also served as the sixth Premier of Newfoundland from 1996 to 2000.
99 Cited in Harris, Lament For An Ocean, 254. Note: seals are the natural predator of cod.
100 Harris, Lament For An Ocean, 255.
101 Ibid., 256.
publication that would have shown bureaucrats responsible for disastrous decisions that costs tens of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars.”

1.9 The Newfoundland Fishermen’s Food and Allied Workers Union (NFFAWU)

Like the Newfoundland Government, the NFFAWU with prominent St. John’s lawyer Richard Cashin at the helm was clearly compromised. Both inshore and offshore fishers and plant workers were members of this union. If the president accused the big offshore companies of overfishing, he would offend an important constituency of his membership. Except, the vast percentage of its membership belonged to the inshore. When NIFA staged public meetings about the crisis in the inshore fishery, although invited, neither President Richard Cashin nor any of the Union executives attended.  

Between blaming the Europeans for exploiting the nose and tail of the Grand Banks and the growing seal population, the NFFAWU circumvented the unenviable prospect of dealing with the conflict escalating within its own membership. Furthermore, as long as inshore fishers remained on the margins with little education and low wages, they had less access to the vehicles of the mass media needed to influence supportive public opinion. Consequently, it was only when the large conical, wide mouthed trawler net lay empty in the water for days and weeks on a stretch, were the politicians, bureaucrats and union bosses forced to respond.

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102 Ibid., 255.
103 As Executive Director of NIFA, the author invited NFFAWU President Richard Cashin and Executive Director Earle McCurdy to attend. Cabot Martin, legal advisor to NIFA and Tom Best, inshore fisherman and NIFA Co-Chair reiterated this invitation.
104 The Nose and Tail refers to the edge of the Grand Banks extending beyond the 200 mile limit. See map 2.
105 Since the 1970’s and 1980’s, through the efforts of Green Peace, the seal hunt has all but vanished as a viable industry. Seals are predators of cod. It is held that they consume cod in large quantities, which also contributes to the demise of the stocks.
106 The issue of education in Newfoundland outports will be taken up in chapter two.
Even Roman Catholic priest, Father Des McGrath, co-founder of the NFFAWU and Board executive remained out of media sight during fisheries crisis and in the sagging days of the cod fishery. Three years later in 1995, when referring to the Spanish trawlers overfishing the turbot, Father McGrath reflected that

the inshore and small boat fishermen have been claiming for years that the foreign effort has had a detrimental effect on the inshore fishery, particularly the effort by some of the European countries who have no regard and have consistently for the past 10 or 15 years taken four and five times the quota that has been allocated to them by their own organization.  

Father McGrath did not mention the years of inshore fishers’ and plant workers’ protests with the Newfoundland based Canadian trawlers for plundering the stocks. Nor did he acknowledge that he himself was a member of the Kirby Task Force Report which had approved the trawler fleet.

So, on July 2, 1992, when the Minister responsible for Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Newfoundland MP, John Crosbie declared a two-year moratorium on fishing northern cod, industry, unions and governments were held at a standstill. In one swift announcement “the 500 year old east coast fishing industry was stopped dead in the water.” And all during these years of gridlock and crisis, the response of the leadership of the Catholic Church-local along with the faith community was scarcely audible.

1.10 The Relation of the Catholic Church to the Fisheries Crisis:

The Catholic Church, like the Governments and the Union had little leeway. Given the congregation included worshippers from both the inshore and offshore, this faith community was perhaps reluctant to take action on an issue beleaguering and tearing them

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apart. Hence, in their hurt and silence about their fishery, the gathered community failed to defend “the place in which they live. It [was] …their, and your, right to do so.”

At first, the Archbishop of St. John’s, Alphonsus Penny wrote a brief letter of support for inshore fishers and their struggles. This letter was read aloud to all present. Once the inshore-offshore rift was exposed, he did not issue any further communiqués supporting NIFA’s agenda.

The Catholic Social Action Committee of the Archdiocese of St. John’s with Director, Sr. Lorraine Michael RSM, although invited did not attend any NIFA meetings. Since its inception in 1980, the Office of Social Action championed such causes as worker strikes, plant closures, aboriginal land claims and contiguous social justice issues. Could Sr. Michael’s relationship with the NFFAWU have influenced her decision to back an organization perceived to divide union membership? She says: “No”. She recalls that the crisis in the fisheries was handed over to the inter-church coalition, and outside of the responsibility of her office. Was this the underlying reason for the Catholic Office of Social Action, together with the social action offices of the other major religious


110 As Executive Director of NIFA, the author invited Archbishop Penney to attend the first NIFA meeting at St. Kevin’s Parish Hall, Goulds. He was unable to come, due to out-of-town commitments. The author recalls that he sent a letter of support, which was read aloud at this meeting. A copy of this letter is no longer available.

111 Telephone contact, early August, 1986. The author invited the Catholic Office of Social Action and Director and staff to attend the first public NIFA meeting of NIFA. Lorraine Michael was out of town, that day. She did not reply to the invitation.

112 Lorraine Michael, Interview with author, Confederation Building, St. John’s, Feb. 10, 2014. This is one of a number of telephone interviews and an interview in person, I held with Lorraine Michael from February to April, 2014. She was the leader of the New Democratic Party in the province and MHA for the St. John’s district of Signal Hill - Quidi Vidi. She specifically named these areas as concerns dealt with by the Office of Social Action in the 1980s. The work and contribution of this office will be considered in greater detail in chapter two. On Jan. 6, 2015 she resigned as NDP leader. Cf. Canadian Press, “Lorraine Michael Quits as N.L. NDP Leader”, Huffington Post, accessed Jan. 7, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/01/06/lorraine-michael-newfoundland-ndp_n_6422614.html.

denominations in March 1986, singling out low level flying in Labrador and its impact on native peoples as the most significant emerging area of concern.114

Sometime in 1987, at the invitation of Father Bill Brown S.J. parish priest at St. Pius X parish in St. John’s, NIFA gave a presentation at a local inter-faith luncheon. This presentation repeated the concerns of NIFA to at least six-eight clergy representing the Catholics, Anglicans, United Church, Presbyterians and Methodists, respectively. Sometime later Father Brown, attended a teleconference between NIFA and NFFAWU. Although NIFA attempted to contact him afterwards, he did not respond to their calls.115 Did he choose to err on the side of caution because of the rift between the inshore and offshore sectors? By contrast, some members of the Catholic clergy serving coastal parishes were reported to have delivered supportive homilies which gave heart to the faith communities of the coves and inlets in which they served.116

1.10.1 The Clergy and Religious and Sexual Abuse Scandals

Two visible supporters of NIFA were Father James Hickey, parish priest of Ferryland, a fishing community on the Southern Shore of the Avalon Peninsula and Father John Corrigan a native of Trepassy, a large fishing community in the same region. A year and a half later in 1988, a stressed populace was stunned with the shocking news that both priests were charged with sexual abuse of underaged boys in the communities where they served.117

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115 This presentation is recalled from memory. The author has no record of the date.

116 Inshore fishers and plant workers of various denominations at times reported back to the NIFA office that their resident pastor delivered a homily or attended a meeting supporting their cause.

In 1995, the St. John’s *Evening Telegram* reported that between 1975 and 1989, “the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. John’s had among its clergy nine priests who were sexually abusing boys.” To add to that appalling spectra came another round of sexual assault charges against the Christian Brothers at *Mount Cashel Orphanage*, St. John’s.\(^{118}\) Reports of the Church’s internal problems littered news headlines from coast to coast. The vital drama unfolding in the fisheries seemed negligible compared to the moral depletion escalating with the ordained clergy and male religious in the diocese.

It was not until a year later that Archbishop Penney acknowledged that the evil … in the sexual abuse of children is found in our own community and unfortunately among some members of the clergy. I call on all the people of God in our Archdiocese to prayer and penance. It will be though prayer and our ministry that God will give us healing and bring forth the Kingdom out of our failings and setbacks.\(^{119}\)

The sexual abuse charges from 1988 onward consumed the mindset of the Catholic faithful and community at-large. The church at this time could speak with very little credibility on any matter, sacred or temporal.

**1.11 Inter-Church Coalition for Fishing Communities**

It was not until two months following the 1992 cod moratorium that the Newfoundland and Labrador Bishops wrote Prime Minister Mulroney demanding that the depletion of the fishing stocks “cries out for radical changes in attitudes among governments at all levels in this country, as well as the governments of those nations who fish in, or near


these waters; it cries out to fish companies and individual fishermen.” This letter, also endorsed by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) contained a three-fold action plan, which included that “the economic reality satisfy the needs of the most deprived,…that the fishery crisis be seen as an ecological issue, and justice be served for the present generation and generations to come”. But it was another four years before the Newfoundland-Labrador Inter-Church Coalition for Fishing Communities was formed. Just before Christmas, in 1996, in a correspondence to their beleaguered congregations, the Coalition stated that “our hope cannot be placed in the illusion that God has created the fish stocks as an inexhaustible infinite resource, which can withstand any degree of fishing effort”. However compassionate this Christmas message, it was becoming increasingly evident that after nearly a decade of vigorous, unheard protest, little hope was left that the fish stocks would return in the near future.

### 1.12 Outmigration from Community

As the World Commission Report on the Environment to the United Nations resounds: “The earth is one but the world is not. We all depend on one biosphere for sustaining our lives. Yet each community, each country, strives for survival and prosperity with little regard for its impact on others.”

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121 Ibid, 1.

122 Although an inter-church coalition had been established in the province’s dioceses in the 1970’s, the inter-church coalition for fishing communities was later established after the moratorium to focus specifically on issues of the fisheries.

123 Letter issued by the Newfoundland-Labrador Inter-Church Coalition for Fishing Communities, December, 1996. Photocopy retrieved from the St. John’s Archdiocesan archive. Not filed.

Newfoundland, at the time of Confederation with Canada in 1949 had nearly 1450 communities. Today it has fewer than 700. A short-sighted way to pursue prosperity translated into high unemployment rates, forcing more and more Newfoundlanders and Labradoreans to seek work out of province. These people whose ancestors for centuries had inhabited the communities along the province’s coastline, left not just for a season, but for a lifetime. In 2013, the province’s population totaled 526,702, some nine percent less than the 1992 census-taking of 580,100. Absence of opportunity compelled especially the younger labour force to seek work far from home and kin, in places like Ontario and Alberta. The socio-economic-cultural-political-spiritual impact of a decimated cod fishery on a five hundred year old community life was and is incalculable. As Trinity-Anglican minister, Michael Calderwood lamented “if the fishermen can’t fish, it puts their whole identity into peril.” Their way of life, beliefs, ideals, how they worked and lived so distinctive to the ethos of a historic maritime community was virtually disabled. The result is that Newfoundland and Labrador did not just lose its fish stocks in the 1990s. It lost five hundred year old outports filled with fishers, their families and their boats, earning their living from the sea - a symbol of decline.

1.13 Conclusion

The five hundred year old annual harvesting of cod was the persuasively, deciding factor to distinguishing Newfoundland’s sense of place as an emerging colony and province.

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During this time, hundreds of small, remote communities were set up along the rocky shoreline. But less than fifty years into Confederation, this newest province was reduced to the poorest in the nation, affecting a “demographic dilemma, a population plunge … the most dramatic slide in the country.”

Both levels of government and the fishers union remained protectively detached from the collapse of the province’s primary industry. The leadership of the Catholic Church-local likewise distanced itself from this politically sensitive crisis. Traditionally, the relationship of the Catholic clergy to their community based fisheries was discretionary and complex. There are cases in annals of this province, however when bishops, clergy and religious intervened in and emerged as advocates for the fisheries in their affected constituencies. Notwithstanding the crippling effect of the clerical sexual abuse scandals erupting mid-way through the crisis, the relation of the institutional Catholic Church-local to the fisheries especially at the time of its demise was impassive. The Catholic Church leaders stood by as governments, unions, and industry mistakenly treated the fishery singularly as a commercial enterprise, a mere commodity, and for years a bargaining chip in international trade.

Chapter Two will examine the relations that selective Catholic episcopacies cultivated with the historic fisheries and fisheries crisis in Newfoundland and Labrador.

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Chapter Two

2.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the historic relation of the leadership of the Catholic Church in Newfoundland and Labrador to the fisheries and the emergent crisis in the fisheries in the late twentieth century. The primary focus will be the Office of the Archbishop of St. John’s which prior to 1904 had been the seat of the Bishop of Newfoundland. This office of the Bishop was first established in this British colony in 1796. While the Harbour Grace (later Harbour Grace -Grand Falls diocese) was constituted a separate diocese in 1856,¹ and the West coast region was designated a prefecture apostolic in 1870², it was not until 1904 that the diocese of St. John’s was elevated to the status of archdiocese. As shepherd of the Church, the metropolitan Archbishop of St. John’s made decisions and issued directives on moral, spiritual and even temporal matters to Catholic adherents. These directives were conveyed in descending order, respectively to bishops, clergy, religious teaching orders and laity.

The narrative of the Church in Newfoundland and Labrador like the fisheries itself unfolds as prototypical to the identity of a maritime people. The ecclesial storyline fleshes

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¹ See History of Immaculate Conception Parish Hr. Grace, para. 2, accessed July 19, 2014, http://ngb.chebucto.org/Hr_Main/Church/RC/hbr_grace_rc.shtml. Note: Grand Falls is a large town in central Newfoundland. Note also, that the model of the Catholic Church in the colony veered towards a more classical type, attending to the spiritual and moral needs of adherents or intra-ecclesia.

out the relationship of the institutional Catholic Church-local with these ‘people of the deep.’

The chapter is divided into three Parts: Parts A, B and C. Part A will sketch briefly the genesis of the Church from its shaping to the more maturing years of the colony. The concentration is on the relation of the local pre-Leonine to post-Leonine episcopacies to their constituent fishing communities, the fisheries and the state. This part establishes that the relationship of the institutional Church within the culture and society, although hierarchical and clerically-centered interventions, was noticeably punctuated with church involvement in the politics of government. Part B is attentive to the post-Confederation period and the relation of pre-Vatican II to Vatican II bishops, clergy and religious to the fisheries. Despite the changes occurring in the universal church, the Church-local with its highly regimented chain of communication only randomly prioritized fisheries issues. Part C describes the movement towards change at the local Church level. Despite this change occurring, neither the official home church nor the Catholic society-culture at the time of the fisheries crisis was prepared for any visible degree of ecclesial intervention in problems with the fisheries. They did not approach the crisis in the fisheries mindful of the Church’s own teachings on the common good.

3 “People of the deep” is a colloquialism used to refer Newfoundlanders and Labradoreans as a maritime people living by and making a living from the sea.

Since the bishops on the whole were the most educated Catholics in the colony, their moral and spiritual authority prevailed among clergy, religious and lay adherents. Inadequate education facilities and widespread poverty conceivably helped legitimate their influence and responsibility. The dictates of the ecclesial authority, for this reason were largely uncontested in the wider community of the faithful. Local historian John Fitzgerald coined “the parish priest was Pope in the village” as these rather unschooled, isolated Catholic outports submitted trustingly to the guidance of their pastoral leader.

But while the local pastor seemingly ruled autocratically, for the most part he merely enforced the bishop’s directives to the religious teaching communities and lay faithful. The bishop by far was the most revered voice on matters moral, spiritual and even temporal among Catholics in the colony. For example, where Catholics were underrepresented or denied equitable representation in the colonial British government, the bishop was the primary advocate for their political rights and privileges.

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5 See Dr. Garfield Fizzard, Dr. Royston Kelleher, Dr. Philip McCann, and Dr. Glen Sheppard, The History of Education in Newfoundland and Labrador: 1727-2000 (Faculty of Education, Memorial University: St. John’s, 2000), 9. The authors note that from the settling days of the colony to the time of Confederation, literacy rates were poor and school attendance sporadic. Malnutrition and poverty were common among many children, particularly in rural areas.


7 In places where there were no religious teaching orders, the priest issued instructions directly to parishioners.
2.1 Catholic Church in Newfoundland (1780-1930):

In the earlier years of the colony, Rome appointed the bishop from Ireland to head the Catholic Church in Newfoundland. Their dictums to a great extent encouraged the intervention of local pastors in the age-old Irish Catholic-English Protestant dispute. Tensions between these immigrants and descendants of immigrants who originated in Ireland and England were common, and marred with anger and even episodes of violence.\(^8\) The earliest Catholic apostolic and titular bishops sought to appease the British colonial administration at any cost.\(^9\) By contrast, during the period of 1829-1950, some of their

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\(^9\) These were James Louis O’Donel (1796-1806), Patrick Lambert (1807-1815) and Thomas Scallan (1815-1829). Newfoundland was a British colony and then a British Dominion until 1949 when it joined Canada as its tenth province. Under the papacy of Pope Pius VI, in 1784 Newfoundland was designated a “separate ecclesiastical territory under the direct control of Rome. O’Donel, an Irish Franciscan Recollect was appointed the prefect of the new mission, thus removing the island from the control of the Bishop of London, who traditionally had held spiritual jurisdiction over all British North American colonies. A little over seventy years later, in 1856, the Diocese of Harbour Grace became a suffragan of the Archdiocese of St. John’s with Bishop Thomas Mullock of St. John's consecrating the Irish Franciscan John Dalton as Bishop of Harbour Grace. In 1870, the West coast of Newfoundland was attached to the St. John’s diocese with Michael Francis Howley serving as its first Bishop. See Hans Rollman, *A Brief History of Newfoundland Catholicism and the Archdiocese of St. John’s*: *From Lord Baltimore to Vatican II* (St. John’s: Archdiocese of St. John's, 1990), para. 3. This overview was written in connection with The Report of the Archdiocesan Commission of Enquiry into the Sexual Abuse of Children by Members of the Clergy and appeared in a shorter form as “Appendix B”, volume 1: 175-9, accessed Jan. 25, 2014, http://www.mun.ca/rels/rc/texts/rchistory.htm.
successors, such as Michael Anthony Fleming, Michael Francis Howley and Edward Patrick Roche became engaged in political controversies to varying degrees.\textsuperscript{10}

Memorial University Professor of Religious Studies, Hans Rollman writes that the history of the Catholic Church in Newfoundland experiences

a crucial re-definition ... in the nineteenth century, from a classical church model with its preoccupation to serve the spiritual and moral needs of the immigrant Irish populace through cultic professionals, to a politicized church intent on achieving civil rights, demographic representation, and social equity for its members even at the cost of ethnic and religious polarisation.\textsuperscript{11}

From the early years of the Catholic Church in Newfoundland to nearly two decades beyond the convening of Vatican II, the institutional Church in general reflects a classicist worldview, with a deep-seated pre-conciliar focus. In this frontier maritime community which assumed the world as a finished product and where the natural, unchanging principles of the moral order remained valid forever, decisions handed down by the bishop yielded a high degree of certitude in the congregation of the faithful.

Although appointed by Rome, the bishop could not escape the culture of religion and ethnicity, primarily informed by the English Protestant-Irish Catholic hostilities inherited from their ancestral countries. In the colonizing age of Newfoundland, these bishops, some more than others became embroiled in these sectarian conflicts. While matters of the fisheries for the most part did not set the criteria for the Church-state debate, Michael Anthony Fleming unlike his predecessors gave it some attention in his prelacy.


\textsuperscript{11} Rollman, A Brief History of Newfoundland Catholicism, para. 6. While the Archbishop of St. John’s was not formally instated as Archbishop by Rome until 1904, this office descends directly from the first titular Bishop, James Louis O’Donel (1796 – 1806).
2.2 Michael Anthony Fleming (1832 - 1850) and Church-State Relations

As Vicar Apostolic\(^\text{12}\) and later Bishop, Michael Anthony Fleming perceivably saw his role as protectorate of the spiritual, moral and temporal interests of Irish Catholics. The Irish Catholics, many of whom were recent immigrants had already struggled for Catholic emancipation, granted throughout Britain since 1829.\(^\text{13}\) By petitioning the local governor, Bishop Fleming is believed to have been instrumental in implementing the *Emancipation Act* for Irish Catholics in Newfoundland in 1832.\(^\text{14}\) His successor Archbishop Howley defended Fleming’s political forays: “Though it was thought a dangerous implement by many, even among his own flock, it was never used by him except in the true interests of the country and people whom he loved so well, and whose temporal welfare, and advancement, and comfort ranked in his mind as second only to the salvation of their souls”.\(^\text{15}\) This spirit of reform helped oversee the creation of a Newfoundland legislature more amenable to including proportionate numbers of Irish Catholics in the governing body.\(^\text{16}\) Consequently, in the fall of 1832 despite “public outcry” from the political and business establishments as to

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\(^\text{12}\) In countries and regions where a diocese has not been established, an apostolic vicariate, a form of territorial jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Church is set up. It is essentially provisional. See “Vicar Apostolic”, *New Advent*, No.3, accessed Feb. 3, 2014, [http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15401b.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/15401b.htm).


\(^\text{14}\) See Webb, “Representative Government 1832-1855”, para. 3.


\(^\text{16}\) The Legislative Council included mainly Protestant appointees selected by the British governor. The newly elected Assembly with more Catholics elected to office, could exert some power because its assent was essential for all legislation. See Webb, “Representative Government 1832-1855”, para. 3.
“interference” in political matters, Bishop Fleming supported the election of three candidates to the House of Assembly.17

Was Fleming’s political patronage purposely indulging his Catholic bias? Brother J.B. Darcy argues that Fleming “could hardly be accused of religious prejudice” as one candidate was Anglican, another Catholic and the one other was considered a free thinker.18 Where bankruptcies were widespread because of the 1820s banking financial disaster, Fleming, Darcy insists had the interests of “the working poor at heart”, namely the fishermen and the longshoremen in their struggles with local merchants.19 His interventions resulted in appeals by the local governor to the Vatican to silence or remove the Bishop from his office. Rome did not co-operate. Still vivid to its memory was Henry VIII’s breakaway from papal authority, accounting for centuries of tempered relations between the British government and the Vatican.20

Fleming’s political activism also spilled over into the activities of his clergy. For example, Father John Duffy, parish priest at all-Catholic St. Mary’s, not only involved himself in the spiritual lives of his parishioners; he also worked hard to break the pattern of

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17 Brother J.B. Darcy CFC, Fire Upon the Earth: The Life and Times of Bishop Michael Anthony Fleming (Creative Publishers: St. John’s, Newfoundland, 2003), 27-28. Note: Fleming from Tipperary, Ireland first served as a local priest in St. John’s in 1829, before being installed as Bishop in 1832. British policy at first defined Newfoundland solely as a seasonal fishing station. The island developed a customary system of governance that met the needs of those in power. Naval and civil magistrates successfully exercised legal authority, and merchants became actively involved in government when their interests were threatened. Before the coming of an independent press, local officials and magistrates were not subjected to critical public evaluation. Despite statutory reforms in 1791-92, the basic mode of governance did not change significantly until the 1800’s. Without a local legislature, naval governors were relatively free to act as they saw fit. See also Jerry Bannister, Naval Government 1729-1815, accessed Jan. 24, 2014, http://www.heritage.nf.ca/lawfoundation/articles/naval.html.

18 Ibid., 27-31.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid., 31.
fishermen’s perpetual debt to the local merchants. In 1835, Duffy defied the local merchant, Elson Slade (a Protestant) and built a new Church on the beach in the area of the fishing premises. For this, Duffy was taken to court.\textsuperscript{21} The absence of prosecution witnesses delayed proceedings and by May 1837, the Crown abandoned its prosecution; Duffy and his co-defendants were freed of the charge.\textsuperscript{22}

Issues of the fisheries do not figure largely in the Episcopal repertoire of Fleming’s more immediate successors, John Mullock and Thomas Power.\textsuperscript{23} On the contrary, Power’s successor, Michael Francis Howley wades deep in the waters of political storm.

\textbf{2.3 Leonine Period: Bishop Michael Francis Howley (1886-1915) and The French Shore Question}

The first native son, Michael Francis Howley\textsuperscript{24} was installed first as Administrator of the St. Georges, West Coast Diocese where he became involved publicly and privately in all levels of government, British, French, and Colonial. As a result of the wars of the early eighteenth century, France gave up its fishery on Newfoundland’s south coast and in turn received the right to fish on the west coast and Northern Peninsula.\textsuperscript{25} Howley contested these

\textsuperscript{21} Father Duffy’s Well, accessed Jan. 20, 2014, http://www.nfld.com/nfld/tourism/holyrood/Fr_Duffys_well.html. See also Les Harding, Exploring the Avalon (St. John’s: Jesperson Publishing, 1978), 25-37. Note: The Church in St. Mary’s was badly in need of repair and was located a distance from the community. Duffy decided to build the church on the beach while John Hill Martin, the store manager and magistrate and local MHA was absent from the community.


\textsuperscript{24} Michael Francis Howley was the first bishop who was not born in and appointed from Ireland. Howley was born and raised in St. John’s, Newfoundland.

\textsuperscript{25} Ryan, History of Newfoundland Cod Fishery, paras. 5 and 6.
exclusive fishing rights granted the French on the so-called French Shore from Cape St. John to Cape Ray, under the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht. See map below:

Where Howley acted as principal spokesperson for the people of the west coast, ironically he was representing Catholics and non-Catholics alike, for all held in common


27 The French Treaty Shore Newfoundland, accessed Jan. 24, 2014, https://www.google.ca/search?q=Map+of+the+French+Shore+Newfoundland&client=firefox-a&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&channel=tp&tbm=isch&source=iu&imgres=1&imgrc=4uwJNHuZtUskCM%253A%253Bhttps%253A%252F%252Fencrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com%253A%252Fimages%253Fv%253D1%253Fw%253D400%253Fh%253D338%253Fdocid%253D2mjaQ8Zy%253BjZQ%253B%253B0%253B%253B11fS7D4%253Dv&imgrefurl=https://www.heritage.nf.ca/exploration/french_shore.html&docid=2mjaQ8Zy_jZQ&sa=X&ei=ivHiUuG7hgtc6AfLS-gD&ved=0CEEQ9QEwBA&biw=1150&bih=631#facrc=_&imgrc=4uwJNHuZtUskCM%253A%253Bhttps%253A%252F%252Fencrypted-tbn1.gstatic.com%253A%252Fimages%253Fv%253D1%253Fw%253D400%253Fh%253D338%253Fdocid%253D2mjaQ8Zy%253BjZQ%253B%253B0%253B%253B11fS7D4%253Dv&imgrefurl=https://www.heritage.nf.ca/exploration/french_shore.html&docid=2mjaQ8Zy_jZQ&sa=X&ei=ivHiUuG7hgtc6AfLS-gD&ved=0CEEQ9QEwBA&biw=1150&bih=631#facrc=_&imgrc=4uwJNHuZtUskCM%253A%253Bhttps%253A%252F%252Fencrypted-tbn1.gstatic.com%253A%252Fimages%253Fv%253D1%253Fw%253D400%253Fh%253D338%253Fdocid%253D2mjaQ8Zy%253BjZQ%253B%253B0%253B%253B11fS7D4%253Dv&imgrefurl=https://www.heritage.nf.ca/exploration/french_shore.html&docid=2mjaQ8Zy_jZQ&sa=X&ei=ivHiUuG7hgtc6AfLS-gD&ved=0CEEQ9QEwBA&biw=1150&bih=631

their dependence on this fishery. The co-operation between these faiths for food security could be cogently unifying. The care of the fishery, a vital food source demands solidarity and sharing among people of all religions. By extension, Howley honours the intentions of Pope Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum* (RN): “For God has granted the earth to mankind in general, not in the sense that all without distinction can deal with it as they like, but rather that no part of it was assigned to any one in particular.”

Howley’s quest for justice on the *French Shore*, is accredited to have led local politicians in St John’s to pressure the British government to improve the lot of Newfoundlanders living on that coast. In 1904, by mutual agreement, France relinquished this fishing territory to Newfoundland residents.

In 1886, Howley was invested as the bishop of St. John’s. In 1904, he became the first archbishop of the diocese. During this time, he publicly supported the candidates and party of his choice, attended public meetings, wrote to the press, and embroiled himself in political controversies. He imaginably perceived his role as being “responsible for every aspect of the lives of the people [he served so as] to help them make wise decisions.”

The well-ordered hierarchical classicist worldview helped further solidify the bishop as the definitive symbol of authority in the land. Committed to the rights of impoverished

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30 See Hans Rollman, *A Brief History of Newfoundland Catholicism and the Archdiocese of St. John’s*, para. 3.

Catholics, even politicians were reluctant to contest his political and moral clout.\textsuperscript{32} Except his non-compliance with Catholic fishers to join a union cascades into a blustery sea of paradox.

\subsection*{2.3.1 Howley: The Fishermen’s Protective Union}

Where religious affiliation did not fare into the \textit{French Shore} dispute, it was the perceived leviathan in the formation of the \textit{Fishermen’s Protective Union (FPU)}. Howley was a major opponent of the FPU, founded in 1908 by protestant, William Coaker. Howley objected that the core of the union membership was recruited in the non-Catholic areas on the northeast coast. At stake, was the integrity of the ultramontane religious philosophy within the Catholic Church, which asserted the superiority of papal authority over the local temporal or spiritual authority.\textsuperscript{33} Howley was concerned that the secular union might undermine the Church’s authority among Catholics living in Catholic outports. He banned Catholic fishermen from joining the FPU, on the grounds that its oath of loyalty made it a secret society and therefore forbidden by the church. The Church leader’s hostility to the union further inhibited the union’s ability to recruit members in heavily populated Catholic areas.\textsuperscript{34}

In Howley’s decision to defend fisher’s rights on the \textit{French Shore} and conversely become their adversary in forming a union, looms a great inconsistency. He overlooks Leo XIII’s \textit{RN} which declared that “the most important of all are workingmen’s unions … it were greatly to be desired that they should become more numerous and more efficient”.\textsuperscript{35} By rejecting the FPU, it seems that Howley believes that not fishers but the institutional Church

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., para. 8.
\textsuperscript{35} Pope Leo XIII, \textit{Rerum Novarum}, # 49.
\end{flushright}
alone has the good judgment to see to the interests and rights of fishers. In so doing, he also
minimizes Leo XIII’s proclamation that natural moral law allows that human reason itself
and by extension humans are naturally disposed to distinguish between good and evil.  

What seems apparent in Howley’s consciousness is that his uneducated, poverty-
stricken and disadvantaged human subjects are not capable of such human discernment.
Barbara Crosbie attests that, “throughout his life his sermons reflect the changing concerns of
society. An ultra-conservative, he challenged the impact of the new social order in the world,
viewing the struggle of working people [trying] to improve their lot as a threat to his and the
church’s authority”.  

His antagonism may also bear out his observance of Pius X’s 1910 Oath Against Modernism. The oath sworn by all clergy, pastors, confessors, preachers, religious superiors and professors in seminaries required that they “embrace and accept the
unerring teaching authority of the Church”. As their decisive ecclesial signatory, Howley
symbolized all that was good for his faithful following.

Yet, could his protestant contemporary D.W. Prowse’s axiom “[the fishery] was the
nursing mother of England’s maritime greatness”, also have ignited Howley’s Irish-
Catholic sensibilities against the FPU or any organization of non-Catholic majority. The
atmosphere of unhealed sectarianism prevails with his episcopal heir, Edward Patrick Roche.
Although, Roche’s prelacy is marked with bitter tensions between Church and state, he does
not so vigorously engage in matters of the fisheries, as his predecessor.

36 Thomas A. Shannon, “Commentary on Reurm Novarum”, Himes et al., 134.
37 Crosbie, Howley, Michael Francis, para., 11.
38 Pope Pius X, Oath Against Modernism (September 1, 1910), accessed July 22, 2014,
http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius10/p10moath.htm.
39 O’Dea, Judge Prowse and Bishop Howley: Cabot Tower and Construction of Nationalism, 5. Note:
D.W. Prowse was a Judge and noted historian.

Roche’s tenure as archbishop was particularly distinguished by his forays into politics. His prelacy was earmarked with his opposition to the expansion of the FPU during the worldwide economic cataclysm of the Great Depression, and the looming prospect of Newfoundland joining Canada. Like his predecessor, Roche was opposed to the FPU, despite the Great Depression deposing more and more fishers into poverty. By the mid 1930’s, three-quarters of the population was on government relief. A native Newfoundlander, conditioned by Catholic-Protestant rivalries, Roche was not convinced that the intent of the FPU was to

address the plight of fishers whereby fishers would stop buying from the merchants, who were only looking out for their own interests, and purchase fishing supplies from union-owned stores and hoped to increase education standards among the fisher folk, making them better able to stand up for their rights. …The union motto was suum cuique (“to each his own”), reflecting the fact that fishers, unlike the better off in Newfoundland society, did not get their own share of its benefits.

Given the widespread hunger of fishers and their families, Roche’s refutation of the union actually does not take into account RN’s directive to take measures to ameliorate “the misery and wretchedness pressing so unjustly on the majority of the working class”; he fails to notice RN’s call to “respect in every man his dignity as a person ennobled by Christian


42 Pope Leo XIII, Rerum Novarum, #s 3 and 20.
character.”43 In denouncing the union, Roche mitigates the main effect of Pius XI’s principle of subsidiarity to empower local efforts and limit the role of the state and other large scale institutions.44 By not taking notice of subsidiarity’s aim to regulate the movement from marginalization to participation for the sake of the common good, Roche downplays the principle/virtue of solidarity which Pius X1 concluded is necessary for the mutual interdependence of the parties involved.45 The dire needs of Catholics in the colony are apparently compromised for the sake of preserving Church authority. His opposition to the FPU, however is only superseded by his greater concern with the threat of Newfoundlander entering into Confederation with Canada in 1949.

2. 4.1 Roche: Confederation

Edward Patrick Roche gained even more notoriety as a strong anti-confederate, fearing that union with Canada would be the demise of Catholic education in Newfoundland.46 In 1949, he ordered all and sundry in the Catholic faith community to vote against Confederation.47 Local historian, John Fitzgerald writes that Roche also feared that joining Canada would be

43 Ibid., #s 3 and 20.

44 Pope Pius XI, Quadragesimo Anno, (Rome: May 15, 1931), #79.

45 Pope Pius XI, Quadragesimo Anno, #s 63-75. This principle of solidarity that all members of society have a responsibility to help the other members of their family was first advanced by Pope Leo XIII ‘s Rerum Novarum. The principle/virtue of solidarity will be taken up in more detail in Chapter Three.


a loss of personal prestige for the Newfoundland Episcopal hierarchy. … His ultraconservative leadership led him to suddenly champion a concerted effort by Newfoundland to defeat confederation. It fell to Smallwood’s lieutenant, Harold Horwood to simply admit the confederates found in Roche the perfect Irish-Catholic anti-confederate enemy, just the right sort of bogeyman needed in deepest outport Orange Newfoundland, to create a Protestant backlash, the guaranteed victory for confederation.48

While Roche foresaw that joining Canada would put an end to the denominational education system49, he did not anticipate the same fate for the fisheries. Roche and his predecessors evidently interpreted the common good of their Catholic communities mainly in terms of sectarian rights. Roche’s successors by contrast are less inclined to political controversy. In the next half a century, the Church’s relationship to the state becomes much more depoliticized.

PART B: THE CHURCH IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR IN A TIME OF CHANGE

The mid-twentieth century finds the Catholic Church in the midst of change as Newfoundland becomes Canada’s newest province, but which is slow to present itself at the local Church level. The relationship of the pre-Vatican II and Vatican II leadership of the

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49 The Religious teaching orders were in Newfoundland since 1833 when Bishop Fleming recruited four Sisters of the Presentation from Cork, Ireland to teach girls of poorer families. In 1842, he invited three Sisters of Mercy from Dublin to educate the middle class and provide services in health care. See Chapter Seventeen-The Coming of the Mercy Sisters: 1840-46, photocopy, author unnamed, File 201.4. Box 3. Shelf 9 (St. John’s: Sisters of the Presentation, Undated), 1. In 1875, at the invitation of Bishop Thomas Power, the Irish Christian Brothers came to set up schools for boys. See Sr. Perpetua Kennedy PBVM, The Presentation Congregation, Newfoundland, Folder 201.4, Box 3, Shelf 9 (St. John’s: Presentation Archives, 1998), 2. These orders were expanded throughout Catholic Newfoundland during Roche’s prelature.
Catholic Church in Newfoundland and Labrador to their faith community and the fisheries itself, reveals that it is unprepared for change. Particular attention is given to the unreadiness of post-Vatican II Church-local leaders to address the fisheries crisis which began to erupt in this time.

In the decade prior to and during the first twenty years of Vatican II, apart from liturgical changes, the leadership of the Catholic Church in Newfoundland and Labrador is apparently not so hurried to introduce other reforms proposed by the Council - rethinking the concept of Church authority, more collegiality throughout the Church-local, and active engagement in domestic social justice concerns.

2.5 Pre-Vatican II -Vatican II: Archbishop Patrick James Skinner (1950 -1979)

Under Archbishop P.J. Skinner, the involvement of the official church in affairs of the state is considerably restrained. This Newfoundland, former rector and teacher of philosophy and fundamental theology at Holy Heart Seminary in Halifax\(^{50}\) is apparently less prone to take on testing political engagements, namely in the fisheries. This may be partly due to the historical precedent set by his bishop predecessors, whose indiscriminate, partisan outspokenness, embittered relations between church and state.\(^{51}\)

Skinner’s understanding of Church, nevertheless is probably best articulated in his 1955 letter to Bishop J.R. Macdonald of Antigonish. In this letter, he expresses concern with the traditional mentality of our people and their good but so often unenlightened attitude towards what really constitutes Church; [the] church mindedness of the lay apostolate [makes it difficult to] organize Catholic Action groups as they do

\(^{50}\) Archdiocese of St. John’s Archives.

\(^{51}\) For a number of years even during Skinner’s prelature, many local clergy claimed that Archbishop Skinner was appointed to help ameliorate tensions between the Church and the local government. However, there is no documented evidence to verify this claim.
elsewhere ... such as setting up confraternities of Christian doctrines and of the
Blessed Virgin. Bishop MacDonald replies that Catholic Action is “frustrating...[But despite these
challenges] avoid controversy, ignore hostility, and concentrate on building the kingdom of
God.” Skinner’s perception of his role in building the kingdom is appreciably paternalistic.
His 1967 homily delivered at the consecration of James M. Hayes as Archbishop of Halifax
counsels: “My dear members of the laity, is it not true that you look upon the Bishop as a
father?”

2.5.1 Vatican II: Skinner and Church-local

Although Skinner participated at Vatican II, apart from implementing liturgical
changes, “the first fruit of the Second Vatican Council”\(^5\), the pecking order of the
hierarchical chain of command remains firmly entrenched in the liturgical protocol. Seven
years after Vatican II, and changes to the liturgy are accommodated solely by male religious.

In a letter to the Christian Brothers’ Provincial, Skinner states:

The Holy See provides for “clerics, religious brothers, religious sisters, catechists,
laymen and lay women. ...I feel it would be most appropriate to invite the Brothers to
share in this new plan. The Brothers as teachers who through their vows, have

\(^{52}\) P.J. Skinner , Archbishop of St. John’s. Letter to His Excellency The Most Reverend J.R.
John’s Archives, File 108/27/02. Note: this letter is marked “confidential”. Here “Confraternity of Christian
Doctrine” refers to revised and expanded teachings of the epistles. The Confraternity of the Blessed Virgin
Mary refers to the setting up of female groups in devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. In Newfoundland, the
Children of Mary was established for all school aged girls. See “Confraternity of Christian Doctrine”, Catalog

\(^{53}\) J.R. MacDonald, Bishop of Antigonish, Letter to Most Reverend P.J. Skinner D.D., Archbishop of

\(^{54}\) Most Reverend P.J. Skinner, Archbishop of St. John’s, Homily Delivered at the Episcopal
Consecration of Most Reverend James M. Hayes, D.D. Titular Bishop of Reperi and Auxiliar of Halifax
(Halifax, June 22, 1967), 1, File 108/10/ 6. Archdiocese of St. John’s Archives,

\(^{55}\) Archbishop P. J. Skinner, Lenten Message: To be Read at all Masses on Quinquagesima Sunday,
February 9, 1964 (The Palace, St. John’s, Newfoundland):1, File 108/121/02. Archdiocese of St. John’s
Archives.
dedicated their lives to God in the service of his Church, are associated in a very special way with the celebration of the Eucharistic sacrifice. In areas where Brothers are not available, I intend to ask priests to submit the names of male catechists to assist in this program.56

But despite three hundred years of deep-seated ecclesial monarchy, the Church in Newfoundland and Labrador is one in transition. Where symbols “have power over emotions”,57 the long-established symbol of Church authority figures controlling the Catholic consciousness begins to erode. By this time, the Church, the symbol of power and domination in the Catholic culture is no longer functioning at a high performance in the local Catholic imagination. Priests take leave of their vows and promises. Fewer young men and women enter the priesthood and religious life. There is a declining enrolment in Church attendance.58

Still Skinner’s episcopacy is not consistent with the historical-conscious approach of Vatican II. He is apparently not poised to vision the Church as the people of God at home. He does not involve his office in the issue of boom and bust cycles in fish catches and marketing performance. The archbishop’s communiqués do not allude to the 200 mile limit negotiations. The international parley for the belt of waters extending 200 nautical miles off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador, was intended to alleviate the impact of excessive foreign exploitation of the northern cod stocks on the province’s community-based

57 Gregory Baum, Religion and Alienation (Ottawa: Novalis, 2006), 239.
58 From the early 1970’s onwards, Skinner’s administrative agenda tables concern for church attendance and the growing shortage of priests. See agendas for “Diocesan Consultors Meetings” (1952-1979), File 108/10/1 -11. Archdiocese of St. John’s Archives.
Did Archbishop Skinner intentionally distance his office from these negotiations out of respect for Church-state jurisdictions? By not seeking to intercede in these negotiations, or trying to educate the Catholic faithful as to the necessity of the Geneva Conference, does he compromise the principle of subsidiarity and principle/virtue of solidarity and by extension, the church’s commitment to the common good in this maritime society?

59 Newfoundland inshore fishers who were experiencing low catches because of the intense European trawler effort beyond the 3 mile limit could only benefit from a negotiated 200 mile limit in favour of Canada at the 1976 Geneva Conference. Between 1956 and 1977, Canada extended its claim from the traditional 3-mile territorial seas, to a 12-mile territorial sea, to exclusive jurisdiction over fisheries within 200 miles of its coast and over mineral resources of its continental shelf.

Sixteen years earlier, Pope John XXIII’s *Mater et Magistra (MM)* recognized the need for a balance between excessive intervention of the state, so as to curb injustices and assist socialization. *MM* advocates for worker participation and ownership while focusing on international poverty rather than just concentrating on industrialized countries.\(^{61}\) Skinner’s more classicist way of thinking seems reluctant to admit that the specific conclusions drawn in a previous historical period may not be valid for the times of his ministry. Yet, some of his episcopal confrères take up the invitation of *GS* for the Church to *interpret the signs of times*, and live in the world rather than being a spiritual entity unto itself.\(^{62}\)

### 2.5.2 Skinner and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

Skinner’s disinclination to challenge the Catholic Church-local to engage in political issues so crucial for domestic stability, ignores the challenge of *Octagesima Adveniens (OA)*. *OA* urges all Christians to embark upon building a just world by analyzing their own realities and devising responses in light of the Gospel.\(^{63}\) Skinner’s pastoral correspondences still do not associate a suffering fisheries with regional disparity, even though the 1974 *Atlantic Episcopal Assembly* of which he is a member, raises concern for regional disparity and its effect on people and communities. … The voices [in these communities] demand respect and development of their various unique cultures [and] livelihoods. Our concern is to stimulate our own analysis of disparity in every dimension of our lives: economic, spiritual, cultural. Atlantic Canada is described as being *poor* while Central Canada is seen as being *wealthy*. The Atlantic region is rich

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in natural and human resources and still promises bountiful fishing and forestry. What becomes of the hinterland regions? The metropolis needs their natural and human resources: cheap lumber, fish and food; cheap labour to process them.”

The Bishops recommend more active involvement of the laity in social justice issues. Still, Skinner’s regular pastoral correspondences continue to focus on liturgical, devotional, parochial, sacramental and moral issues. The Catholic Church in Newfoundland continues as hierarchical, bishop-clerical centered, to which the lay faithful have and are expected to submit without demur.

Yet, five years previously, in 1970, Skinner’s *Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops* (CCCB) confrère, Bishop Remi De Roo warned that Church government “centered on the ideas of power and authority… was influenced by medieval patterns and was inclined as a result to reflect the social model of the absolute monarchy.” A year later, the CCCB in deference to GS no. 42 calls for a de-emphasizing of “clerical culture; [to] set aside the great emphasis placed on the body of the Church-in which there are two groups-ruler and ruled, government and governed; and once again stress the nature of the Church as community.”

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64 “Statement of the Atlantic Episcopal Assembly on Regional Disparity”, *Renewing the Social Covenant*, Ibid, 1, 4, 5, 7.


And the 1972 Canadian Religious Conference (CRC) reassures that “within the Church … we shall become a public voice, calling the Church to practice justice”.\(^68\)

Despite these suggestively activist overtures from the national body, Skinner’s episcopate may well be described as poised to avert any mixing and meddling in affairs of the state. In his final year in office which coincides with the new pontificate of John Paul II, Skinner, in his Lenten message to the “whole Catholic community” refers to the “apostolic mission of the Catholic Church guided by the teaching authority of the Church with the pope”.\(^69\) Even then, he fails to mention the Church as the “people of God”. Up to the end of his term in office, his pastoral communiqués do not raise concerns of work, employment and the health of the fisheries, the lifeline to the common good of these maritime people.

### 2.5.3 NFFAWU and Father Des McGrath

Notwithstanding the top-heavy, disproportionate relationship of the institutional Church to the community of the faithful prior to and during Skinner’s episcopacy, the spirit of aggiornamento does come alive in the efforts of Father Des McGrath. In the late 1960’s, Father McGrath organized fishers and plant workers in the west coast communities in which he served as parish priest. In 1970, together with St. John’s lawyer Richard Cashin, they organized fish plant workers and fishers who were paid sub-minimum wages, and who were at the mercy of the merchant and the market, to form The Newfoundland Fishermen, Food and Allied Workers Union (NFFAWU). In 1971, due to pressure from the NFFAWU,

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Newfoundland became the first Canadian province to recognize collective bargaining for fishers and plant workers.\textsuperscript{70}

Even though, P.J. Skinner was Archbishop of St. John’s at the time, there is no evidence to suggest that he opposed Father McGrath’s efforts, despite McGrath having recruited members from within the St. John’s archdiocese. In any case, unlike William Coaker, McGrath was a Catholic priest under the episcopacy of Bishop Richard T. McGrath (no relation) and not Archbishop Skinner. Bishop McGrath, a graduate in Sociology from the Catholic University of America was seen as more socially progressive and more ecumenical in his thinking.\textsuperscript{71}

While studying at St. Francis Xavier University (StFX), Father McGrath is said to have come under the influence of Father Moses Coady and the \textit{Antigonish Movement}.\textsuperscript{72} Coady encouraged fostering “community education and co-operatives among poverty stricken fishermen and farmers of the 1920s and 30s.”\textsuperscript{73} Coady’s \textit{Masters of Their Own Destiny} encapsulates his desire to see ordinary people achieve economic and social freedom by beginning “with the economic phase ... that we may more readily attain the spiritual and cultural towards which all our efforts are directed.”\textsuperscript{74}

\textsuperscript{70} See “They Said it Couldn't Be Done”, \textit{FFAW/UNIFOR: Fish, Food and Allied Workers}, accessed Mar. 16, 2014, \url{http://www.ffaw.nf.ca/?Content=About_Us/History}. Today the NFFAWU is renamed the \textit{Fisher Food and Allied Workers Union (FFAW)}.

\textsuperscript{71} Helena Moore, Interview with author, Aug. 26, 2014. Helena Moore, his niece confirms that he graduated with a Masters in Sociology from Catholic University of America. The St. John’s archdiocesan archives did not have a file on Bishop McGrath.

\textsuperscript{72} The Alumni records of St. FX University show that Father McGrath first enrolled at StFX in 1957. In the 1960’s, he started organizing the fisher’s union. Richard Cashin enrolled a year later in 1958.

\textsuperscript{73} Gordon Inglis, \textit{More Than Just a Union: The Story of the NFFAWU} (St. John’s: Jesperson Press, 1985).

Coady makes the case that ordinary people had permitted money and business to become mysterious forces outside of their control. He urged them to risk co-operative action. Here, they could achieve economic security and on that foundation, attain greater human and spiritual freedom and self-realization. Coady’s desire was for the more socially-economically at risk to become equal participants “in a free and prosperous society.”\textsuperscript{75} While Coady may have stirred McGrath to empower impoverished fishers to take collective action, there is no strong evidence to establish that a firm link existed between founding the \textit{NFFAWU} or the \textit{Labrador Fishermen’s Union Shrimp Company} as a worker co-operative in 1979. These initiatives emerged independent of the Antigonish Movement. In fact, in the late 1930s, members of the of St. Francis Xavier University Extension Division came to launch a cooperative movement in Newfoundland. They did not produce results quickly and the concept was abandoned. The political system, geography and economic landscape were not amenable to this adult education cooperative program.\textsuperscript{76} It was not until the mid -1960’s, when threatened by resettlement to larger centers that “the people on Fogo Island took their future into their own hands and formed a co-operative. The Fogo Island Fisheries Co-operative became recognized world-wide as an example of how the co-op model can help facilitate the development of self-sustaining rural communities.”\textsuperscript{77}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 118.
  \item \textsuperscript{76} Note; In the late 1930’s and early 1940’s, the Government of the Dominion of Newfoundland turned to India for models of cooperative enterprises to be implemented in Newfoundland. See Miriam Wright, \textit{A Fishery for Modern Times: The State and the Industrialization of the Fisheries} (Toronto: Oxford University Press Canada, 2001), 19-23; and Inglis, \textit{More Than Just A Union}.
  \item \textsuperscript{77} Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Co-operatives, \textit{Co-operatives and Social Enterprise In Newfoundland and Labrador} (St. John’s: September, 2005), 5, accessed Aug. 20, 2014, \url{http://www.envision.ca/pdf/socialeconomy/cooperativessocialenterprise.pdf}. Note: The Government of Newfoundland by then was supporting the establishment of worker, housing and business cooperatives throughout the province.
\end{itemize}
Despite these efforts to engage and empower the more marginalized, Father McGrath was a member of the *Kirby Task Force* which recommended “the restructuring of the fisheries”\(^{78}\) at the expense of the more disadvantaged inshore sector. The current Archbishop of St. John’s, Martin Currie affirms that Father McGrath, even by the early 2000’s believed that given the way the industry was going, “the days of the inshore fisheries were numbered and the future would be with factory freezer trawlers which could catch, process and freeze cod without having to land it.”\(^{79}\) After retiring from the union in 1996, Father McGrath returned to his diocese on the West Coast. He died in 2009, while facing charges of sexual abuse of the underaged.\(^{80}\)

### 2.6 The Parish Priest and Religious Teaching Orders

In the 1970’s the long-standing supremacy ascribed Church authority began to wane. For more than two hundred years, the local pastor oversaw, ordered and controlled the lives of parishioners according to prescribed Catholic moral codes of conduct. This “competent authority” and custodian of the “rules of conduct ... for the common good”\(^{81}\) was perceived the final arbiter of good and evil. As Chair of the school Board, he hired and fired teachers and ensured the proper delivery of the Catholic curriculum in schools.

While Vatican II calls for a the shift in emphasis from the more authoritarian parish priest to one of pastor to the people, apart from the work of Father Des McGrath, the efforts of local pastors ministering to coastal communities, do not translate so much into social

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\(^{78}\) See Kirby, *Navigating Troubled Waters*.

\(^{79}\) Archbishop Martin Currie, interview with author, St. John’s Newfoundland and Labrador, March 26, 2014. He recalls Father McGrath visiting him from time to time in Grand Falls, where he served as Bishop, from 2000-2007.


activism, namely the issues of the fisheries. Nor does the work of the religious teaching communities reflect this change.

2.6.1 Religious Teaching Orders and Education:

The religious congregations in Newfoundland and Labrador society and culture loomed large in the field of education. Very early in their mission, Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Sisters of Mercy, and Irish Christian Brothers were introduced to parishes in and outside of St John’s. Under Archbishops Roche and Skinner they grew and spread around the province.82 These religious teaching orders opened schools in the larger centers sand in the outports.83 While the Christian Brothers established a commendable reputation as educators, “the Congregation later administered Mount Cashel Orphanage, which in our time has become a symbol of notoriety and shame in connection with the sexual abuse scandals associated with it.”84

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82 From four Presentation Sisters Presentation Sisters originally recruited to teach the poor Irish Catholics in the port, the order grew to 377 members by 1968. By the 1970’s there were 500 women religious placed in thirty-six Presentation Convents, with the Sisters teaching in 67 schools. Today, there are 100 sisters at the average age of 75 remaining in the congregation. See Sister Mary James Dinn P.B.V.M., Foundation of the Presentation Congregation in Newfoundland (St. John’s: Presentation Convent, Cathedral Square, 1975), 16; Sister Mary Perpetua, PBVM, A Brief History of the Presentation Congregation in Newfoundland, Folder 201.4, Box 3, Shelf 9 (St. John’s: Presentation Convent Archives, 1998), 4; and Sister Sharon Fagan, e-mail to author, Aug. 27, 2014. Note” Sister Sharon Fagan is the Congregational Leader of the Presentation Sisters.

83 In 1884, the Sisters opened a Catholic girls’ boarding school, St. Bride’s (College) Academy, Littledale, St. John’s. St. Bride’s became a training school for Catholic female teachers. For the next eighty years, the college played a key role in the post-secondary education of Newfoundland women. In 1968, the Sisters entered into an agreement with Memorial University Medical School to enlarge the mandate of St. Clare’s Mercy Hospital as a private Catholic teaching hospital to a university Catholic teaching hospital. See Hogan, History of the Foundation of the Sisters of Mercy 19-21. 83 From their peak of 308 sisters in 1965, today, the congregation has 101 sisters with an average age of 75.6 years. Sister Madonna Gatherall, RSM, e-mail to author., Mar. 11, 2015.

84 Rollman, A Brief History of Newfoundland Catholicism, para. 7. Note: The Royal Newfoundland Constabulary investigation conducted in February 1989 eventually resulted in the conviction of nine Christian Brothers on counts of physical and sexual abuse of children. See also Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance, “Abuse at the Mount Cashel Orphanage in Newfoundland”, Religious Tolerance, para. 5, accessed Aug. 28, 2014,
Nevertheless, for more than a century, these teaching orders were front and center in teaching religion and schooling children island-wide. From 1885 to the late 1960s their de facto standard Catholic religion text was the Catechism of Christian Doctrine, simply, the *Baltimore Catechism* with its emphasis on heaven, hell, sin, death, eternal punishment, good and evil.\(^85\) Until the 1950s, however, they used the Irish readers produced by the Christian Brothers to teach English, history and social studies. These readers, although similar in content to the Royal readers used in the non-catholic schools were more tailored to the education of Catholic pupils.\(^86\) The books possessed a moral tone, firmly committed to teaching Christian Doctrine in the classrooms.\(^87\) Curriculum content focused largely on King and country and its heroes; it did not broach any issues of Newfoundland society, culture and economy, particularly the fisheries.

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\(^85\) See *Baltimore Catechism*. Various editions include annotations or other modifications were made between 1885 and 1960, accessed Aug. 16, 2014, [http://www.baltimore-catechism.com/](http://www.baltimore-catechism.com/).

\(^86\) Fizzard, et al. *The History of Education in Newfoundland and Labrador*, 11. Note: Royal readers, books produced in Britain were used in the Newfoundland non-Catholic schools from the 1870’s until well into the twentieth century. Short narratives, moral stories and standard Victorian poems were used to inculcate moral values, respect for the monarchy, the empire and great heroes.

\(^87\) The Christian Brothers, *The Ideal Catholic Readers: Third Reader* (Dublin, M.H. Gill & Son Ltd., 1931), 126. See also *The Abbey History Readers: Stories from English History 1066-1485*, Book II, rev. by Cardinal Gasquet D.D. (London: G. Bell and Sons Ltd., 1924); and The Christian Brothers, *The Secondary Reader* (Dublin, M.H. Gill & Son Ltd., 1931); *The Ideal Catholic Readers: Third Reader* (Dublin, M.H. Gill & Son Ltd., 1931), 126; *The Fifth Reader, Publisher*, undated; *Fortifying Youth or Religion in Intellect and Will* (Dublin: M.H. Gill and Son, 1926); *Irish Literary Reader*, (Dublin: M.H. Gill and Son, 1925) and *A Companion to the Catechism*, (Dublin: M.H. Gill and Son, 1938). The readers featured such stories as Christ Blessing the Children, Bernadette of Lourdes and C.F. Alexander’s, *Calvary*. The 1938 revised edition of the *Companion to the Catechism* adds such topics as God and creation, the sacraments, holy days of obligation, prayer, purgatory, sin, hell, the Ten Commandments and general judgment. The *Fifth Reader* contains such works as those of William Shakespeare, Henry W. Longfellow, and writings from The Old and New Testaments. The *Sixth Book* brings in introductory lessons in Latin and Greek roots, elocution, and such works as those by Sir Walter Scott, Lord Byron, Cardinal Newman, William Shakespeare and Thomas Macaulay. The 1925 new revised literary reader added works from Ruskin, Dickens, J. Fenimore Cooper, Tennyson, Irving, Lamb and Hugo. Other major text comprise: *The Irish History Reader* includes the persecution under Cromwell, seventeenth century Irish writers, The Fenian Movement and the contributions to Catholic education of Edmund Rice, founder of the *Christian Brothers*, Nano Nagle, founder of the *Presentation Sisters* and Catherine McAuley, founder of the *Sisters of Mercy*. 
Although approved by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, even the new religion program of the late 1970’s onward - *Come To the Father* series and the secondary level curriculum set in world religions, religion and culture, ethics and philosophy, do not specifically address local culture and social justice needs, namely the predicaments of fishing people.\(^8\) Not even the current affairs section of the high school history program examination comprised a question concerning such hardships as those consequent of the fall in “exports of salt cod ... from 41,605 metric tons (mt) in 1950 to 5, 926 mt tons in 1986”.\(^9\)

For nearly two centuries, the religious teaching orders while at the forefront of education, remained effectively detached from politics and affairs of the state. Yet, these congregations were perhaps the longest standing examples of cooperatives operational in Newfoundland and Labrador.

### 2.6.1 Religious Congregations and Co-operatives

The communal structure of these religious teaching communities could have been the model for vital witness to the consciousness raising needed to respond the excessive appetite of large-scale corporations profiteering at the expense of the people, the local economy and natural resources. These communities ascribed to a social arrangement such that all property was owned in common by the group or community, instead of by individual members. They fostered the ideal that the human person realizes dignity and rights in relationship with others in community.


\(^9\) McCann, *Schooling in a Fishing Society*, 223. Current affairs was a mandatory subject in the history program. The public final exam included a compulsory question on current affairs.
While the issue of cooperatives as a viable option for the management and execution of fisheries in Newfoundland and Labrador is far too lengthy a subject for this thesis, it is important to note that by 1985, five fish producer’s cooperatives and one fishers cooperative were established in the province. Despite the communal-cooperative structure of religious congregations, their members did not encourage or participate in setting up these voluntary, non-profit cooperative ventures. Given their vocational expectations, training and working practices, did these religious communities perceive themselves too inexpert and unprepared for involvement in the community industry? Or were they too at an impasse, in light of the restrictions imposed on their position and rank in the institutional Church, and the ambiguities contiguous to Church-state relations? What is more, since cooperatives were neither privately nor state owned, they “were often criticized as socialist”. A business cooperative was oft perceived as anarchist, as endangering the established institutions, as having the tendency to promote the identification, criticism, and practical dismantling of legitimate authority. Willingness to brand the cooperative as the enemy of the free society begs these questions: Did the conditioning of the faithful in the dogma and doctrine of the pre-conciliar Church institutionalize their imagination and hopes to the point of ever perceiving themselves as social activists or instruments of change? Was schooling with the

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90 See R.F. Hayes, *Status of Fisheries Cooperatives in Newfoundland and Labrador* (Fisheries and Oceans Canada: Communications Branch, Newfoundland Region, September 18, 1985). The fish producer’s cooperatives were strewn along the Northeast coast at Fogo Island (1967), Torngat, Labrador (1980), Upper Trinity South, and Red Bay. The other fish producer’s coop was at Petite Forte in Placentia Bay. The sole fishermen’s cooperative was founded in Petty Harbour, 30 miles from St. John’s in 1983.


92 See Paul McLaughlin, *Anarchism and Authority: A Philosophical Introduction to Classical Anarchism* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2007), 1. Authority is defined in terms of the right to exercise social control (as explored in the “sociology of power”) and the correlative duty to obey (as explored in the “philosophy of practical reason”). Anarchism is distinguished by its skepticism and challenge to those claims to “normative powers” and “authoritative powers” which cannot justify their claims and which are therefore deemed illegitimate or without moral foundation.
accent on the British colonial/Irish Catholic heritage and culture far too rigid for priests, religious, parents, and students to ever feel that this is their home, that they belong here? Did the official Church and government systems ever think that through education, people can realize their potential, contribute to their community and culture, and attain their common good as a people of the sea?

PART C: POST-VATICAN II CHURCH AND THE FISHERIES CRISIS

In 1979, Alphonsus L. Penney who had served as Bishop of Grand Falls since 1973, succeeded Patrick J. Skinner as Archbishop of St. John’s.³ Thirty years had lapsed since the Church intervened publicly in matters of the state. The memory of a Church public was fading in this fishing society and culture.

Even, I, myself having been educated and raised in the Catholic tradition in outport Newfoundland was startled when Cabot Martin, the son of an Anglican priest insisted that NIFA invite the Churches to attend our meetings and support our agenda. I queried “Why the Churches? What role could they play? Churches do not get involved in politics and public sparring.” Cabot Martin replied: “Where is the gospel message of love, human rights and justice that you listen to on Sunday mornings?”

More than twenty years after Vatican II, the Church-local seemed insufficiently practised to piece together the past and try to reconstruct its relationship with these maritime people as they endure the loss of their fisheries. But by the late 1980s, any good intention to bring the Church into relation with the fisheries crisis, is unexpectedly complicated with the bitter revelation of priests and religious sexually abusing young children.

³ Grand Falls diocese comprises nearly half of the geographical territory of the island of Newfoundland. The diocese includes central, eastern, northeastern, and a considerable portion of southern Newfoundland and Labrador.
2.7 Alphonsus L. Penney (1973-79; 1979-1990) and Sexual Abuse Scandals

Unlike his predecessor, Archbishop Penney was more disposed to implement the changes invoked at the second Vatican Council. Yet, his ten years in office is more disdainfully remembered with the mishandling of the clerical sexual abuse scandals. Penney was accused of trying to neutralize the effect of the scandals to protect the interests of the church hierarchy. The institutional Church was perceived to be culpable for providing trusted opportunity structures, in which priests and religious could have access to potential victims. Penney was blamed for denial, cover-up and using a slow moving and non cooperative bureaucracy to wear the victims down, so that they would drop the charges. The Church leadership was seen as trying to reassure people and reconcile them to their faith, claiming that the matter is already addressed and all that is left is to resume being a faithful member of the Church.\footnote{94}{Paraphrased from Ashley Fitzpatrick, “Archbishop Penney Knew About Abuse”, \textit{The Evening Telegram} (St. John’s, Nov. 3, 2011), accessed Aug. 20, 2014, \url{http://www.thetelegram.com/News/Local/2011-11-03/article-2794793/Archbishop-Penney-knew-about-abuse%3A-documents/1}.}

Consequently, on July 18, 1990, on the recommendation of the archdiocesan appointed \textit{Winter Commission}, Alphonsus L. Penney was asked to step down as Archbishop of St. John’s. The commission concluded that “the Archbishop did not take effective measures to address these issues, even after serious problems occurred with some priests who were acting out their sexuality.”\footnote{95}{Cited in Michael Harris, \textit{Unholy Orders} (New York: Viking Penguin Books, 1990), 371. The \textit{Winter Commission of Inquiry into the Sexual Abuse of Children by Clergy} was appointed by the Catholic Church in Newfoundland and Labrador. By 1990 five Newfoundland Catholic priests and twelve Christian Brothers were either charged or convicted of sexually abusing children, and the numbers continued to grow.} Where lay people so long believed that their priests and religious were without a spot or a blemish, however naive this notion may have been, clergy credibility shrunk drastically. These scandals occurring at the peak of a declining fishery
virtually disqualified the Church hierarchy from adding voice to the crisis. These scandals also cloud memories of Penney’s initial efforts to awaken the Newfoundland and Labrador Catholic faith community to the spirit of change and open-mindedness engendered at Vatican II. 96

2.7.1 Beyond Vatican II: Church and State

From the outset, Penney encouraged a “vision of the Church … which is the living presence of Jesus in our society and which is responding to the needs of people.”97 In 1981, he and his Newfoundland confrères, Bishops McGrath and Macdonald invited communities of the faithful to come alive to “a deeper awareness that the Church is the people of God on pilgrimage and our spontaneous identity with this new reality. An important facet of that identity is the involvement of the laity.”98 Their joint Lenten Messages in the following year encourage a more active laity while simultaneously stressing the obligation to “renew our social and public institutions in light of the gospel...[to]bring the spirit of Christ into our communities... and share the living conditions and labours, the sufferings and hopes of the people of this province.”99

In the same month, Archbishop Penney broke the nearly thirty year old silence on Church–state relations. At the ecumenical memorial service for the victims of the Ocean

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96 The sense of Church renewal and self understanding brought about at Vatican II will be dealt with in Chapter Three.


Ranger disaster, he called for a federal-provincial “joint inquiry [into] this terrible accident”. A subsequent edition of the archdiocesan newspaper features an editorial on oil and the fishery, with the caveat against over enthusiasm for “oil prosperity… [when] the fishery is a resource on which Newfoundlanders continue to depend: it must have attention.” Unemployment at this time is soaring at 16.2 per cent, almost 30% greater than the Canadian average.

The following year, the CCCB warns:

The recession appears to be symptomatic of a much larger structural crisis in the international system of capitalism. … In order to restore profit margins needed for new investments, companies are cutting back on investments, laying off workers, and selling off their inventories. The present strategies [are creating a moral crisis as] working people, the unemployed, young people and those on fixed incomes are increasingly called upon to make the most sacrifice for economic recovery. New directions such as self reliant models of economic development; community ownership and control of industries; new forms of worker management and ownership [are necessary to accommodate] the working and non-working in communities- farmers, factory workers, fishermen, native peoples and many others who have a creative and dynamic contribution to make in shaping the economic future of our society.

Archbishop Penney invited “the people in the archdiocese in your committees, parish groups and as individuals [to examine] closely the contents of this [CCCB document] and

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100 Archbishop A. L. Penney, “Homily- Ecumenical Service for Crew Members of the Ocean Ranger”, *The Monitor*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (March, 1982), 16. The Ocean Ranger, the world’s largest semi-submersible mobile offshore drilling unit sank on February 15, 1982 while drilling an exploration well on the Grand Banks of Newfoundland. 84 crew members were on board when it sank. There were no survivors.


discuss what it means to Newfoundlanders”.\textsuperscript{104} His subsequent Lenten Message draws attention to the sagging economy:

Our fisheries is failing, our mines are closing, paper mills are slowing down…. The work of justice and of improving our life is a common effort. It will not be done by an office or by a group of professionals or even by prophetic leaders. God’s justice is brought about in our society through God’s people working to transform the society into the kingdom.\textsuperscript{105}

But apart from overtures made in the archdiocesan print media to actively address concerns for the people’s common good, local pastors made little or no attempt to give concrete shape to these intentions in their parishes. No follow-up meetings in parishes were held. Consultations with their congregations of fishing families bearing the brunt of a failing fisheries are not sought. No appeals are made to governments and businesses as to needs of suffering fisbers and their dependents.

Not even Pope John Paul II’s 1984 \textit{Address to Members of the Fishing Community} moved the local church leadership to action. From the top of the cliff towering over the harbor below decked with inshore fishing boats suspended in the shape of a Cross, the pontiff reassured these crews of their worthiness and dignity as he took the Church deeply into matters of the state:

I join with them [fishers] in appealing to those in positions of responsibility, and to all involved, to work together to find appropriate solutions to the problems at hand, including a re-structuring of the economy, so that human needs be put before mere financial gain. The social doctrine of the Church requires us to emphasize the primacy of the human person in the productive process, the primacy of people over things.\textsuperscript{106}

\textsuperscript{104} “Archbishop Penney Responds to Social Affairs Commissions Statements”, \textit{The Monitor}, Vol. 50, No. 2 (February, 1983): 11.


\textsuperscript{106} Pope John Paul II, \textit{Address to the Members of the Fishing Community}, # 3. Lorraine Michael claims that the authorship of this papal address was “a collaborative effort of the CCCB and the Social Action Committee, in which the Vatican may have put its finishing touches on it.” Lorraine Michael, interview with author, Feb. 6, 2014.
Pleas from the archbishop to “set our sights on God’s love”107 to some extent materialize into advocacy or coordinating ideas and approaches to deal with the sluggish economy in struggling fishing communities. In the first year of his office, Penney appointed Sr. Lorraine Michael RSM as director of the newly established *Catholic Office of Social Action*. Her task was to extend social outreach and address issues of social justice throughout the diocese.108

2.8 Catholic Social Action in Communities

From the outset, Sr. Michael reaffirmed the CCCB concern that “*the riches of Canada are unequally shared. The inequality which keeps so many poor are social sins*”. She encouraged Catholic schools to include in their social studies curriculum “questions of inequality between groups of people,... of the long term effects of colonialism, power of multi-national corporations, and the reasons for regional disparity in Canada”.109

A year later, her office and the CCCB backed Innu and Inuit support groups protesting Bill C-48 “designed to entrench Federal government control over oil and gas developments in the Northern territories and in off-shore areas in coastal regions.”110 Three months later, Mona Wall of the *Office of Social Action* cited Pope John Paul II’s

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108 Sister Lorraine Michael, at the time was a member of the *Sisters of Mercy*, St. John’s. She was a graduate in theology from the University of St. Michael’s College, Toronto.


condemnation of the “exploitation of the earth and uncontrolled development of resources.”\textsuperscript{111} She does not mention the cod fishery as an endangered species.

Sr. Michael nonetheless had already helped organize people in fishing communities such as those in Placentia-Argentia who “pledged themselves to keep in touch with their communities and ... to involve as many people as possible.”\textsuperscript{112} Michael forewarned, “if there is to be change, Christians are to be involved as Christians in the political structure.”\textsuperscript{113} Where a religious sister encourages transgressing church-state boundaries, the question arises as to the position of the home Church on Church-state relations?

\textbf{2.9 Church-State Relations}

In 1981, Bishop Remi De Roo was asked “Is it possible for the Church to defend human rights and not get involved in politics?” He replied:

The Church is not only a religious community, but it is also a corporate legal entity. For the Church to remain silent where injustice prevails is political statement for the status quo. ... So to say that the Church has no role in political life is a very narrow and ultimately distorted concept of Christianity and it is not acceptable. On questions such as social justice, the development of peoples, human rights, war and peace and racism is part of the Church’s pastoral mission.”\textsuperscript{114}

Two years later, in a special to \textit{The Monitor}, Cardinal Joseph Bernardin explains that churchmen stay out of politics is often a knee jerk reaction from people who find it embarrassing to be told of the implications of morality for social and political life. Beneficiaries of exploitation and repression would not be reminded that the gospel

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condemns their behavior. How specific should the Church be on social issues... The challenge always is to strike a proper balance. That can be difficult indeed.  

2.10 Catholic Social Action, Clergy and Communities of the Faithful

Lorraine Michael’s public stance may have tested the security of the long established differentiation between Church and state establishment. Her resolve to engage the Church in political, economic and social issues met with mixed support from members of the clergy. Today, she recalls:

We were not empowered to go into these parishes and help these small communities work out an agenda for their future. Some parish priests were openly supportive, while others offered subtle opposition and still others were more behind your back in their disagreements. The latter would be supportive to our faces, but when they attended the priest’s meetings with the archbishop, they would object vehemently to positions taken by the Office of Social Action. Supportive priests in turn would tell us what was said. Consequently, it was difficult to put our proposals in place and get them implemented as parish priests kept putting off having a meeting.  

When Lorraine Michael confronted Archbishop Penney about the alleged hypocrisy of these priests, he hesitated to acknowledge their insincerity. As with “the sexual abuse of children”, Penney, she believes would not challenge these priests. In his mind, “they were priests and above being sinful. The more social action connected with the people, the more the fight back from the clergy”. I asked her “were the priests afraid you would usurp their positions?” “No”, she replied, “they were afraid they would lose their power.”  

Michael claims that the Archdiocese kept “putting off having meetings to activate social justice venues in the parishes.” I asked her “if her liberation theology approach would have appeared too radical for unsuspecting priests and people who had been

118 Ibid.
programmed to think only in terms of clergy controlled communities, who were indoctrinated in preconciliar Catholic catechism and could only envisage circumscribed traditional Roman symbols of their common good?”

Michael disagrees, as communities where parish priests were receptive, such as Placentia-Argentia felt really empowered. “We really needed the support of parish priests, many of whom resisted our input because they feared that a grassroots movement would expose their shortcomings and failings as parish priests.”

Although the inter-Church coalition was assigned to monitor the fisheries crisis, Michael continued to address certain issues of the fisheries:

Fishermen in Placentia are already claiming that construction of the concrete platform will affect their fishing grounds... If we as a church are going to be more responsible we’re going to really have to listen to [their] voices... It really bothers me that we will allow an industry that may only last 15-20 years destroy an industry that is a renewable resource.

Still, it was not until 1990, that her office identified the fisheries crisis as a major problem of the past which will continue into the future. Lorraine Michael resigned as Director of the Catholic Office of Social Action in 1990. The same year, Alphonsus L. Penney stepped down as archbishop of St. John’s, just two years short of the moratorium imposed on fishing cod in Canadian waters. His successor, Bishop James MacDonald of Charlottetown was not appointed until a year later. MacDonald, consumed with the damaged reputation of priests and religious is hardly capable of addressing the crisis in the fisheries. Consequently, it was not until two months after the cod moratorium was imposed, that the Newfoundland and Labrador Bishops wrote to the Prime Minister warning that the

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119 Ibid., April 1, 2014.  
destruction of this bountiful cod fishery threatens “a two hundred to three hundred year old way of life, and cultural ethos, ... This is the local dimension of the tragedy.  

2.11 Conclusion

For three hundred years, the mission, marks and spirituality of the institutional Catholic Church in Newfoundland and Labrador was distinguished to a great extent by sectarian rivalries. The notion of the institutional Catholic Church as an absolute monarchy and ultimate symbol of ecclesial authority became normative culturally and socially. Because Church leaders were the most educated among the people, they were assumed to have the highest power to reason not only on spiritual but also on civic and political matters. But even with their supposed authority to impose their religious views on the general community, ecclesial interventions in local fisheries matters were more the exception than the rule. Overall, the annals of the Catholic Church in Newfoundland and Labrador reflect a Church, sociologically, psychologically and politically untaught to advocate for its people beset by a fisheries in crisis.

During the post-Vatican II period, the Church in Newfoundland and Labrador had moved little beyond the sacristy, sanctuary or confessional. Despite the opening up of the Church to the fresh air and breezes, the leadership of the Church-local did not seem to recognize that the health of the local fishery was vital security to the common good of the people. They did not consider the fisheries crisis as a crisis of the common good. They did not, in my judgment fully grasp or comprehend that the vocation of the Church is to serve the common good as assured in two thousand years of Catholic social tradition. They did not fully grasp the meaning and intention of the common good in their everyday relations to the

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people they served. Given this context, Chapter Three will focus on development of the understanding of the notion of the common good as it emerges throughout the major periods of Catholic social thought.
Chapter Three

The Common Good In Catholic Social Tradition

3.0 Introduction

The chapter focuses on the development of the understanding of the common good in more than two thousand years of Catholic social tradition. It establishes that the theme of the common good is not a notion arising without precedent in modern Catholic social thought. The notion of the common good, deeply rooted in Catholic social tradition emerges over time, as a response to pressing issues posed to the Church’s leadership and community of the day. The common good is about the responsibility for the Church as a community of faith and as a human/divine community to bear moral witness to the issues of love, peace, justice-equality, fairness and freedom, operational in social systems, institutions, and environments on which we all depend, so that they befit a manner that benefits all.

This chapter is divided into two parts: Parts A and B. Part A attempts to trace briefly the trajectory of the development of the understanding of the common good in Catholic social tradition from the days of the early Church: pre-modern period (1st Century B.C.E to 19th Century C.E), the Leonine to post-Leonine period (1878-1939), Vatican II to Post-Vatican II (1958-1978) and during the pontificates of Pope John Paul II, Benedict XVI (1978-2012) and ending with Francis I’s Evangelli Gaudium.¹ Part B will examine the methodologies used to interpret the common good throughout these major periods of Catholic social thought.

¹ Pope Francis I, Evangelli Gaudium. Note: Pope Pius XII (1939-1958) did not issue any encyclicals, accepted as in the tradition of Catholic social teaching.
PART A: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMMON GOOD IN CATHOLIC SOCIAL TRADITION

Theologian Marvin L. Krier Mich states that, “the notion of the common good is a dynamic term that has never been defined ‘once and for all’”. To answer the question, what is exactly the common good, would require absolute consensus on what constitutes the good to which everyone has a right to have access. This would demand coming to a common, conclusive agreement on the ethic of the common good in light of the crisis, struggles and experiences of human beings throughout history.

Centuries of grappling with the meaning of the common good in Catholic social tradition has confounded the theological scrutiny of even contemporary social ethicist, David Hollenbach. While Hollenbach’s understanding of the common good will not loom large in this chapter but in the ensuing ones, his expansive text on the common good does not offer a conclusive definition of the term. This is probably because “the notion of the common good... depends in part of one’s view of society.” In a pluralistic Western society, for example, different people have different ideas about what is worthwhile or what constitutes love, justice, equality, social, political and environmental responsibility.

While the common good is foundational to Catholic social thought, it changes or enlarges throughout the major periods of the tradition. Chances, therefore of coming to a common word on the common good are highly improbable. This two thousand year tradition attests to multiple and diverse situations and circumstances, each one giving rise to newer gradations of interpretations of the common good. As Douglas Hall allows “the invitation to

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3 See Hollenbach, The Common Good and Christian Ethics.

theology… is a mandate to recover and rethink the dimensions of our tradition.”

Throughout history, diverse and dissimilar human societies have thought differently about what is worthwhile or what constitutes the common good for all that God has created. So, the Church’s teachings on the common good, reflect a rethinking of and responding to challenges that have faced people in history. These teachings develop and change over time in order to speak with relevance to the “signs of the times.”

Nevertheless, there is agreement in the tradition that the notion of common good is attainable in the community, yet individually shared by its members. Consequently, rather than trying to squeeze the notion of the common good into the strictures of iron-clad definition, it is important to emphasize the communal aspect of shared relationships cultivated in various times and spaces in history.

But a full and complete delineation of the development of the notion of the common good in Catholic social tradition would be larger than considerable for the purposes of this thesis. Therefore, I will begin with the early tradition, addressing only what I estimate to be the more significant contributions to the interpretation of the common good, prior to what is generally viewed as the first Catholic social encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* (RN).

### 3. 1 Early Church : Monastic Communities (1 C.E – 6 C.E.)

From the earliest Christian community of “teaching and fellowship” described in Acts, in the first century C.E., emerges a distinct manner of living among those who follow “The Way”. These early monastic communities see a renunciation of possessions as a

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5 Hall, *Thinking the Faith*, 190.
communal manner of living. Everything was at the disposal of the community for the common good. Nearly twenty centuries later, David McCann and Patrick Miller reflect that the common good cannot be thought of “apart from some shared experience in community”.10

One of the earliest monastic rules, the Rule of St. Augustine formulated in the fifth century is considered to have greatly influenced Western monasticism. The Rule stipulates that the purpose of life is to search for the higher good, God, the definitive truth, not alone, but among friends who are committed to the same journey.11 In the Augustinian community, the common good is put before private advantage. The monastic vow is not a personal and isolated thing; it means to enter into the tradition, with the commitment to faith shared by those in community. Community members share common space and strive to live in harmony and be of assistance to each other in every way possible, including fraternal correction in a spirit of love and understanding. Members look upon their work as an expression of their human nature, in cooperation with the Creator, seeking to work for unity, justice and peace-making, the fruits of love, a reality in the Church and in the world.12 Love is key. The Rule teaches that in love I freely do the common good:

For charity, as it is written, is not self-seeking (1 Cor 13:5) meaning that it places the common good before its own, not its own before the common good. So whenever you show greater concern for the common good than for your own, you may know that

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9 The third century hermit, St. Anthony of Egypt is considered the first Christian monk. He chose the eremitical lifestyle, living in solitude. In the fourth century, at Tabennisi, Egypt, St. Pachonius established the first coenobitic community, bringing together smaller communal groups under religious rule. See C.H. Lawrence, “Chapter 1: The Call of the Desert”, Medieval Monasticism, 3rd edition (Toronto: Pearson Education Limited, 2001), 7.

10 Miller and McCann, “Introduction”, In Search of the Common Good, 2.


you are growing in charity. Thus, let the abiding virtue of charity prevail in all things that minister to the fleeting necessities of life.¹³

The virtue of charity continues to prevail in *The Rule of St. Benedict*, which came a little more than a century later. The Benedictine rule has been the dominant monastic rule for the Western Church with its commitment to the vows of poverty, obedience, and chastity. The monastic abandons all monetary gain, accumulated possessions and inheritance, to follow Jesus Christ. The vow of poverty - no one owns anything but all there is belongs to all, forsakes material gain. Members gather around a shared vision of the good life and are governed by a common moral rule of stability. *Ora et Labora* frees Benedictines to fully commit their lives to the monastic community, not moving about from monastery to monastery, or place to place. This means learning the practices of love: giving up personal preferences and forgiving, trusting in the community’s support during difficult times, and to serve the community through the stability of a committed relationship.¹⁴

Since the early Church, several and various theological contributions were made to further the understanding of the common good. Although important, for the purposes of this thesis, I will deal only with the concept love and service advanced in the theologies of St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Ignatius Loyola.

### 3.2 Aquinas-Ignatius Loyola (13 C.E -19 C.E)

In the thirteenth century, St. Dominic adopted the *Rule of St. Augustine* that members live, work and pray together.¹⁵ In the same century, the Dominican, St. Thomas Aquinas expands on Augustine’s understanding of love and the common good. He sees faith, hope,

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and love as a participation in the Divinity, a way of sharing in the nature of God and a way for humans to live the Divine life. Of these, love is paramount. Love is friendship with God and enables human beings to live with God intimately as members of society. Love is fulfilled in participation in the social life of God, whose love communicates itself to every being who may possibly share in that intelligent and intelligence-transcending love. Love in its fullness empowers human beings to love neighbor, and live not in isolation but together as a human family.  

David Hollenbach clarifies that “Aquinas [identifies] the good to be sought by all persons in common with the very reality of God.”  

Susanne DeCrane agrees that “for Aquinas the common good of all reality is God. God is the universal common good to which human beings are oriented to their end as their ultimate fulfillment.” She refers to the Summa to support this claim:  

Now loving God above all things is something connatural to man, and even to any creature, rational and non-rational, and even non-living in accordance with the kind of love which may befit any creature…. Even by natural love every particular thing loves its own proper good for the sake of the common good of the whole universe.  

Love, that is “to will the good of another” is pivotal in Aquinas’s reading of the common good. Except, the common good, itself is not the focus of Aquinas’ work. Jean Porter writes that while the common good is not “central and foundational for Aquinas… the

16 St.Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, q. 62, 1a - 2ae.
motif of the common good does play an important role in Aquinas’s mature moral thought, [but] he does not develop a full scale theory of the common good per se.”21 While he does not propose a definition of the common good, he reconciles Aristotle’s thought on the common good with Christian revelation as the good of the community: “It is natural for man [sic] more than any other animal, to be a social and political animal, to live in a group.”22 Where people are inclined to look first and foremost after their own self-interest (i.e. Ecclesiastes 4:9: “two are better than one; they get a good wage for their labour”), Aquinas concludes that “in every multitude there must be some governing power [to direct people toward] the common good.”23 Otherwise, the absence of a ruler or government would likely move the society towards anomie, the breakdown of social bonds between an individual and their community.24

David Hollenbach supports Aquinas’ belief that a ruler or government would help sustain the level of solidarity needed to sustain the common good:

being a good person requires fulfilling one’s responsibilities as a citizen for the public good…. Seeking the common good is not an all or nothing affair [for a] basic level of solidarity is essential to social life even though society falls short of being an ideal community due to the moral limits and weakness of its members.25

21 Jean Porter, “The Common Good in Catholic Social Teaching”, McCann and Miller, 96.


23 Ibid., #8.


3.2.1 Ignatius Loyola

To follow on Aquinas’ vision of the common good, in the sixteenth century, founder of the Society of Jesus, Ignatius of Loyola in his Spiritual Exercises, illuminates many key aspects of Christian spirituality. These include trusting in God, imitating Jesus and the saints, love and the common good.26 The Jesuits, a non-cloistered religious community within the Catholic Church are committed to education, the service of faith and the promotion of justice worldwide. Ignatius seeks a “broader common good” for his followers, linking the “glory of God” with the earthly reality of the common good. He breaks beyond the confines of existing notions of the common good in religious communities and imagines it as “universal, extending well beyond the mediaeval kingdom’s of Aquinas’ understanding … as the good of the whole of humanity, extending to the ends of the earth.”27

But it was not until the late nineteenth century when events of an economic nature became so politically and culturally explosive in Europe, that the Catholic Church in the canon of its social teachings, formally advocated for the right of everyone to have greater access to the common good.

3.3 Leonine Period: Pope Leo XIII (1878 - 1903)

The Industrial Revolution (1760-1850) and the rise of Marxism, permeating the European trade union movement, profoundly changed centuries-old societal structures.28 Serious problems of justice prompted by the conflict between capital and labour moved the Catholic Church, under the papacy of Leo XIII, to address in a new way the great social

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question of labour. Marvin L. Krier Mich notes that the social teachings of German theologian, Archbishop Wilhelm von Ketteler became particularly influential to Pope Leo. In 1869, von Ketteler who distinguished himself with the social movements of this time, presented a list of socio-economic reforms to the German bishops some of which include: wage increases, better working conditions, prohibition of child, girls and women’s labour in factories, Sunday rest and care for disabled workers. Von Kettler was determined that in the name of faith, morals, and charity, Church intervention was necessary for the removal of these economic evils. “Forty-three years later, Leo XIII named … Archbishop Ketteler our great predecessor in addressing the social question”.

In RN, Pope Leo defended the rights of the family and the right to private property, rights which he believed were attacked and encroached upon by the spread of communism throughout Europe. The res novae, “new things” represented a challenge to the Church’s teachings, hence motivating his special pastoral concern for masses of people. A revisiting of the situation was needed, to honour the type of discernment capable of finding appropriate solutions to this critical historical time, posing unfamiliar and unexplored social challenges to the common good.

To ensure the establishment of a more just social order, RN gives more prominence to the human person as sharing in God’s image through being a “worker, a creator of something new, bound up [with the] impress of his personality”. The emphasis on the imago dei would not only have a range of implications for a Christian anthropology, but would impact greatly

\[29\text{Marvin L. Krier Mich, Catholic Social Teaching and Movements (New London, CT: Twenty-third Publications, 2009), 7.}\]
\[30\text{Ibid., 7.}\]
\[31\text{See Pope Leo XIII, Rerum Novarum.}\]
\[32\text{Ibid.,# 9.}\]
the understanding of the common good in the next century of Catholic social teaching and beyond.

Leo foresaw that the primary purpose of a state is to provide for the common good. He maintained that since all people have equal dignity regardless of social class, a good government protects the rights and cares for the needs of all its members, both rich and poor:

As regards the State, the interests of all, whether high or low, are equal. The members of the working classes are citizens by nature and by the same right as the rich; they are real parts, living the life which makes up, through the family, the body of the commonwealth.... therefore the public administration must duly and solicitously provide for the welfare and the comfort of the working classes; otherwise, that law of justice will be violated which ordains that each man shall have his due.33

Forty years after Leo’s 1891 hallmark encyclical, a growing fear that collectivism “would imperil the common good, [leaving it] to the care of private individuals”, fuelled the anxieties of Pope Pius XI.34

3.4 Post Leonine Period - Pope Pius XI (1922-39): Subsidiarity and the Common Good

During the nineteenth century many private organizations and associations providing for a highly developed social life in the interest of economic freedom, were now prohibited by law. They divided society “into two classes”35, the wealthy few and the impoverished masses. Pope Pius feared the possibility of “the near extinction of that rich social life.”36 The traditional European society of the Middle Ages, when private associations - religious, charitable, educational and industrial which provided for the needs of society at the most

34 The term *collectivism* is sometimes used as a substitute for *socialism*. It is of later origin, and is somewhat more precise in use and content. Socialism means primarily an ideal industrial order. Collectivism, in this case implies the substitution of the collective for private property in the means of production. Cf. James W. Sillen and Rockne M. McCarthy, eds., “*Rerum Novarum* (On the Condition of Workers)*, Political Order and the Plural Structure of Society* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1991),144.
35 Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, #47
36 Pope Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno* #78.
immediate levels, was eroding. Such association freed up civil authority to address higher level responsibilities. The result of the abolition of private associations was that “there remain[ed] virtually only individuals and the state.” Pius, concerned that the state would be forced to take over “all the burdens which the wrecked associations once bore,” offered his now famous principle of subsidiarity:

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 the members of the body social, and never destroy and absorb them.”

Pope Pius went on to say that the state should focus on those activities. For the state alone can effectively direct, watch, protect, urge and restrain as necessity dictates. It should not meddle in affairs more efficiently and effectively handled by intermediate organizations and individual persons. He clarifies that government intervention should be limited so as to maintain a proper balance in tension between the state and the creativity, initiative, freedom, and legitimate autonomy of local social units and individuals.

Considered a major corollary of the principle of the common good, subsidiarity requires those in positions of authority to recognize that people have a right to participate in decisions directly affecting them, in accord with their dignity and their responsibility to the common good. Decisions or choices that rightly belong to individual persons or smaller groups should not be assigned to a higher authority; they should be made at the most appropriate level in a society or organization. However, a higher authority properly intervenes in decisions only when it is necessary to secure or protect the needs and rights of

37 Pope Pius XI, Quadragesimo Anno, #78.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid., #s 78 and 79.
40 Ibid., # 80.
all. Stated succinctly, subsidiarity holds that when a decision is to be made, the most appropriate forum and level of decision-making should be identified. From there, it must be determined how best and the degree to which the person or group most affected should participate in the decision-making process.

But Pius XI is adamant that these decisions must respect the dignity of human beings who must first realize their nature as images of God. He forewarns against selfish ambition, greed and the inordinate lust for transitory things. While subsidiarity helps relieve government from making all decisions affecting the general welfare of people, it also adds more clarity to the reading of the common good. But to meet its own objectives, this principle still needs a greater facility to free one and all to take the lead in caring for those in need.

3.5 Popes John XXIII and Paul VI (1958-1978): Vatican II and the Common Good

The peasant beginnings of Pope John XXIII, his “diverse ministry as priest and bishop” and subsequent assignments taking him outside of Italy to Turkey, Greece and Paris helps give force to his vision of Church renewal, the leitmotif of Vatican II. In France, he learned to put “ideological differences aside” and relate to even those outside the Catholic tradition stressing what unites rather than divides. His openness to others encodes his vision of the common good, stated in Mater et Magistra (MM):

A sane view of the common good must take account of all those social conditions which favor the full development of human personality….It [is] altogether vital that the numerous intermediary bodies and corporate enterprises be really autonomous, and loyally collaborate in pursuit of their own specific interests and those of the common good. For these groups must themselves necessarily present the form and substance of a true community, and this will only be the case if they treat their

41 Pope Pius XI, Quadragesimo Anno, §§ 109 and 129.
individual members as human persons and encourage them to take an active part in the ordering of their lives.43

Four years later, Vatican II enlarges on the notion of the common good in *Gaudium et Spes (GS)*. GS is written at a time not only marking major renewal in the Church, but also a time of critical political, scientific and technological developments. The U.S. enters the space age; the American civil rights movement intensifies and the political tensions of the Cold War deepen.44 Community becomes the locus of dialogue as GS moves more towards human commitment to inequalities existing in the world community.45 “While keeping open a path to an understanding of the human condition that can be shared outside the Church”, the dignity of the human person created in the *imago dei* is reaffirmed.46 GS affirms the interrelatedness of a person’s human dignity with their full psychological, social and spiritual development. It describes the common good as “the sum total of all those conditions of social life which allows social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfillment”.47

*Populorum Progressio (PP)*48 is written less than two years after Vatican II. During this time of rapid social, economic and cultural advances on a global scale, the United Nations declares “The Decade of Development”49 Given the abject poverty consuming Africa and South America and the corresponding rise of Latin American liberation

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44 Hollenbach, “Commentary on Gaudium et Spes”, Himes et al., 267-268.

45 *Vatican II, Gaudium et Spes*, #65.

46 Hollenbach, “Commentary on Gaudium et Spes”, Himes et al., 273.

47 *Vatican II, Gaudium et Spes*, # 26.


49 Allan Figueroa, “Commentary on Populorum Progressio”, Himes et al., 293.
theologies, Paul VI further formalizes the definition of the common good as “integral human development”⁵⁰ The integral human development of individuals, families, communities and nations is many-sided, including social, ecological, spiritual, cultural, political and economic dimensions.⁵¹ While the definition put forth in GS and upgraded in PP is conceivably the most definitive to date, still another aspect of the notion of the common good is to come with Pope John Paul II, beginning with a revisiting of the principle of subsidiarity


Pope John Paul II’s Centessimus Annus (CA) comes “in the midst of dramatic transformation of communism in the Soviet Union.”⁵² As an important catalyst of these changes, namely his Polish upbringing under the “heavy hand of communism”⁵³, the Pontiff is concerned with cases where excessive state intervention deprived members of society of their sense of responsibility, leading to a loss of initiative and human energies.⁵⁴ Decades prior, Pope John XXIII warned that where personal initiative is lacking, political tyranny ensues, provoking economic stagnation in both the material and the spiritual orders.⁵⁵ Anxious that too much state involvement would lead to an enormous increase in spending, he re-formulated the principle of subsidiarity, stating:

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.⁵⁶

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⁵⁰ Pope Paul VI, Populorum Progressio, #20.
⁵² Daniel Finn, “Commentary on Centessimus Annus”, Himes et al., 437.
⁵³ Ibid., 438.
⁵⁴ Pope John Paul II, Centessimus Annus, #48.
⁵⁵ Pope John XXIII, Mater et Magistra, #57.
⁵⁶ Pope John Paul II, Centessimus Annus, #48.
This strengthening of the principle of subsidiarity helped regulate the relationship between different parts of the social order and different levels of association. Effectively, larger or higher levels are required to help or assist those in lower levels, or more precisely those in need. But to help further advance the principle of subsidiarity and Vatican II’s notion of the common good, Pope John Paul II who in part distinguished his pontificate with his relationship with the Solidarity movement in Poland, further advanced the principle of solidarity.

In his encyclicals Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (SRS) and CA, he refers to solidarity as a “duty”’59 a” principle” 60, and a “virtue”61, respectively. With the greater emphasis on virtue, solidarity with the energy of grace, works to advance the good of community. It comes to mean 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”.62 It condemns both individualism and collectivism because they have the potential to minimize the greater sense of loyalty to community. Solidarity “leads to a new vision of the unity of humankind, a reflection of God’s triune intimate life”.63

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58 Note: The principle of solidarity while developed extensively by Pope John Paul II, in fact preceded him in Catholic Social Teaching. Its foundations are widely considered to have been laid by Pope Leo in RN which advocated economic distributism. Distributism is more expansively explained by Pope Pius XI in QA. Solidarity can be traced to the New Testament: e.g. "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.” (Jn.6:37).
59 Pope John Paul II, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, # 9.
60 Pope John Paul II, Centessimus Annus, # 10
61 Pope John Paul II, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, #s 38 and 40.
62 Ibid., # 38
63 Pope John Paul II, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, # 40.
Solidarity in Catholic social teaching is considered an ontological reality. It is a reality uniting individuals, giving particular attention to the person’s relational communal nature, which requires the cooperative effort of others. Ultimately, it allows all individual members of society to have access to the common good, a good from which no one can be easily excluded.

3.6.1 Pope Benedict XVI- Francis I (2005-): Subsidiarity and Solidarity

With the papacy of Pope Benedict XVI, the theme of the common good is reinforced. In Deus Caritas Est (DCE), Benedict continues to uphold the principle of subsidiarity, declaring that: “the pursuit of justice must be a fundamental norm of the State and that the aim of a just social order is to guarantee to each person, according to the principle of subsidiarity, his share of the community’s goods.”

Four years later, where the incidence of the global financial crisis, considered the worst since the great depression, and measured a symptom of a deeper systemic crisis of capitalism itself, in Caritas in Veritate (CV) Benedict XVI validates the complementarity of subsidiarity and solidarity: “The former without the latter gives way to social privatism… the latter without the former gives way to paternalist social assistance that is demeaning to those in need.”

The dignity of every person and association actively working to shape the community and society in which they live for their own good, the human good and the good of all creation, brings to life the possibility of human beings reviving close relations with the

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66 See Pope Benedict XVI, Caritas in Veritate, # 58.
world around them. Created in the *imago dei*, the social nature of the Trinity compels them to live in harmony with not only neighbour but all God’s creation.

Christopher Hrynkow and Dennis O’Hara resolve that “the common good of one’s neighbour has the potential to extend one’s understandings of ‘neighbour’ to include all those who contribute to the well-being of creation, both human and other-than-human alike”. 67 Living in solidarity with all God’s great handiwork will help foster a new vision of human-earth relations, whereby humans are inspired to think in the context of the whole planet. That said, Pope Benedict clarifies that “the environment is God's gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole.” 68 The *United States Catholic Bishops (USCB)* follow that protecting both “the human environment and the natural environment is about our human stewardship of God’s creation and our responsibility to those who come after us.” 69

But this vision of stewardship, Hrynkow and O’Hara find problematic from an eco-spiritual perspective: “The stewardship model …when it is based on the understanding that the steward replaces the Lord of the kingdom, who is not present [presumes] the steward knows how to manage the estate/ kingdom and the estate/ kingdom needs managing.” Stewardship undermines the transcendent and immanent presence of God, disregards humanity’s demonstrated historical ignorance as to how to manage the earth’s complex

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ecosystem [and overlooks the fact that] the earth has survived and thrived for 4.5 billion years” without people.70

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) out of concern for the environment, concurrently defer to Pope Francis: “The Church is likewise conscious of the responsibility which all of us have for our world, for the whole of creation, which we must love and protect.”71 While protectorate still insinuates human supremacy over non-human creatures, Francis raises consciousness to the fact that not only humans but also non-humans breathe the same air, drink the same water, and rely on the same fruits of the earth for sustenance. His Evangelium Gaudium (EG) reinforces the unbroken teachings on the common good since Leo XIII. By dedicating a chapter to the common good, he adds force to Pope Paul VI’s concern that by an ill-considered exploitation of nature man risks destroying it and becoming in his turn the victim of this degradation. Not only is the material environment becoming a permanent menace - pollution and refuse, new illness and absolute destructive capacity - but the human framework is no longer under man's control, thus creating an environment for tomorrow which may well be intolerable. This is a wide-ranging social problem which concerns the entire human family.72

EG, likewise continues to validate that value of work and the worker, stating that “it is through free, creative, participatory and mutually supportive labor that human beings express and enhance the dignity of their lives”.73 While Benedict and Francis strive to

70 Hrynkow and O’Hara, “The Vatican and Eco-Spirituality”, 181.
72 Pope Paul VI, Octagesima Adveniens, #21.
73 Pope Francis I, Evangelii Gaudium, # 192.
illuminé and enlarge on the notion of the common good as the good of all, the task of interpreting the common good with greater clarity remains arguably a work in progress.

### 3.7 Defining the Common Good

As raised in the introduction to this chapter, the common good is hardly definable as perceptions of the common good are contingent on times and circumstances in which the common good is addressed. "A hierarchical view of society [for example] sees the common good differently from a democratically ordered society."\(^{74}\) That said, the formally ranked structure of the Catholic Church would suggest a hierarchical view of the common good. Yet, it cannot be concluded that the Church’s view of the common good allows for the distribution of benefits to members of a group according to their rank or importance. Although he did not author a social encyclical, Pope Pius XII estimated that to grasp fully the notion of the common good, it must be understood that not only is it truly common but it is also prior to the private good. His principle of totality teaches “the part exists for the whole and that, consequently, the good of the part remains subordinated to the good of the whole, the whole is a determining factor for the part and can dispose of it in its own interest”.\(^{75}\)

When Pope John XXIII added his voice to the long standing debate over the common good, he chose to start from “the ground up to see where different philosophies of life or ideologies shared common ground for working together.”\(^{76}\) This important development in the understanding of justice to enable especially the poor and marginalized to participate in the economic, social and political life of the community is given special attention in 1986 by the USCCB. The Bishops explain: “The prime purpose of this special commitment to the

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\(^{75}\) Pope Pius XII, *The Moral Limits of Medical Research and Treatment* (Rome: September 14, 1952), # 34, accessed July 19, 2014, http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius12/P12PSYCH.HTM.

poor is to enable them to become active participants in the life of society. It is to enable all persons to share in and contribute to the common good.”

Pope Benedict’s CV considers it a right and duty that poor persons, communities, and nations together participate in the planning and implementation of programs designed to promote human development and reduce poverty. CV presents the Church’s deep reflections on the financial, economic and environmental crisis, when the global financial crisis is marking the total collapse of major financial institutions, and when new environmental issues emerge and existing issues evolve. The priority Benedict gives to the common good is demonstrated by its place in the encyclical as its argument unfolds. He starts with justice, which he calls “the primary way of charity [for] to love someone is to desire that person’s good. Beside the good of the individual there is a good that is linked to living in society - the common good. To desire the common good and strive towards it is a requirement of justice and charity.”

The encyclical Lumen Fidei (LF), a joint effort of Popes Benedict and Francis, links faith with the common good. Faith, “because it is linked to love (cf. Gal 5:6), the light of

79 In 2009 Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley, the two last remaining independent investment banks on Wall Street, became bank holding companies as a result of the subprime mortgage crisis. The issue of the environment for the first decade of the second millennium played an increasingly important role in almost every aspect of modern life, from politics and business to religion and entertainment. The environment was a pivotal issue in all three of the decade’s U.S. presidential elections, commanded more congressional attention than any issue except the economy and health care, and was the subject of government action and debate worldwide. See “Goldman, Morgan to Become Holding Companies”, Market Watch, Sept. 21, 2008, accessed Jan. 23, 2014, http://www.marketwatch.com/story/goldman-sachs-morgan-stanley-to-become-bank-holding-companies.
80 Pope Benedict XVI, Caritas in Veritate, # 7.
faith is concretely placed at the service of justice, law and peace”.\(^\text{81}\) Faith endows people with the gift to reach to those outside of the mainstream of society. Without the love of God in whom we can place our trust, the bonds between people would be based only on utility, interests and fear. Instead faith grasps the deepest foundation and real commitment of human relationships, their definitive destiny in God, and places them at the service of the common good. Faith “is for all, it is a common good”; its purpose is not merely to build the hereafter, but to help in edifying societies in order that they may proceed together towards a future of hope.\(^\text{82}\)

But these encyclicals with their express emphasis on love pose certain risks in determining individual and collective liability and responsibility for the common good. David Hollenbach for this reason is a little uneasy with CV. His view also seems valid for LF:

If Christian love is seen preeminently as a form of self-gift or self-sacrifice that transcends the requirements of justice, especially if this transcendence is interpreted to mean that love could call surrender to injustice. … Christian love may call for self-defense in some circumstances. Nor does Christian love call for one to stand aside when one’s neighbor is being exploited.”\(^\text{83}\)

But where the Church prioritizes love and to avoid unnecessary violence, as the full development of human life requires peace\(^\text{84}\), Francis I’s Evangelii Gaudium (EG) devotes an entire section of chapter four to the common good, appealing to it as a catalyst for peace:

Peace in society cannot be understood as pacification or the mere absence of violence … Demands involving the distribution of wealth, concern for the poor and human rights cannot be suppressed under the guise of creating a consensus on paper or a


\(^{82}\) Pope Francis I, Lumen Fidei, #s 50-5.


\(^{84}\) Catechism of the Catholic Church, # 2304.
transient peace for a contented minority. The dignity of the human person and the common good rank higher than the comfort of those who refuse to renounce their privileges.\textsuperscript{85}

That said, Francis still does not attempt to define the common good. According to John Coleman, S.J., these social encyclicals overall “deal with …the temporal, the historically passing, with a reading of the ‘signs of the times’ and an assessment of movements and institutions of a given age which may or may not be accurate”.\textsuperscript{86} Hence, the prospect of arriving at an unequivocal definition of the common good is not an imminent possibility. Yet, in all examples, there seems to be a general agreement that the varied understandings come together to form a unified whole. The latent and underlying meanings insinuated in the notion of the common good validate the unified result that it is a good that belongs to all.

Although it has been established that interpretations of the common good are respective of historical settings, it is important to be attentive to the limits of their form. Even where they reflect wide consultation on the assessments of movements and trends, for example as in socialism and capitalism, they are still contextualized and often constrained by the assumptions of the writers and suppositions of the period in which they are written.

\textbf{PART B: METHODOLOGIES USED IN CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING TO INTERPRET THE COMMON GOOD}

The Catholic Church’s ideas about the common good are not only determined by doctrines of faith, but are also a part of human inquiry into the nature of the world. Therefore, in my judgment it is important to first introduce the concept or notion of natural law. Natural

\textsuperscript{85} Pope Francis I, \textit{Evangelii Gaudium}, # 218.

law is foundational to the methodologies used in Catholic social tradition to interpret and explain the notion of the common good.

### 3.8 Natural Law and Catholic Social Teaching

The notion of universal moral truths discernible by reason, a fundamental principle of ethics in Catholic social tradition, has been most commonly addressed under the rubric of natural law. St. Thomas Aquinas is credited with arriving at a natural law theory in which “the universe is governed by God who knows what is best and orders all things accordingly.”

He defined natural law as participation of free and rational human beings in the eternal law, as an intelligible command, “a dictate of reason”, coming from the legitimate authority of God who makes the command for the good of those God governs.

The concept of logos or “word” in the prologue to the Gospel of John (1:1), sets a foundation for natural law in Catholic social teaching. When God spoke creation into existence through God’s word, God’s logos sends things forth with an order that is discernible. Natural law in effect helps determine the logic of rationality needed to understand what God has created, and what God wills for the world.

The document of the first Vatican Council, *Dei Filius* teaches that faith is presupposed to assist reason, capable of knowing basic truths like the existence of God and the judgment of right from wrong. Pope John Paul II, centuries later declares that natural

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87 See Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologiae I*, qq. 22 and 23.


law can be defined positively as a participation “in the wisdom and goodness of the Creator” and an expression of “moral sense which enables [humankind] to discern by reason the good and the evil.”

The natural law approach has tended to dominate Catholic social teaching since its inception. The methodology of Pope Leo XIII is based on natural law. He defends the rights of workers: the need for justice and solidarity, but at the same time affirms the natural right to private property, which appeals to the Thomistic notion of private property. Leo also presumes that natural law is inherently teleological and deontological. Although it is aimed at goodness, it is entirely focused on the ethicality of actions, rather than the consequence. Leo understands natural law as mediating the law of God. In RN, he stresses that human beings govern themselves by their own reason, declaring that “man alone among the animal creation is endowed with reason - it must be within his right to possess things not merely for temporary and momentary use, as other living things [as vested] under the eternal law and the power of God whose providence governs all things.”

After the publication of RN, the imago dei was not only interpreted as the rational faculty of being human; it was also understood in the relational and representative senses.

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90 Catechism of the Catholic Church, # 1954.

91 For Aquinas, private ownership becomes a necessary feature of the human being’s earthly state. It is the best guarantee of a peaceful and orderly society. It provides maximum incentive for the care and efficient use of property. In the Summa, he writes: “every man is more careful to procure what is for himself alone than that which is common to many or to all since each one would shirk the labor and leave to another that which concerns the community, as happens where there are a great number of servants.” Cf. Murray N. Rothbard, “The Philosopher-Theologian: St. Thomas Aquinas”, Mises Daily (Ludwig Von Mises Institute, Dec. 25, 2009), para. 21, accessed Jan. 22, 2014, http://mises.org/daily/3920.


Created in the image of God, the Trinity, human beings in due course came to be conceived not as individuals but as persons. The mystery of human personhood in communio, with origins and destiny in God’s personal existence will help carry Catholic social teaching’s interpretation of natural law through the economic and social crises of the twentieth century and into the second millennium. Both Pius XI’s *QA* and John XXIII’s *MM* make further attempts to shed light on the natural law approach of RN. *QA* reconsiders that it is 

reason itself that clearly shows, on the basis of the individual and social nature of things and of men, the purpose which God ordained for all economic life. But it is only the moral law which, just as it commands us to seek our supreme and last end in the whole scheme of our activity, so likewise commands us to seek directly in each kind of activity those purposes which we know that nature, or rather God the Author of nature, established for that kind of action, and in orderly relationship to subordinate such immediate purposes to our supreme and last end.\(^94\)

*MM* describes the natural law approach as “a social message based on the requirements of human nature itself and conforming to the precepts of the gospel and reason.”\(^95\) Vatican II, although marking a major methodological shift in Catholic social teaching follows on the same line of thinking. *GS* develops its opening argument for religious liberty “based on the dignity of the human person, the demands of which have become more fully known to human reason through centuries of experience”.\(^96\)

Two years later, Pope Paul VI’s *PP* further affirms that all human beings are spiritual and are ordered to the Creator, the Supreme Truth. Charles Curran wagers that the encyclical moves towards developing

a true and authentic humanism whereby human beings move less to the higher level which involves the growth of knowledge and acquisition of culture; to a further level

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\(^94\) Pope Pius IX, *Quadragesimo Anno*, #s 42-43.


\(^96\) Pope Paul VI, *Gaudium et Spes*, Preface.
of esteem for human dignity and cooperation for the common good; to the deeper
humanization of the acknowledgement of supreme values with God as their source
and end; and finally to faith, whereby we share in the life of God as God’s own
children.  

In *Veritatis Splendor (VS)*, Pope John Paul II reinforces that natural law in Catholic
social teaching holds human beings to be inherently good and preserves their rational ability
to judge and choose what is morally good in and of itself.  

In *DCE*, Pope Benedict continues
to defend that “the Church’s social teaching argues on the basis of reason and natural law so
as to help form consciences in political life and to reawaken the spiritual energy needed for
justice to prevail.”  

On his 2011 *Apostolic Visit to Germany*, Pope Benedict, again in
defense of the natural law approach, challenges the positivist notion that anything not
scientific is simply personal preference. While he agrees that

the positivist approach to nature and reason, the positivist worldview in general, is a
most important dimension of human knowledge and capacity that we may in no way
dispense with, [he argues] in and of itself it is not a sufficient culture, corresponding
to the full breadth of the human condition. [He disputes that] the idea of natural law is
today viewed as a specifically Catholic doctrine, not worth bringing into the
discussion in a non-Catholic environment, so that one feels almost ashamed even to
mention the term. …. A positivist conception of nature as purely functional, in the
way that the natural sciences explain it, is incapable of producing any bridge to ethics
and law, but once again yields only functional answers. The same also applies to
reason, according to the positivist understanding that is widely held to be the only
genuinely scientific one. Anything that is not verifiable or falsifiable, according to
this understanding, does not belong to the realm of reason strictly understood. Hence
ethics and religion must be assigned to the subjective field, and they remain
extraneous to the realm of reason in the strict sense of the word. 

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97 Charles Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching: 1891-Present* (Washington D.C.:Georgetown University


Journey to Germany, September 22-25, 2011: Visit to the Bundestag, #s 7-8, accessed Feb. 10, 2014,
xvi_spe_20110922_reichstag-berlin_en.html.
Benedict foresees that the object of natural law is to seek the truth about what is good; which comes from God and is largely outside of the expertise of scientific inquiry. Together, Benedict and Francis in *LF* note that in the search for common ground between a rapidly progressing scientific philosophy and the ancient Christian tradition, the significance of both reason and faith are diminished. In essence, too much credit was given to scientific philosophy so that faith lost its sure-footing in this thwarted view of life, lived out in a culture that has “lost its sense of God’s tangible presence and activity in our world… [Hence] faith encourages the scientist to remain constantly open to reality in all its inexhaustible richness; faith broadens the horizons of reason to shed greater light on the world which discloses itself to scientific investigation”.101

James J. Schall explains that Pope Benedict understands that

a clearer understanding of natural law can occur between reflection and experience, … that it is a ‘duty’ of those with ‘public responsibility’ to promote this progress. We are supposed to learn more and more about what is right, about what we are. We are not left isolated when more sophisticated problems arise because natural law is available to confront new problems.102

### 3.8.1 Liabilities of the Natural Law Approach

The natural law approach offers benefits, not least of which is openness to dialogue with “*all people of good will*, the usual addressee of papal encyclicals, since Pope John XXIII. …. The natural law methodology logically allows one to address all human beings because the arguments proposed are not primarily based on uniquely Christian sources.”103

Charles Curran, however argues that “by basing the whole teaching on reason and the order

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101 Pope Francis I, *Lumen Fidei*, #s 2 and 34.


that the author of nature has put into the world [i.e. *PT* and similar documents] … neglects the aspect of sin. As a result [they] suffer from a natural law optimism that often fails to explicitly acknowledge the harsher realities of human existence.”

Another objection Curran raises is that the natural law approach has meant that Catholic social teaching tends not to be significantly shaped by explicit references to Jesus, scripture, or the language of grace. Such references are not absent, but scriptural references are few especially in the Leonine and post-Leonine period of Catholic social teaching. This raises a significant question: “Is there a unique Christian content regarding social justice in the world and the transformation of human society that is not shared by non-Christians and all people of good will?”

What might Catholic social teaching look like if even some of it drew explicitly from scripture and imposed the demands of the Gospel upon Christians?

While Curran recognizes that Vatican II marks a significant theological/methodological shift as to how scripture can be used in Catholic social ethics, he notes that Catholic use of scripture is not fundamentalistic. “Scripture is not the only source of moral wisdom and knowledge for Catholic Social teaching. … Roman Catholicism has insisted on faith or scripture and reason, as exemplified in the natural law tradition.”

The use of scripture with tradition, in fact clashes in general with any literal interpretation of scripture that is fixed and unchangeable. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) declares that reliance on scriptures alone is insufficient. It does “not provide us

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104 Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching*, 30.

105 Ibid., 29-30.

106 Ibid., 40.

107 Ibid., 43.
with detailed answers to the specifics of questions we face today.” 108 Yet, scripture is the foundation and basis of all Catholic social thought. Its importance in discerning the fullness of faith-in-action cannot be underestimated.

A third liability of natural law theory rests with its indistinctness. What is meant by natural? Why is there so much disagreement about morality if there are universal moral principles discernible by all? Theologian, Richard Gula maintains that natural law assumes that universal moral norms of good and evil and the ability of human reason “to know and choose what is right.” 109 On the other hand, the diversity of ethno-socio-economic and religious backgrounds of human beings and the corresponding inequality in opportunity, begs the question as to how everyone can have equal insight into a universal moral law. Yet, the exemplar of reason said to inspire good human action, as distinguished under the heading of natural law to this day filters through the emergent methodologies of Catholic social teaching, starting with the Leonine and post-Leonine period.

3.9 Classicist Worldview: Pope Leo XIII - Pope Pius XII

The social teachings of this period are distinguished by a classicist worldview, focusing on the eternal and the unchanging which sees reality primarily as static, immutable and eternal, marked by objective order and harmony. 110 Starting with Leo XIII’s RV, primacy is given the episcopate in the ordering of the Church as the Pope addresses specifically all bishops of the world. Yet, Pius XI claims that in doing so, Leo in fact addressed himself “to

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the entire Church of Christ and indeed the whole human race.”\textsuperscript{111} Moreover, RN’s supplications for adequate wages and just working conditions for everyone, including other than Christians are based on reason and natural law. Natural law is universal as it applies to the entire human race, and is in itself the same for all.

The pontificate of Leo XIII marks a return to scholasticism. He reminds the world that true liberty cannot be attained separately from moral law. Referring to Aquinas, Leo affirms that “man should not consider his outward possessions as his own, but as common to all, so as to share them without difficulty when others are in need… It is a duty to give to the indigent out of what remains over.”\textsuperscript{112}

With Leo, the church embarks with caution, yet seeming openness to issues in the modern world. Recognizing that the evils of unrestrained capitalism found salvation in socialism, Leo fought both capitalism and socialism for affirming only the material dimension of the human being. He condemns the exploitation of workers by the wealthy, and moves social policy, prophecy and moral doctrine forward as “perennial moral principles to be applied to specific societal institutions.”\textsuperscript{113} Leo emphasizes that the role of the state is to promote social justice through the protection of rights, while the Church must speak out on social issues to ensure class harmony. He restates the Church’s long-standing teaching on the crucial importance of private property rights, but acknowledges that the free operation of market forces must be tempered by moral considerations:


\textsuperscript{112} Pope Leo XIII, \textit{Rerum Novarum}, # 2.

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

Leo’s vision of justice however does not progress at the same rate with his immediate successor, Pope Pius X. Pius puts the accent on Catholic truths opposed to modern agnosticim and the unchangeableness of the doctrines taught by Christ to His Apostles, and handed down by them to their successors. Twenty years later, except for his principle of subsidiarity offering a newer vision of the role of the state, the tenor of the Church as a juridical, hierarchical institution bespeaks the papacy of Pope Pius XI. He envisions that “all eyes … are turned to the Chair of Peter, to that sacred depository of all truth”. Still, QA takes the unprecedented step in appealing to the role of Catholic Action by advancing the importance of the laity, of working people working with their like, but in collaboration with and subject to the Church hierarchy.

While his successor, Pope Pius XII continues to affirm “the powers of the Apostles were passed on to the Pope and Bishops… the power to teach and govern belongs to

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115 Pope Pius X, *The Oath Against Modernism* (Rome: September 1, 1910), accessed Jan. 12, 2014, [http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius10/p10moath.htm](http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius10/p10moath.htm). The Oath condemns religious indifferentism, religious liberty and upholds as infallible, the teachings of Pius IX’s *Syllabus of Errors both of which deal with faith. Though not in and of itself a Magisterial document, the Syllabus of Errors is an important part of Church history. In issuing *Quanta Cura*, Pope Pius IX sought to condemn errors that were current to his time. The theological qualification of this encyclical is that in condemning doctrinal or moral errors, the Apostolic See is preserved by the Holy Spirit from error and *Quanta Cura* was concerned with condemning such errors. This oath was imposed on all seminarians before their ordination to the major orders, all professors of philosophy and theology in seminaries and universities, and all confessors, pastors, preachers and religious superiors.


117 Ibid., # 138.
in spite of this, he defines Catholic action as participation and collaboration of the laity in Church hierarchy. On the other hand, Pius rethinks the Church’s relationship with modernity and the role of the state itself. He foresees the role of the state as a necessary medium at the service of the human person, which must control, help, and regulate private and individual activities of national life in order that they may tend harmoniously toward the common good. Theologian, Stephen J. Pope notes that Pius gives a newer image to the dignity of the human person, pointing out that they “do not come from blood or soil… but from common human nature made in the image of God. The state [therefore] must be ordered to the Divine and not be treated as an end in itself.”

The Church as the papacies from Leo XIII to Pius XII decree is by divine will a hierarchical institution. In spite of their efforts to elevate and safeguard the pecking order of the Church’s juridical chain of command, Richard Gallairdetz maintains that their pontificates marked a shift in metaphors in attitude of the Church towards the world whereby “sheep/flock is replaced by cosmological design, … it is the task of the Church to see that the natural order of things, indeed all creation, fulfill its God-given end. [The defect of sin on

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121 Stephen J. Pope, “Natural Law in Catholic Social Teaching”, Himes et al., 52. CF. Pope Pius XII, *Summi Pontificatus*, # 35.
human rationality demanded] the guidance of the Church to assist the Divinely willed, cosmic order of things.”

This metaphorical shift anticipates a greater change to come with Vatican II. The convening of the twenty-first ecumenical council under Pope John XXIII, calls for a modernization of some church practices as a means of opening a dialogue with the world and wider spreading of the good news of the Gospel. Vatican II allows the papacy “to make greater use of natural law theory … [allowing for] more expansive claims to papal authority in the affairs of the world.”

3.10 Historical Consciousness: Pope John XXIII and Vatican II

The ultramontane mass Catholicism which had flourished for about a hundred years began to lose its durability with Vatican II. An entire chapter of Pope John XXIII’s *MM* is devoted to the “Reconstruction of Social Relationships in Truth, Justice and Love”. A year later, the pontiff convened the Second Vatican Council to bring the church into the modern world through the spirit of *aggiornamento* or “updating”. This spirit of change and open-mindedness for the Church prefigures *Pacem in Terris* (*PT*). Written after the Cuban missile crisis and at the height of the Vietnam and Cold Wars, Pope John XXIII’s encyclical moves the Church into the world arena, whereby the Church provides for the universal common good of the whole family. The encyclical marks the transition of the Church from a more

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123 Richard M. Gallairdetz, “The Ecclesiological Foundations of Modern Catholic Social Teaching”, 74.

highly authoritarian worldview to a more democratic one. PT maintains that love, truth, justice, charity, solidarity and freedom make civil society well-ordered, more beneficial to all while respecting human dignity.\(^{125}\)

In *PT*, the pontiff insists that love must motivate public authorities to protect and defend the human rights of everyone. Charles Curran maintains that the encyclical’s numerous references to “love” is a “substitution of solidarity for love”.\(^{126}\) The encyclical continues on a steady progression in recognizing the value of natural law; it further develops the concept of the legislator and law as participating in the eternal law and directing individuals towards the common good, therefore one’s own good. *PT* reaffirms that civil authority is essential for the good of society as “authority is before all else a moral force. For this reason the appeal of rulers should be to the individual conscience, to the duty which every man has of voluntarily contributing to the common good.”\(^{127}\)

Despite the intentions of the Church to reconcile the role of civil authority with the freedom and rights of individuals, to this day tensions between both continue to belabor the Church’s stance on the role of natural law, as an ordering of reason which should not be designed to coerce reasonable individuals into submission.\(^{128}\) More specifically, repeated tolerance of tyrannies and autocratic regimes questions if the world can survive on ethics

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\(^{125}\) Cf. Pope John XXIII, *Pacem In Terris*, #s 140 and 25. Chapter 3 especially distinguishes the values of truth, justice, solidarity and freedom to guide the relationships among states.


\(^{127}\) Pope John XXIII, *Pacem In Terris*, # 48.

\(^{128}\) I refer here to a world map heftily dotted with autocratic systems of government and regimes which oppress the lives of their citizens. Even in so-called free, democratic societies, there are more and more instances of governments allowing for massive ecological and environmental exploitation, resulting in such disasters as the decimation of Canada’s east coast fishery in the late twentieth century.
devised by human reason? The Nazi holocaust and the Rwandan genocide are examples of acts of evil which can be conceived of as a revolt against reason and goodness.

But hope prevails, as David Hollenbach points out that “out of that darkness [the Holocaust] arose the United Nations… and the promulgation of the Declaration of Human Rights articulating the dignity of the person as a normative standard to which all cultures and nations should be held accountable”.129 And it is in the shadow of the Holocaust and the height of the cold war that Vatican II emerges. The ecclesiological vision of the Council impels the need to recognize the cooperation of the clergy, religious and laity and other major world religions actively resolving to better the world, to fulfill the church’s mission on earth.

Vatican II marks the shift from a classicist to a historically conscious worldview,130 attentive to a world that is constantly changing and which invites investigation into the particularity of a situation to gain better understanding of it. The emphasis of GS on “signs of the times” and “needful solidarity” encourages a new spirit of openness for the Catholic Church to the world. The new historical consciousness based on the church’s own self-understanding is “linked with mankind and its history by the deepest bonds”.131 Chapter One entitled “The Dignity of the Human Person”, according to David Hollenbach is foundational as “the focus for the Church’s concern is in the social, economic, political and cultural domains.”132 This marks a move towards a greater appreciation of human dignity, hence, the freedom of people.

129 Hollenbach, “Commentary on Gaudium et Spes”, Himes et al., 267.

130 See Lonergan, Method in Theology, xi and xii.

131 Pope Paul VI, Gaudium et Spes, # 4 and 1.

132 Hollenbach, “Commentary on Gaudium et Spes”, Himes et al., 266.
Charles Curran, however estimates that *Dignitatis Humanae (DH)* is “the best illustration of historical consciousness at work in Vatican II.”\(^{133}\) Previous Catholic teaching including the writings of Leo condemned religious liberty. While “tolerated in some countries, … [religious liberty] could not be seen as a basic good.”\(^{134}\) Curran deems that the work of American theologian, John Courtney Murray S.J. proved a central influence to the writing of *DH*, as well as the thinking of Vatican II, itself. Although close to the classicist approach with respect to “unchangeable transtemporal principles”, in the late 1960’s, Murray began to employ Bernard Lonergan’s notion of historical consciousness to explain that “historical consciousness cannot accept the notion of truth as something that objectively exists out there apart from history and the subject, and expressed in unchangeable propositions. [Lonergan saw] the teachings on religious liberty and Vatican II precisely in terms of historical consciousness… [as] not only recognizing historical change but also involving differentiation in terms of historical consciousness”\(^{135}\).

The movement of the Church away from a more moralistic view towards society and the world at large, Curran nevertheless deems is best represented in *Octagesima Adveniens (OA)*. *OA* “best incorporates a historically conscious methodology” as it attends to the diversity of situations in which the Church finds itself today”.\(^{136}\) Pope Paul VI’s treatment of papal teaching authority is a significant departure from previous approaches of magisterial

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\(^{133}\) Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching*, 58.

\(^{134}\) Ibid., 58. Cf. *Quadragesimo Anno*, #s 41- 43.


\(^{136}\) Ibid.,58, 59 and 60.
teachings. The pontiff declares that it is the Spirit who is at work in Christian communities. He reminds that “on all the continents, among all races, nations and cultures, and under all conditions the Lord continues to raise up authentic apostles of the Gospel.” The “forward-looking” spirit of the letter, Curran maintains is centered on “the human person discovering himself or herself as a child of God in the midst of personal and historical struggle.” The apostolic letter ends with a call to shared responsibility, a call to action, and a realization of the pluralism of possible options.

The overall object of PP is to see the full flowering of people in support of the common good of all humanity. While Pope John Paul II continues to focus on the problems of humanity, where the key role of the Church is to be committed to work for the common good, Curran thinks that the emphasis on historical consciousness does not quite continue with his papacy.

3.11 Neo-Thomism: Post Vatican II (Pope John Paul II – Present)

The philosophical and theological teachings and writings of Pope John Paul II are characterized by explorations in phenomenology and personalism. His theology in part has been viewed also as neo-Thomistic expressions of doctrines, partially because of their dependence on Aquinas’s formulations as evidenced in Fides et Ratio. The encyclical, although not generally considered a social encyclical, attempts to reintegrate and raise up

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137 Pope Paul VI, Octagesima Adveniens, #2.
139 Curran, Catholic Social Teaching, 83. Cf. Octagesima Adveniens, #s 47-52
140 Pope Paul VI, Populorum Progressio, 76.
141 Curran, Catholic Social Teaching, 61.

Charles Curran, in contrast seems to see tensions between historical consciousness and the “neo-scholastic tradition” in which John Paul was trained.\footnote{Curran, \textit{Catholic Social Teaching}, 62-63.} Curran apparently uses the term neo-scholasticism synonymously with neo-Thomism. But neo-scholasticism seeks to restore the fundamental organic doctrines embodied in the scholasticism of the thirteenth century. It claims that philosophy does not vary with each passing phase of history; the truth of seven hundred years ago is still true today. For example, the great mediaeval thinker, Aquinas succeeded in constructing a sound philosophical system on the data supplied by the Greeks, especially by Aristotle. The Jesuit philosopher, Joseph Ricaby contends that even by the eighteenth century “the Scholastics … saw no possibility of any accommodation of the Scholastic philosophy and the new physical theories that were riveting the attention of the world”.\footnote{Joseph Rickaby, “Causes of the Decay of Scholasticism”, \textit{Scholasticism.}, Jacques Maritain Center. (New York: Dodge Publishing Company 1908): para. 4, accessed Oct. 19, 2014, \url{http://www3.nd.edu/Departments/Maritain/etext/scholas6.htm}.} Étienne Gilson posits that Thomism is by no means identical with scholasticism, but rather a revolt against it.

St. Thomas turned towards knowledge of the existing concrete given in sensible experience of the first causes of this existing concrete whether they be sensible or not. … Philosophy degenerates into scholasticism when instead of taking the existing concrete as object of its reflections to study [more deeply] it applies itself to the statements it is supposed to explain as if these statements and not what they shed light on were the reality itself.\footnote{Etienne Gilson, \textit{The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas}, (Indiana:University of Notre Dame Press, 1956), 366–367.}
In keeping with neo-Thomism, John Paul II continues to emphasize the dignity and integrity of the human person in light of the redemption of humankind through Christ. He points to the central doctrines of the Incarnation and the Redemption as first and foremost evidence of God’s love for humanity:

Man cannot live without love.... This is why Christ the Redeemer fully reveals man to himself so that anyone, no matter how weak, wishing to understand himself/herself must assimilate the whole of the reality of the Incarnation and Redemption in order to find himself. The Church's fundamental function in every age and particularly in ours is to point the whole of humanity towards the mystery of God, to help all men to be familiar with the profundity of the Redemption taking place in Christ Jesus. Thus the human person’s dignity itself becomes part of the content of that proclamation.\[147\]

This emphasis on the redemption may be seen as an attempt to reset the theological focus to interpret the Church as a radical community of witness. The assumption that the neo-scholastic method has become the de facto heart of the matter for Pope John Paul II particularly when taking into consideration, his reinterpretation of Catholic social teaching as a doctrine, deserves further discussion. Theologian, Johan Verstraeten claims that Pope John Paul in his social encyclicals leaves no doubt that the social teaching of the Catholic Church belongs “to the field … of theology and particularly of moral theology.”\[148\] Consequently, the pontiff’s perceived resistance to historical consciousness is more difficult to describe as a complete shift.

Charles Curran concurs that the social encyclicals of Pope John Paul II reflect a more “relational-responsibility” model; they are not a clear departure from the methodology

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employed by his immediate predecessors.\textsuperscript{149} He underscores \textit{SRS}’s stress on overcoming sin and the call to conversion which involves “a relationship with God… and hence to neighbor. \textit{Conversion} heightens our awareness of “the independence of all individuals and nations. [And where] solidarity constitutes the virtue that deals with this interdependence, it guides our relationships in the contemporary world.”\textsuperscript{150} Curran also draws attention to \textit{CA}’s emphasis on good and bad principles, warning that “if there is no transcendent truth … to which the human person achieves one’s full identity, then there is no sure principle for guaranteeing just relations between people. [This] indicates a deontological model at work.”\textsuperscript{151}

David Hollenbach meanwhile notes that the emphasis of \textit{LE} on the human right and duty to work is true to “Roman Catholic natural law tradition with its emphasis on the significance of the human experience and reason … as humans are seen as images of God though their possession of both reason and freedom, faculties which give them capacity for self-determination and moral responsibility”.\textsuperscript{152} Yet \textit{CA} by contrast seems not to interpret the role of the human being with the same degree of importance, stating that “man's true identity is only fully revealed to him through faith [and] it is precisely from faith that the church’s social teaching begins.”\textsuperscript{153}

Johan Verstraeten notes that Pope John Paul II repeatedly confirms that his teaching is “not dealing with the \textit{abstract} person, but with the real, concrete, historical person. [Yet the

\textsuperscript{149} Curran, \textit{Catholic Social Teaching}, 83-84.

\textsuperscript{150} Curran, \textit{Catholic Social Teaching}, 83-84.

\textsuperscript{151} Ibid 84-85. Cf. \textit{Centessimus Annus}, # 44.

\textsuperscript{152} David Hollenbach, \textit{Justice, Peace and Human Rights} (New York: Crossroad, 1988), 39 and 41. Cf. \textit{Laborem Exercens} #s 1,4, 6, 12, 14 and \textit{Gaudium et Spes}, #17.

\textsuperscript{153} Pope John Paul II, \textit{Centessimus Annus}, #54.
question remains]: “How can we ensure that the faith perspective does not end up as an abstract doctrine disconnected from real life, and therefore removed from the attainment of the common good”?\textsuperscript{154} This debate continues into the papacy of Pope Benedict XVI who “seeks to strengthen the way Catholic social teaching is rooted in the gospel, [emphasizing that] Christian love requires equal regard for all of one’s neighbors especially the poor.”\textsuperscript{155}

3.12 Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis I

Pope Benedict XVI’s \textit{CV} reiterates the coherence of Catholic social teaching while stressing the essential links between truth and charity and the real world. The encyclical upholds the human person’s inviolable dignity as well as the transcendent value of natural moral norms. By quoting from every social encyclical since Leo XIII’s \textit{RN}, Benedict refutes any misinterpretations of Catholic social teaching suggesting that there are two functional typologies, one pre-conciliar and one post-conciliar.\textsuperscript{156}

Benedict’s special deference to \textit{PP} in chapter two of \textit{CV} may be seen as an extended exercise in the hermeneutic of reform. In an address to the Roman Curia in 2005, the pontiff declared that Vatican II had to be interpreted through a “hermeneutic of reform, [rather than through a] hermeneutic of discontinuity and rupture.” The hermeneutic of discontinuity risks ending in a split between the pre-conciliar and post-conciliar Church.\textsuperscript{157}

The true spirit of Vatican II, according to Pope Benedict must be seen simply as a continuation of the Church’s tradition; the acts and the documents of the Council itself can

\textsuperscript{154} Johan Verstraeten, “Catholic Social Thought as Discernment”, 95
\textsuperscript{155} Hollenbach, “Caritas in Veritate”, 171.
only properly be interpreted in the light of tradition. That same principle guides his discussion of PP whereby he warns against drawing an incorrect conclusion from the connection between the encyclical and the Council:

The link between Populorum Progressio and the Second Vatican Council does not mean that Paul VI’s social magisterium marked a break with that of previous Popes, because the Council constitutes a deeper exploration of this magisterium within the continuity of the Church's life. In this sense, clarity is not served by certain abstract subdivisions of the Church’s social doctrine, which apply categories to Papal social teaching that are extraneous to it. It is not a case of two typologies of social doctrine, one pre-conciliar and one post-conciliar, differing from one another: on the contrary, there is a single teaching, consistent and at the same time ever new.158

David Hollenbach, notes that while Benedict is “seeking to tie together the social teaching of the Church… by linking it to love that is at the heart of Christian faith [CV has] contextual challenges”159 Hollenbach, for example claims that the way the U.S. Bishops intervened in the 2010 health care bill undercut the agenda of the encyclical. Despite the advice of Catholic health care officials and other authoritative voices in the Catholic community that “the legislation would not fund abortions”, the official Catholic position became consumed in the “abortion-related consequences of the legislation”, rather than health care insurance for masses of Americans. Hollenbach questions the “competence and charism of the episcopacy” to make such judgments.160 Such criticisms are also accorded Lumen Fidei (LF).

### 3.12.1 Francis I

LF, a work begun by Benedict and completed by Francis, focuses on the relationship

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158 Pope Benedict XVI, Caritas in Veritate, # 12.


between reason and faith, the Church’s role in the transmission of the faith, and the role faith plays in the building of societies in search of the common good. Spanish theologian, Juan Jose Tamayo critiques the encyclical for failing to

address the relationship between Christianity and liberation, faith and the struggle for justice, theological hope and commitment. … The poor do not appear in it, or liberation, or the option for the poor, which constitute the most genuine light of faith and are radical theological truths and ethical attitudes.¹⁶¹

Despite this deficiency, LF nonetheless stresses that faith is not only essential to the lives of Christians, but to society itself. Faith is communal and a gift that is shared. Faith contributes to the common good of society.¹⁶² Francis I’s Evangelii Gaudium (EG) incorporates the themes of his three predecessors: love, justice and peace. The joy of the Gospel is

God is love; our love for neighbor is a response to God’s love for us; God’s love never ceases to transform us; every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus for if we have received the love which restores meaning to our lives, how can we fail to share that love with others?”¹⁶³

While it would be premature to categorize the methodology of Francis as a shift, there is a striking change of tone in his approach. A predominant theme of EG is that the Church should live a love of preference for the poor. EG also bemoans that too many Christians are living and “acting as if God did not exist, making decisions as if the poor did not exist, setting goals as if others did not exist, working as if people who have not received the Gospel did not exist.”¹⁶⁴ Francis appeals to simplicity which is not some romantic retreat from the


¹⁶² Pope Francis I, Lumen Fidei, #54.

¹⁶³ Pope Francis I, Evangelii Gaudium, #s 11, 12, 24, 162, 120 and 8.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., #80.
reality of a technological age. His hope is for a clear way of thinking that immobilizes the desire for wealth and domination present within large sectors of the population, such that cultures of the common good will rise up and flourish. He presents the image of the three dimensional, flat faced, straight edged polyhedron with sharp corners or vertices as symbolic of globalization.

Here our model is not the sphere, which is no greater than its parts, where every point is equidistant from the centre, and there are no differences between them. Instead, it is the polyhedron, which reflects the convergence of all its parts, each of which preserves its distinctiveness.  

These seemingly obscure set of symbols and metaphors actually make sense when referring to the emergence of a diverse international network of economic, political and religious systems. They bring into question the very presumptions and worldview of a western world bespeaking a pure and homogeneous sense of well-being that they are not only a part of a whole; they are the whole. The reality is disparity. For example, the sense of despair arising from the loss of the world’s largest fishery and the disaffection with the centers of power associated with it, fail to correspond to the ideological image of the sphere. The challenging task, therefore of moving toward a newer, more enlightened, more experienced understanding of the common good must continue to be pursued in a so-called global commons beset with growing inequality, unfairness and injustice.

3.13 CONCLUSION

While Catholic social teaching has struggled to define the common good, the notion of common good nevertheless includes as an essential element the greatest possible development of human beings united for the benefit of each other and all God has created. The principle of the common good with its distinct value on love justice, equality, respect for

165 Pope Francis I, *Evangelii Gaudium*, # 236.
the dignity of the human person, predisposition to solidarity and the human rights of workers, and centrality given to community, is pivotal to the Church’s social teachings.

Where the foundation of these teachings is the life of Jesus Christ and the Church’s response to events in history, this gift of our faith tradition is largely a response to challenges that have faced people in history. These teachings are ever-dynamic as they develop and change over time in order to speak with relevance to the “signs of the times.”\textsuperscript{166} The historical dimension, must always be kept in mind, given the requirements of the common good are intimately related to the social conditions prevailing at various times.\textsuperscript{167} Since these conditions are subject to recurring change, the requisites and descriptions of the common good change with them.

The Church’s social teachings deepened by the great commandments to love God, self, and neighbor are pivotal to the Church’s own self-understanding. Catholic social teaching as an expression of the gospel message aims to foster a living faith that moves the Church as the “people of God” to loving action on behalf of the common good. In 2013, Pope Francis pressed Novices, Seminarians and Those Discerning Their Vocation to “risk activism [warning that] relying too much on structures, is an ever-present danger. If we look toward Jesus… the more the mission calls you to go out to the margins of existence with no ‘purse, no bag, no sandals’ (Lk 10:4).”\textsuperscript{168} A Church moved by this spirit of aggiornamento, committed to reading the signs of the times and actively engaging in the needs of the world will be reflected on in David Hollenbach’s reinterpretation of the notion of the common good.

\textsuperscript{166} Pope Paul VI, \textit{Gaudium et Spes}, # 4.
\textsuperscript{167} Ibid., # 78.
in Christian ethics. Hollenbach’s vision of a more revitalized common good, which has profound implications for the role of the Church in the diverse world of today, will be addressed in Chapter Four.
Chapter Four

David Hollenbach and the Common Good Reinterpreted

4.0 Introduction

This Chapter focuses on David Hollenbach’s reinterpretation of the common good in Catholic social tradition. A revisionist theologian, his writings enlarge on the understanding of the common good with respect to Church, community and the contemporary urban and global social divisions that lessen potential for more stable community life. Hollenbach’s common good hermeneutic pursues broader understandings of the notion of the common good that reach beyond narrow, definitive, static interpretations.¹ His reinterpreted common good allows all people, regardless of ethnicity, socio-economic background, and religion or clime open access to justice, peace, equality, mutual sharing and mutual respect. In an economically, socially, ethnically and religiously pluralistic society, Hollenbach anticipates a common good of today, in which the church plays a more participatory lead role. Given that Vatican II teaches that we are all part of the one body in Christ (Rom.5:12) and as Church, we, the people of God are sent on a mission, Hollenbach perceives the Church’s role as an innovator, guardian and advocate of the common good in the public sphere, while remaining “faithful to its own true identity and respecting all its fellow citizens.”²

This chapter consists of three parts: Part A, Part B and Part C. Part A concentrates on the contributions Hollenbach brings to common good reinterpretation in light of history and challenges in understanding the common good in Catholic social tradition. Part B examines

¹ Hollenbach, The Common Good and Christian Ethics, 50.
Hollenbach’s recognition of the centrality of community to the common good. Part C concentrates on Hollenbach’s reinterpretation of the spiritual, prophetic and public role of the Church as “the people of God”.³

PART A: DAVID HOLLENBACH’S REINTERPRETATION OF THE COMMON GOOD IN CATHOLIC SOCIAL TRADITION.

4.1 Revisionsist Approach to Interpreting the Common Good

Hollenbach’s approach to reinterpreting the common good is considered to fall largely within the category of revisionist ethics, a philosophy emerging from a historically-conscious worldview.⁴ Moral theologian, Richard Gula notes that emphasis on historical consciousness sees the world of reality as marked by progressive growth or decline. Reality, in this way of thinking is dynamic, evolving, historical and ever-developing.⁵

Revisionism, philosophically formulates a norm grounded in reason and experience for determining the objective rightness or wrongness of an act. This criterion often called proportionate reason designates the revisionist school as proportionalist. Revisionist or proportionalist thinking provides a norm or proportionate reason for resolving cases of conflict in moral judgments when two moral norms conflict.⁶ Proportionate reason functions as a standard for moral judgment in determining whether a non-absolute norm applies in a particular situation. The method assesses the proportion of morally good against the

³ Pope Paul VI, Gaudium et Spes, # 1. See also Hollenbach, The Common Good and Christian Ethics, 98, 107-109, 147 – 154.


proportion of morally wrong in a particular act. With the view to the good, the object is to achieve the balance between the greatest proportion of good and evil.  

Proportionalism relates morality to some aspects of human fulfillment, namely, to the goods of persons which are affected by human actions. Proportionalists hold that the fulfillment of persons has to search for what is morally good. Moral goodness is a dimension of human goodness. In other words, moral fulfillment is part of total human fulfillment. In support of proportionalism, Richard McCormick says “the rule of Christian reason, if we are governed by the ordo bonorum [the basic human goods] is to choose the lesser evil.”

While proportionalist reasoning intends to lessen the damage and capitalize on the benefits to persons, it does not try to rationalize morally wrong actions by a good intention. Proponents of this method advocate that if the object of the act is wrong, this act cannot be justified morally. For example, although the major institutions, namely industry and governments were culpable for the excessive exploitation of the marine life in the Newfoundland and Labrador coastal waters in the late twentieth century, proportionalist would approve interventions to allay further socio-ecological-environmental harm to these fishing grounds and its dependent communities. Hence, acceptable to proportionalists is DFO’s 1992 decision to suspend fishing cod in these waters, so as to rebuild the stocks and

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Classical moral theology recognizes the right “to choose the lesser evil”. If someone assumes they do not have a morally right option (including delaying choosing) their conscience is confused. There must be a morally right possibility to allow a person struggling with discerning to do right, to avoid choosing what seems morally wrong, and choose what seems to be the lesser moral evil. See also Bernard Haring, The Law of Christ: Moral Theology for Priests and Lait, Transl., Edwin G. Kaiser, CPP.S (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1961), 1:156. “Choose the Lesser Evil” opts for the “rule of Christian reason”. Christian reason aims to guide the forming of a proper conscience by comparing nonmoral evils, not counsel an erroneous conscience to minimize moral evil when it is wrongly regarded as inevitable. The principle of double effect counsels that a good effect is not achieved by means of an evil effect.
ultimately avert the complete eradication of the species. Despite the more immediate massive job loss and imminent economic hardships, the good intention is to preserve the morally good - suspension of fishing - for the sake of the overall good.

Australian moral theologian, Brian Lewis explains that proportionalism as a basic criterion of morality and of all proper social policy is for the good of the human person. The ‘good’ in question” is

relational in meaning, signifying initially what is good for me (the person acting), and ultimately what is good for persons (myself and others). Accordingly, a course of action is to be judged as morally right or wrong according to how it advances or diminishes the genuine good of persons, both the person acting and others who will be affected by that action, or, in other words, insofar as it is humanising or dehumanising for all involved.10

Revisionist theology, rooted in Catholic moral tradition deals with the historical person in historically particular circumstances. Emphasizing responsibility and actions appropriate to changing times, it is concerned with “defending and adjudicating theological truth-claims by means of publicly warrantable criteria.”11 Consistent with revisionist theology and the historical-conscious worldview, Hollenbach’s methodology is “in part inductive. [He] presents some aspects of the cultural situation that suggest we need to bring the idea of the common good back into contemporary discourse and make it usable again.”12

Emphasizing experience while seeing everything as part of a dynamic whole that can be grasped a little at a time from our limited perspective, he addresses contemporary issues of

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9 See Yetman, “The Catholic Church and the Fishery Crisis”, 25
12 Hollenbach, The Common Good and Christian Ethics, xiv
the common good. Hollenbach employs social analysis, moral philosophy and theological ethics as he suggests new directions in urban, rural and global society.

Influenced by his experiences in urban United States and Kenya, Africa, he cautions that many global problems plead for a move “from the brute fact of the world’s growing interdependence to a greater sense of moral dependence and solidarity.” Hollenbach opens up the interpretation of the common good to belong not only to Catholic social tradition but also to the wider realm of Christian ethics, as the title to his key text on the common good suggests. Robin Gill notes that “Hollenbach emphatically does not believe that Churches and their theologians should address their concerns only to fellow Christians”.  

In an ever-expanding religious and culturally pluralistic society and world, Hollenbach warns that “diversity of the good life makes it difficult or even impossible to attain a shared vision of the common good.” He cautions against making the claim that what the Church has taught traditionally holds exactly the same meaning that we would have for it today:

The complexity of emerging world realities is leading many communities to seek reaffirmation of the distinctive traditions that set them apart from others… Thus, we face a paradox: attaining a vision of the global common good is increasingly problematic precisely at the historical moment.

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15 Ibid., xii.

16 Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, 9, 24-25, 32, 122, 123, 131, 152ff. While pursuing a united vision of the common good, could risk neglecting or even coercing the values of other religions or traditions, Hollenbach demonstrates that even with these challenges, he hopes that a Christian communal emphasis on human nature, interrelatedness of human beings to each other and the approach of “dialogic universalism” can greatly contribute to a shared national and global vision of the common good.

For this reason, John Courtney Murray figures largely in Hollenbach’s discourse on the common good. Murray’s writings provide a prism through which to visualize how Vatican II created the environ for rethinking the Church’s doctrinal heritage, validating the common good as the basis for social justice.

4.1.1 Hollenbach’s Methodology and the Influence of John Courtney Murray

John Courtney Murray S.J. earmarks the outward-looking spirit of *aggiornamento* adopted by Vatican II as programmatic for the future; it redefines the Church’s mission in the temporal order in terms of the realization of human dignity, promotes the rights of the human being, the growth of the human family towards unity, and the sanctification of the secular activities of this world.\(^{18}\) Twenty years prior to Vatican II, Murray contended that to bring about social justice “organized cooperation among all people especially Christians was necessary…. This cooperation would be a blending of civic and religious realms: it pursues the civic goal of the common good in the social, economic and political arena based on the religious motivation of faith in God and love of God’s Law.”\(^{19}\)

Hollenbach further elaborates that Vatican II’s openness to Murray’s thought is reflective of the “Church’s willingness to learn from secular society as well as its readiness to recognize that this learning could enrich its own tradition.”\(^{20}\) This marks a move from the way of thinking of the pre-conciliar Church. As principal contributor to *Dignitatis Humanae (DH)*, Murray points out that the significance of the conciliar achievement was not simply to


\(^{19}\) Krier Mich, *Catholic Social Teaching and Movements*, 111.

put to rest the notion of “the Catholic state,” but to situate the church-state question within
the broader framework of a theological statement of the Church’s role in the world. Both
GS and DH legitimatized

the local church as a social actor. [This] changed the public posture of the Church in
the world from the papacy to the parish. [In the social teachings from RN through to
PT] social ministry was understood (or tolerated) as an extension of the Church’s life,
but not always seen as decisively something of the Church’s nature.

Given this new perspective of Church, Hollenbach draws on Bernard Lonergan’s
reflection on the shift from the old theology to the new theology with its accompanying shift
from the classicist worldview to one marked by historical consciousness. Historical
consciousness, John Courtney Murray maintains, affects “the emergence of new doctrinal
approaches - new approaches formulated in the phrase ‘changing states in the questions’, that
are simply not deductions from or clarifications of previous doctrinal declarations.”

As he anticipates the role religion should play in defending and adjudicating the interests of the
common good, Hollenbach points out that Murray’s understanding of religious freedom is
informed by Lonergan’s descriptive phrase “‘classicism designates a view of truth which
holds objective truth, precisely because it is the objective to exist ‘already out there now’ (to
use Bernard Lonergan’s descriptive phrase). Therefore, it also exists apart from its possession

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22 J. Bryan Hehir, “Church-State and Church-World: The Ecclesiological Implications”, CTSA

Research Institute of Regis College, 1974), 55-67. See also Lonergan “Dimensions of Meaning”, Collected
Works of Bernard Lonergan: Collection, Vol. 4. eds. Frederick Crowe S.J. and Robert M. Doran S.J. (Toronto:
Lonergan Research Institute of Regis College, 1993), 232-245.

24 J. Leon Hooper S.J., Ed. Bridging the Sacred and the Secular: Selected Writings of John Courtney
by anyone.”

Hollenbach affirms that “any development in the understanding of Christian life that might be legitimate is limited to changing historical circumstances.” He explores at length the “notion of the common good in a way that could speak to both Christian believers and to citizens at large.”

Given that Murray’s major efforts in the aftermath of Vatican II was to help the Church navigate its way in a world of religious pluralism, Hollenbach corroborates Murray’s thought that the Church must be “influential in …. engagement in public life.”

On the other hand, Hollenbach’s vision for the post-Vatican II Church is subject to accusations of relativism. Revisionist theologians have been accused of moral relativism, implying that all our truths are relative to a historical context or point. They are criticized for not adequately explaining what it means to say that Christian beliefs are really true. In some quarters, they have been disregarded as being idealists, of looking towards what might be, rather than anticipating the practical dimensions of problems.

But as Richard Gula explains:

since proportionalism respects the relational character of reality, it is a form of relativism. But it is not relative to the sense of being arbitrary. It is relative in the sense that the intention and circumstances, or all the objectively given aspects which make up the total meaning of the action, are relevant to the morality of the action. To hold to such a content of morality is not equivalent to relativism.

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Any wrong action requires specification of conditions and context before assessing or rendering judgment on it. But adhering to these requirements “do not make proportionalists relativists.” Given the inevitable conflict among principles in a pluralistic society, Tom L. Beauchamp and James F. Childress attempt to balance the moral principles of respect for autonomy, beneficence and nonmaleficence. They offer a “common morality” theory or set of socially sanctioned norms “that all morally serious persons share.” The common morality theory brings into common parlance the principles of autonomy and beneficence. Autonomy upholds respect for persons and individual self-determination. Beneficence maintains one should help others further their important and legitimate interests or their good. Failure to act to benefit others could put a person in the way of harm as it discounts the moral principle of nonmaleficence, that is to cause no harm to others.

The moral requisite of these “principles and rules from considered judgments” is to seek coherence through a process of reflective equilibrium. Judgments can be made reflecting on how best to prioritize or balance competing moral principles. Reasoned judgments about what is to be done are evaluative in character. To make truth claims requires weighing up the good and the necessary evil caused by the action. The discernment needed to choose the right course of action helps further develop natural law theory.

4.2 Natural Law and Tradition

The place of natural law in relation to the proportionalist method of constructing ethical theory adds force to Hollenbach’s belief that “Christian ethics and theology can set people on guard against some of the greatest temptations of a new globalizing world”. Hence,

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33 Ibid., 120-126.
his view that “the idea of the common good is an idea whose time has once again come [to which the] Christian community can deliver”\textsuperscript{34}, has merit in dealing with present-day issues that affect the dignity and rights of all people. As he attempts to reconcile the long tradition of Catholic social teaching with modern day discourse on the common good, Hollenbach emphasizes natural law as an inductive and historically contextualized approach to help understand what promotes human flourishing.

He draws on Aquinas and the Church Fathers to speak to current social needs. He admits, however that the homogeneity of the Thomistic approach to the common good may be too restrictive for the issues confronting today’s pluralistic society:

\begin{quote}
We cannot simply invoke Aristotle or Aquinas for solutions to our problems. Their world was vastly different from ours and one hopes we have actually learned something from intervening centuries. But to dismiss entirely such ancient conceptions of the common good may foreclose possibilities we cannot afford to ignore.\textsuperscript{35}
\end{quote}

That said, Hollenbach emphasizes that the contributions of Augustine and Aquinas have been crucial to the undertaking of the common good in Catholic social tradition. He argues that

\begin{quote}
a retrieval of their thought can also address fears about the possible impact of the religious promotion of the common good that are based on some of the behaviour of the Roman Catholic Community in the past. … The aim is to draw on them in the interest of a Christian theological approach to the common good in a free pluralistic society.\textsuperscript{36}
\end{quote}

Hollenbach employs the Thomistic natural law approach as part of his methodology. Given that the basis of natural law is the rational and social nature of the human being and

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{34} Hollenbach, \textit{The Common Good and Christian Ethics}, 243.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 60-61.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 120.
\end{quote}
natural law is God’s law and is based on human nature, the foundational aspects of the common good in his estimation are derived from natural law. Thomas Aquinas maintained the ultimate good of all creatures, the full common good is good. “The term ‘good’ refers only to God who perfects all things and is the perfection of all things.” Hollenbach thus construes that since humans are created in the imago dei, they “achieve their ultimate fulfillment-their good-only by being united with God, a union which also unites them to each other and indeed with the whole created order, [consequently] God’s own goodness … is the good of the whole universe.”

Hollenbach follows Jacques Maritain in believing that at the heart of issues of the common good is reason. Maritain’s conception that the “human being’s personality by nature tends to communion” affirms Aquinas’s understanding of the “analagical nature of the common good … the true good of persons is communion with other persons, realized fully and only in God”. Hollenbach follows that

the human good is both like the divine good of full communion and love, but also different from the divine good because of the finitude and incompleteness of temporal existence. The terrestrial common good of human society is thus analogous to the full communion of the Trinity and to the full union of God and neighbor that Christians hold will be a gift of Divine grace in Heaven.

4.2.1 Common Good: Natural Law and Human Dignity

Hollenbach is firm in his determination that human dignity can only contain meaning if it is applied to concrete and existential settings of existing human beings. His writings

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37 DeCrane, *Aquinas Feminism and the Common Good*, 50.
advocate for integrating the transcendental worth of human persons with their existential response to their particular, socio-cultural and political settings. He argues that, “unless the relationship between the transcendental worth of persons and particular human freedoms, needs, and relationships can be specified in greater detail, the notion of human dignity will remain an empty notion.”\textsuperscript{41}

Hollenbach affirms the primacy of the dignity of the human person as a principle of moral and political legitimacy. He distinguishes as doctrines of faith, the transcendence of the person over the world of things, and the human person as created in the image of God and redeemed by Christ.\textsuperscript{42} He claims that these doctrines “illuminate the overall human experience and are themselves illuminated by such experience.”\textsuperscript{43}

While upholding the dignity of the human person, Hollenbach argues that there is still a conflict in the “center of the human person and Christian theology calls it sin.”\textsuperscript{44} He is critical of PT’s conviction that “freedom and intelligence are images of the divine in human beings. … Such an interpretation of the ethical implications of the \textit{imago dei} fails to recognize the depth of human brokenness, sin and the need for redemption.”\textsuperscript{45} The sin of alienation afflicting our world runs “counter to the structures of human existence as created by God. [It] is not simply the result of individual choice. It is embedded in the economic and social institutions of human communities.”\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{41} Hollenbach, \textit{Justice, Peace and Human Rights}, 96.

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 96.


\textsuperscript{44} Hollenbach, \textit{Justice, Peace and Human Rights}, 217.

\textsuperscript{45} Hollenbach, \textit{Claims in Conflict}, 110.

\textsuperscript{46} Hollenbach, \textit{Justice, Peace and Human Rights}, 58.
Hollenbach’s conviction that “reason alone is incapable of discovering the actual
demands of human dignity,” in my judgment, would have more fluidity with the help of
Bernard Lonergan’s intentionality analysis. In our pluralistic, individualistic world, the
natural law theory ostensibly needs the clarity Lonergan’s transcendental precepts offer: be
attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable and be responsible. Lonergan teaches that it is through
self transcending questioning that we come to know what really is true and what truly is good
as opposed to that which only seems to be true or is only apparently good. It is only by being
attentive to our experience, intelligent in understanding that experience, reasonable in
judging whether our understanding is correct, and responsible in judging whether something
is truly of value, and proceeding to act on those values that we human subjects transcend
ourselves, create ourselves and our world. These precepts, by “grace” can only enable
human beings to co-operate in transforming the estrangement suffered through original sin
and “find healing, redeeming and emancipating action in the redemption offered by Christ.”
The more the Christian believer is oriented towards God, the more “their reality will shape all
other perceptions of human existence and interrelationships.”

### 4.2.2 Delineating the Common Good

Hollenbach’s common good hermeneutic widens as the classical conscious approach
gives way to historically conscious thinking. He crafts a notion of a common good as being
able to articulate a minimal set of goods that can and must be pursued together, despite the
fact that human beings do not agree about every good to be pursued in this life. His
reenvisioned common good can only be realized in aspects of lived life such that the societal

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47 Hollenbach, *Claims in Conflict*, 110.
consciousness can grow in these aspects. He argues for four goods that a pluralistic society can pursue together. These are:

[First], mutual respect as a shared or common good… that is realized when the members of a society share in creating their life together; [second, a relational autonomy as in the right to] self-determination which is participation in communal give and take but always responding to and interacting with others. [In this case, people act morally, solely for the sake of doing good and independently of other incentives]; [third] the good of relationships with others as an a priori condition of the good of the self such that the common good a realization of the human capacity for intrinsically valuable relationships [is] not only a fulfillment of the needs and deficiencies of the individual; [and fourth], friendship where the intrinsic good is realized [through] the co-operative action of citizens determining how they will live together. 51

Hollenbach takes these four goods and distinguishes the common good from a good that has the unity of an aggregate “general welfare”, as well as from goods that are deemed “public” only insofar as they bear upon the well-being and rights of the individual and “public interest”. 52 Common goods, he believes, are always rooted in the sociality of society. “A key aspect of the sociality of society, the common good, can be described as the good of being in a community.” 53

Hollenbach’s common good presumes a social, well developed interaction with others in community. This invokes a revisiting of long held meanings and interpretations of the common good. His offering of the discipline of “intellectual solidarity… the active engagement of listening and speaking with others whose beliefs and traditions are different” opens people up to see one another’s perspective. 54 The shared vision of intellectual solidarity facilitates interpretive processes that help people make sense of what constitutes the good in their world.

51 Hollenbach, The Common Good and Christian Ethics, 70, 77, 78, 81, 83, 84 and 85, and Chapter 3 “The Eclipse of the Public”, 3-22.
52 Ibid., 7, 8 and 9.
53 Ibid., 9.
54 Ibid., 158.
4.2.3 Tolerance and Intellectual Solidarity

Intellectual solidarity encourages dialogue as to shared commitment about the nature of the good, its application to the civil community and how the good is shared and shareable by all people. This, Hollenbach deems “is the key to the dynamism needed to rise above mere tolerance.”\(^{55}\) In the face of increasing pluralism, Hollenbach points to the paradox in the tendency to tolerate in Western culture. While he is clear that tolerance of itself is a social good, as it gives humans confidence to develop different perspectives and ways of thinking, and keeps us open to the possibility of adding options to our account of living; he is worried that “tolerance, that is, non-interference in the lives of others can result in the loss of a genuine public.”\(^{56}\)

For this reason, he contends that the existence of social problems calls for more than tolerance. For example, given institutionally structured patterns that exclude them, the poor and marginalized worldwide do not become better off if we simply leave them alone. Where our current culture of ‘tolerance’ does little to protect the weak against the strong, Hollenbach warns that this “liberalism of wariness and toleration…is a way of avoiding rather than addressing many of the problems we face today.”\(^{57}\) The existence of social problems calls for “real engagement with those who hold different visions of the good life. [He asks] could deliberation about how we should live together be mutually enriching and lead to a better public life for all?”\(^{58}\) His idea of intellectual solidarity nevertheless does not imply that all views are equally true or false. He explains that intellectual solidarity suggests that the pursuit of truth is worth the arduous task of disciplined conversation. It can provide a

\(^{55}\) Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, 158.
\(^{56}\) Ibid., 3-22.
\(^{57}\) Ibid., 58.
\(^{58}\) Ibid., 32.
“framework” that highlights the possibility of truly public deliberation and gives direction to
the specific considerations that take place there.  

But despite overtures to adapt Catholic social tradition’s notion of the common good
to a globalized world, Hollenbach still wrestles with defining the common good in the
context of the gospel message for today’s world. As M. Shawn Copeland writes: “The phrase
common good refers to one of the more troublesome and provocative notions of problems
and ideas which have preoccupied political thought from classical antiquity to the present.”  

4.3 Challenges in Defining the Common Good

Hollenbach points out that the definition of the common good provided in GS is not
original as it is “taken from Mater et Magistra; it “does not sufficiently stress the relational
aspects of the common good; the definition places too much emphasis on the individual
rights of each person and seems to divide the common good among individuals, rather than
uniting people through participation in a shared good.” This same criticism, however does
not appear in his earlier Commentary on Gaudium et Spes where he claims

that the stress on the common good for the meaning of justice flows directly from the
council’s position that we need to transcend ‘individualistic morality’; [it] calls for an
ethic that stresses active solidarity and enables all persons to participate in the life of
the human community in ways that befit their human dignity. … GS launched the
Roman Catholic Church on a new path in its involvement and social and political
affairs [and provides] insight into how the Christian community can combine fidelity
to a particularistic vision of the human good rooted in the gospel.  

59 Ibid., 45.
60 M. Shawn Copeland, “Reconsidering the Idea of the Common Good”, Oliver F. Williams and John
W. Houck, eds., Catholic Social Thought and the New World Order: Building on One Hundred Years (Notre
Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press,1993), 310.
61 David Hollenbach, e-mails to author , April 20, 2012 and July 2, 2012. See also Pope John XXII,
Mater et Magistra, # 20.

62 Hollenbach, “Commentary on Gaudium et Spes”, Himes et al., 281 and 271. See also The Common
Good and Christian Ethics, 156.
Even though Hollenbach faults GS’s definition of the common good, he, himself admits that he does not offer a clear and concise definition of the term. Most of his reflections seem to favour the philosophical and empirical while engaging a preponderance of theological, ethical and empirical evidence to render meaning to the common good, as he turns to the Catholic social encyclicals to illuminate, envisage and imagine the idea of healthy relationships as the essence of the common good.

In deference to SRS, Hollenbach urges western society to sense, perceive and embrace the virtue of solidarity as love of neighbour, instead of yielding to rugged individualism. He advocates for working together to create economic and social structures to overcome the gap between the rich and the poor. On the other hand, he questions whether CV’s “understanding of the relation of love is adequate enough to aid in the understanding of the norms of justice. [In developing countries] greater emphasis on love as equal regard and mutual relationship would strengthen [its] practical approach to world poverty.”

Where Hollenbach looks to Catholic social tradition and teachings for inspiration on the common good, Christopher Lind senses that he “takes for granted that our understanding of the common good can develop over time.” But that the notion of the common good inevitably develops as it alters and varies with time and circumstances is substantiated historically. The ever evolving metaphoric reading of language and experiences has led to ruminating over, reliving, and reinterpreting the common good in human society.

63 Hollenbach, e-mail to author, April 20, 2012.

64 This theme is developed in considerable detail in The Common Good and Christian Ethics.

65 Hollenbach, Caritas in Veritate, 177-178 and 171.

4.3.1 Reconstructed Vision of the Common Good

Despite the different expressions of the understanding of the common good, arising throughout history, Hollenbach’s theological discourse on the common good has currency and durability, with his emphasis on the Christian imperative to love. His writings enlarge on love as the key to the interdependency between the human good and divine goodness: “The true good of persons is communion with other persons, not something that can be enjoyed in solitude. The good is realized completely only in God. God is supremely personal, for God is the supreme exemplar of love and communion. God is love. (1 Jn. 4:8).”

To feel and experience love, in Hollenbach’s vision is to extend an unconditional hand of friendship that loves when not loved back, that gives without getting, and that looks for what is best in and for others.

Hollenbach’s re-reflection on the common good in light of issues, local and universal facing the world today is driven largely by his concern for the fate of the common good articulated in Catholic social tradition with roots in Thomas Aquinas and later echoed by Ignatius Loyola. The interpretation of the common good for many Christians emerges from their own cultural repertoire to incarnate their response to God. The necessity to make the spiritual present in their lives, nevertheless leads the way to interpreting the common good as meant to represent the good of the greater whole. No vision of the common good is completely transcendent; nor is it exclusive to the society or culture in question.

Hollenbach, for this reason suspects that today the traditional notion of the common good “is in trouble”, given the varying public expressions of the common good made freely

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68 Ibid., 4-6, 9, 12-13, 24, 60, 68, 120, 123, 129-132, , 134-135, 149-150, 191-193 and 197.
available in a pluralistic society. To support his claim, he cites John Rawls who fears that the Aristotelian, Thomistic and Ignatian vision of the common good “is no longer a political possibility for those who accept the constraints of liberty and toleration of democratic institutions. … The pluralism of the contemporary world makes it difficult to envision a social good agreeable to one and all.”

Though, political theorist Michael Sandal counters that “we can know a good in common that we cannot know alone.” Hollenbach, however maintains that this point of view would have more fecundity if social media had a truly appreciable experience of social unity, which values the existing bonds of social connection. He argues that a “positive experience of social interdependence enables persons to learn from one another, thus giving rise to the understanding of a good life that could not be envisioned apart from these connections.”

Hollenbach attempts to revitalize the traditional understanding of the common good by advocating for open access to the common good in spite of many elements in local and international society militating against this approach. He urges that the common good be explored and adapted for an age in which pluralism and globalism are here to stay: “The Golden Rule … stresses the reciprocity of moral obligation and can surely be understood in ways that imply reciprocal duties towards all one’s fellow human beings.”

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Hollenbach rethinks the ancient tradition of the common good, warranting that social and cultural situations necessitate the need to bring the common good back into contemporary discourse and make it usable again. He advances an understanding of the common good that can lead to better lives in rural and urban economies and globally. He is convinced that the increasingly international scope of human interdependence “generates obligations of justice that reach across borders that call for newer manifestations of global solidarity.”

He contends that such an ordering of a society could recover “an active social commitment to the common good [which] is a critical element in serious efforts to reduce poverty and advance economic justice.” A community respecting different preferences, beliefs, sharing resources, recognizing needs and taking risks for the sake of their common good, is vital to his common good rethought.

PART B: DAVID HOLLENBACH AND THE CENTRALITY OF COMMUNITY IN THE COMMON GOOD

4.4 Common Good and Community

Hollenbach’s understanding of the common good in Catholic social teaching distinguishes a community which emphasizes respect for the communal nature and dignity of all human beings. The health and stability of community is contingent on the human right of each and every person to live in dignity in the human family. He is adamant that any good of a person that is a real good … is embedded in the good of community [for]
a good community is a place where people are genuinely interdependent on each other, through their participation in, discussion concerning, and the decision-making about their common purposes. It is a place where people make decisions together

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74 Hollenbach, “Commentaries on Gaudium et Spes”, Himes et al., 280.
75 Hollenbach, The Common Good and Christian Ethics, 173.
about the kind of society they want to live in together. It is a community that goes beyond tolerance to the pursuit of the common good.\textsuperscript{76}

In community, human beings are in communion with God. At the heart of community lies the mystery of the Trinity, in which everyone shares by “our incorporation into the body of the incarnate Son.”\textsuperscript{77} Where the hypostases of the Trinity have one divine nature, their one essence ‘ousia’ can be thought of in loving relationship, thus emphasizing God as an inherently social being. Because human beings are created in the \textit{imago dei}, Hollenbach maintains that human likeness to the Trinity “is their capacity for relationships to love, mutual communion and solidarity. ... The terrestrial common good is thus analogous to the full communion of the Trinity and full communion with God and neighbour.”\textsuperscript{78}

His common good hermeneutic is not limited to local, homogeneous considerations. “In its full global reach [the common good] involves commitment to community that is universal in scope, and that takes the differences among people and cultures with the full seriousness they deserve.”\textsuperscript{79} Citing Pope John Paul II, he anticipates that the birth pangs of globalization point to the “need for a solidarity which will take up interdependence and transfer it to a moral plane.”\textsuperscript{80}

Where the human person can only be viewed in relationship to others, Hollenbach resolves that even if in the minority, they are entitled to participate in the shared life of the community; the individual pursuit of good things can not only benefit the individual but also the community itself. The end, he concludes is something for the community to strive for; it

\begin{footnotes}
\item[76] Ibid., 79 and 42.
\item[77] Clifford Kossel, “Global Community and Subsidiarity”, McCann and Miller, 37.
\item[78] Hollenbach, \textit{The Common Good and Christian Ethics}, 130 and 132.
\item[79] Ibid., 239.
\item[80] Ibid.,220. Cf. \textit{Solicitudo Rei Socialis} , #26.
\end{footnotes}
sets a model of good pursuits for the individuals within it; the call to act in solidarity is a personal and human vocation coming from God.  

4.4.1 Solidarity in Community

Hollenbach reinforces Aquinas’ thought, asserting that “the good of each person is linked with the good shared with others in community, and the highest good common to the life of all in community comes from God.” He is adamant in his belief that the individual person’s good is bound up in the good of the community as

the common good of the community and the good of its members are mutually implicating. A good community is a place where people are genuinely interdependent on each other, through their participation in, discussion concerning, and the decision-making about their common purposes. It is a place where people make decisions together about the kind of society they want to live in together.  

Hollenbach continues that even “where communities are small or intermediate in size … the bonds of communal solidarity formed in them enable persons to act together, empowering each other to shape some of the contours of public life and its larger social institutions such as the state and the economy.” Where the personal is not nurtured or secured in isolation, solidarity aims to uphold the dignity of each person whose “identity is linked deeply with community … [and their] human dignity is achieved in communion with others”.

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81 Ibid., 82-83.
82 Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, 22. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles III*, 17 in C. Pegis, *Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Vol.II, 27. Note: Summa Contra Gentiles III bears out that individuals and smaller groups in society should aim at enhancing the common good of the entire community with the view towards the “supreme good, since the good of all things depends on God”
83 Ibid., 79, 188 and 42.
84 Ibid., 102.
85 Ibid., 160 and 210.
4.4.2 Community Identity and Human Dignity

Hollenbach gives weight to the responsibility of people as rational agents to determine truly what is in their own interest and what is in the interests of others.⁸⁶ No single person, he warns, can set themselves apart from the interests of the wider social network without observable consequences. Affirming Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI, Hollenbach sees self-centeredness as conflicting with the moral and social virtue of solidarity, because it leads the human person to take care of their own needs while caring little for others.⁸⁷ He adds that

the human good is thus analogous to divine goodness. The moral implications of the doctrine of the *imago dei* make plain that fulfillment of human persons occurs in relationships of love, communion, and solidarity both with God and other human beings. … As the first letter of John puts it: *if we love one another, God lives in us.*⁸⁸

Hollenbach deems that love as a shared expression works best, when what is truly in our interest is freely and impartially pursued. People must “have the freedom to shape their lives according to the values they hold.”⁸⁹ The right to self-determination in a free society affords each and everyone as much freedom as possible in social life, given all people are considered equal before the law. But where *self-interest* and self-preservation have become more institutionalized in the public sphere, there are limits to such freedom. How then may freedom play a normative role in cultures that believe that the needs of each person supersede the needs of the whole society? Or what are the implications for differentiated modern

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⁸⁸ Ibid., 182. While his references to scripture are few, this and his previous reference to 1 Jn. authenticate the strength of God’s message of love.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 27-28.
societies divided into multiple economic, religious and social spheres? Even in the liberal democratic society, freedom of religion, conscience or expression is subject to certain regulatory norms to safeguard the moral principle of personal and social responsibility. In the Christian community, for example, individual persons and social groups are bound by moral law to respect the rights of others so as to protect the common welfare and preserve human dignity.

Hollenbach upholds John Courtney Murray’s claim that human dignity “rests upon that truth that all are peers in dignity of nature and that every human is equally the subject, the foundation and the end of human society”. 90 A person living in solidarity with neighbour for the sake of discovering the truth about God and sharing that truth with others, finds perfection in their dignity and own common good. The good increases the more it is shared. For the sake of the good, Hollenbach pleads for humanitarian interventions to address such challenges to human rights as internal displacement, forced migration and urban refugees, destabilizing such continents as Africa. 91 He insists that advocacy for human rights, regardless of ethnicity, religious belief or geography is “a part of the common good, not an individualistic alternative to the common good”. 92

4.5 Community: Common Good and Human Rights

Hollenbach’s reconsidered common good makes a distinct contribution to the debate on human rights. The relationship between human rights and conflict is dynamic, complex

92 Hollenbach, The Common Good and Christian Ethics, 159.
constantly shaping and reshaping the course of life for societies and people on this planet.

Human rights are moral claims of all persons which must be respected; they are “not simply claims against other persons, but claims on the community as a whole”. 93 As the bearer of the human rights tradition, the community

is no stranger to conflict and compromise. It is also a community with complex organizational structures and institutional self-interests. It is also a community which is present and visible in all societies around the globe and all levels of society. … No community of this sort can avoid making decisions about the conflicting decisions that appeal for concern and support. The Catholic Church has felt these conflicting claims in its efforts to contribute to the protection and promotion of human dignity and will continue to do so. 94

In his Claims in Conflict, Hollenbach puts a premium on the rights specified in the liberal democratic tradition, some of which include: the right to material comfort and security, political participation, assembly and association, the right to work with adequate working conditions including a just wage, the right to have a family or live singly, the right to freedom of public and religious expression and education. 95 These rights “denied in many parts of the world today … [and] set forth in a liberal theory, are related to each other by their common foundation in the freedom of the individual person.” 96 He is concerned however that the liberal democratic theory, as in part championed by John Rawls is primarily concerned with problems of justice and human rights which arise in societies that are generally well-off. … [Whereas] the pluralism or inequality in levels of economic development makes inescapable the question of the legitimacy of restricting the economic liberty of the rich in the interests of those in extreme deprivation. This restriction makes an inadequate foundation for developing a human rights policy for our world.” 97

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93 Hollenbach, Claims in Conflict, 28.
94 Hollenbach, Claims in Conflict, 187.
95 Ibid., 13.
96 Ibid.
97 Ibid., 20.
Hollenbach is determined that “persons can live in dignity only when they live in a community of freedom in which both personal initiative and human dignity are embodied.” In his view, Catholic social teaching can be seen at its best when it endeavours to synthesize the Aristotelian and Thomistic notion of covenanted community with the liberal commitment to the freedom and equality of all individuals under the law. But the common good of community, he reckons can only be sustained if the human rights of all, regardless of nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language or any other status are equally accessible to everyone without discrimination: “All persons have personal rights to the basic material necessities when society is capable of meeting these needs.”

Hollenbach looks to Catholic social tradition as the way to ensure that the poor and otherwise disadvantaged are not excluded from the common good. He stresses that inequalities in economic assets perpetuated by privileged power are the primary culprits affecting severe marginalization of peoples: “Our country and our globalizing world are troubled by deep inequalities and poverty. We are in urgent need of an understanding of social justice that addresses these problems.” He believes our economic and political structures should be characterized by solidarity and cooperation and not exclusion and discrimination.

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98 Hollenbach, The Common Good and Christian Ethics, 228.
100 Hollenbach, Claims in Conflict, 204.
101 Hollenbach, “The Catholic Intellectual Tradition, Social Justice and the University”, Conversations on Catholic Higher Education, Vol. 36., Issue 1, Article 10, (2010): 2 and 3, accessed July 24, 2014, http://epublications.marquette.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1065&context=conversations&sei-redir=1&referer=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.ca%2Furl%3Fsa%3Dq%26cd%3D1%26ef%3D1%26sclient%3Dg-sr%26source%3Dhp%26vpr%3D1%26ql%3D7%26粘%26hl%3Den%26client%3Dfirefox-a%26rls%3Dlang%3Den-US%26ie%3DUTF-8%26ei%3D6jXwUeuqAcO9qgGWk4DQDzg%26usg%3DAFQjCNEKNAyDBvej0dBfKZFpmJS5rDB2pQ%26bvm%3Ddvby49641647%2Cd.aWM#search=%22hollenbach%2C%20s.j.%2C%20david%20%282009%29%20catholic%20intellectual%20tradition%2C%20social%20justice%2C%20university%2C%22
marginalization, the markers of the injustice that causes poverty. Hollenbach shares the concerns of Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI that one of the greater signifiers of human hardship and deprivation in this world is lack of or unavailability of work.

4.5.1 The Human Right to Work

Work, Hollenbach maintains is not only a human right but also a primary duty of the citizen. In his estimation, LE’s stress on the *imago dei* can be taken to mean that through their work, human beings share and participate in God’s activity in creation.\(^{102}\) Hollenbach notes that Catholic social tradition regards human work as fundamental. The rationale for work, he argues is not solely economic. Such reasoning would lead to distorting the profound nature and purposes of work. Hollenbach sees work as imaginative, creative and not just the object of the economic sphere. Work is key to the socialization, integrity and dignity of the human being:

> It is the intention of the creator that human labor itself be a creative expression of human dignity. Like human beings, work and economic activity were created good... very good. [Through work] human beings can contribute their energies to the creation and maintenance of the human community. By means of their labours, individual persons are enabled to discover the meaning and value of their lives as images of God, the creator.\(^{103}\)

He further contends that since “human beings are created and sustained by God in their very being and their very action … there is a dynamic interrelation between God’s action as creator and the human activity of work.”\(^{104}\) Where *PT* and *GS* hold that all human beings have the natural right to free initiative in the economic field and the right and duty to work, Hollenbach asserts “that human persons have the right to employment that makes an

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\(^{103}\) Ibid., 58 and 59.

urgent and imperative demand on society in all its parts.”

For lack of work such as that reflected in his testimonials of migrants forced from their homes, and the evidence he presents of human beings enduring abject urban poverty plays havoc on people’s sense of permanency, their relationship to their place and to their natural world around them.

4.5.2 Human Work: Relationship to the Environment

Hollenbach’s treatise on the common good gives special treatment to “the protection of the global environment [as it] points to ways that the good of one country and good of the larger world are intertwined or, in the long run, even identical.”

Globalization, the environment and work is a many-dimensional reality to which humans are called to be responsible and accountable.

Hollenbach disputes the assumption of LE that “man is called to work. Work is one of the characteristics that distinguishes man from the rest of creatures”. He questions the supposition that only humans are capable of work as it “runs the risk of arrogantly inflating the significance of what we humans can do and who we humans really are”. Hollenbach agrees that if humans are to be respected as co-creators in the kingdom, there is need for a more extensive biblical exegesis on human dominance over nature. Where humans attempt to control or work against nature, they develop a view of supremacy in their relationship with nature. He proposes that where humans agree to work with nature, they take a position to not

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105 Ibid., 61. Cf. Pacem in Terris, # 18, and Gaudium et Spes, # 61.


108 Pope John Paul II, Laborem Exercensis, “Initial Blessing”.

109 David Hollenbach, Justice, Peace and Human Rights, 38.
only be attentive to the preservation of the natural world, but also care for themselves, their community and all God’s creation.\textsuperscript{110}

Daniel Cowdin notes that Hollenbach approaches environmental issues by exploring how our ecological interdependence impacts the human good. Springboarding from a “Catholic sacramentality” and a retrieval of the classical “Aristotelian-Thomist” notion of the common good, he broadens the scope of the common good to a wider “creatiocentric” spirituality to include our contemporary global context.\textsuperscript{111} “An issue such as working for the protection of the global environment points to ways that the good of one country and good of the larger world are intertwined or, in the long run, even identical.”\textsuperscript{112} Working in solidarity for the good of the whole strengthens people’s relationship to their place - their home community. It is here that the Church can restore confidence in its own principle of subsidiarity and thus reawaken itself to a new work as the “people of God”.\textsuperscript{113} To carry out the redemptive mission of Christ, the Church is compelled not to distance itself from everyday life, as Hollenbach cautions, but rather be a mutual participant in the issues affecting the good of all that God has created into being.

\textsuperscript{110} See Hollenbachibid 42. The writings on justice, work and the environment have exploded in the past few decades. Among the more notable contributions are Thomas Berry, \textit{The Great Work: Our Way Into The Future} (New York: Harmony/Bell Tower, 2000); and David Zuzuki, \textit{The Nature of Things}, CBC Television Series.


\textsuperscript{112} Hollenbach, \textit{The Common Good and Christian Ethics}, 48.

\textsuperscript{113} Pope Paul VI, \textit{Gaudium et Spes}, #1.
PART C: THE CHURCH AND THE COMMON GOOD

4.6 The Church: Agent of the Common Good

Unless stated otherwise, David Hollenbach’s reference to the Church means the “people of God.”114 From Hollenbach’s perspective, the greater possibility of attaining the common good is in the type of community where the Church itself plays a lead role. He feels that the church as the people of God, and as a Eucharistic community “is for the world, bearing witness to the one and only hope for redemption. [Its principle task] is to recover the transcendent promise of the gospel …. One of the greatest obligations of the Church today is to remind the world that it is incomplete, that reality is still awaiting something.”115 Robin Gill points out that Hollenbach’s common good makes the case that while “Churches have an important role to play in contributing to the common good within pluralistic societies, [he] emphatically does not believe that churches and their theologians should address their concerns only to fellow Christians.”116

Hollenbach disputes the thinking of Stanley Hauerwas that the Church should cease and desist from articulating universal moral norms persuasive to all members of pluralistic society; the Church’s proper task is to “build up the Christian community of faith hope and love. The Church does not have a social ethic to guide the life of society as a whole.”117 Hollenbach retorts that the Church “can and should learn from the world; the world can and

114 While this interpretation is apparent in the writings of David Hollenbach, he also reaffirmed this interpretation in an e-mail to me, dated August 7, 2013. Pope Francis I explains: “Being the Church, being the People of God, means being God’s leaven in this our humanity.” … [The mission of the Church is] to bring God’s hope and salvation to the world: to be a sign of the love of God who calls all to friendship with him.” “Pope Explains Definition of Church as ‘People of God’, Catholic World News (June 12, 2013), paras. 1 and 5, accessed July 26, 2014, http://www.catholicculture.org/news/headlines/index.cfm?storyid=18135.

116 Gill,“General Editor’s Preface”, The Common Good and Christian Ethics, xii.
should learn from the gospel, and the whole Christian tradition.”\textsuperscript{118} He contends that the common humanity of the entire human race compels the Church to be the agent of the common good and intercede on behalf of the vulnerable and disadvantaged regardless of religious or no religious affiliation. “The living experience of the Christian community is the fundamental sign of God’s gracious intentions for the whole of humanity, not just for those who are members of the Church.”\textsuperscript{119}

\textbf{4. 6. 1 The Church: Prophetic Voice for Public Engagement}

One of the greatest needs in the Church today is a clearer understanding of its ministry to the common good. Hollenbach brings to light that the Church is a sacramental community; the celebration of the sacraments provides important insights into the Church’s social role.\textsuperscript{120} These special occasions marked by sacred signs for experiencing God’s saving presence, instituted by the Church, commission ‘the people of God’ to make holy, various occasions in human life. Through the sacraments, the Church can be brought to a greater common awareness of its duty to exercise faithful citizenship.

The prophetic voice of the Church, upholding the Catholic sacramental and social tradition can help bridge the gap between God’s will for humanity and the challenges besetting humanity. This requires more than priestly instruction as “the Churches vocation to work for peace and justice must be a communal undertaking”.\textsuperscript{121} For this reason, Hollenbach invokes the disposition of “intellectual solidarity [which] entails a willingness to take other persons seriously enough to engage them in conversation and debate about what they think

\textsuperscript{118} Hollenbach, \textit{Justice, Peace and Human Rights}, 75.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 185.
\textsuperscript{120} Hollenbach, “A Prophetic Church and the Catholic Sacramental Imagination”, 256.
\textsuperscript{121} Hollenbach, \textit{Justice Peace and Human Rights}, 181.
makes life worth living, including what they think will make for the good of the polis.” He cautions, however that “the Christian community’s role in society is different from that of a political party or an organized special interest group. … The Church does not have the political and technical competence to know what is either possible or what is best” in complex political decision-making.

Despite these limitations, Hollenbach maintains, the Church has the duty to raise the consciousness of its public officials. He cites Protestant ethicist, Paul Ramsey who declares that the Church today is responsible for the development of “decision-oriented or action-oriented (relevant) social and political analysis” that will serve to cultivate the political ethos of a nation and inform the consciousness of those holding public office.

Hollenbach insists that the Church is obligated to live the reality of the Christian experience; postconciliar sacramental theology stresses the intrinsic link between human action in the world and the sacraments “The Church is a sacrament of Christ - the human community in which the saving grace of Christ is made visible and effective. Though the presence of Christ is not restricted to those who are members of the Church, the grace comes to its most explicit symbolic expression in the Christian community.” The breadth of its sacramental imagination “points to a world beyond the sanctuary …with each sacrament having its social relevance [providing] the potential to make a major contribution to the struggle for justice and peace in the world.”

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123 Hollenbach, Justice Peace and Human Rights, 181 and 185.


125 Hollenbach, Justice Peace and Human Rights, 195.

126 Hollenbach, Justice Peace and Human Rights, 197-198.
The quest for justice and peace ultimately entreats the cause of human rights. Some fifteen years ago, Hollenbach had already established that “during the last half century, the Roman Catholic church has moved from strong opposition to the rights championed by liberal thinkers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, to the position of one of the leading institutional advocates for human rights on the world stage today.”\textsuperscript{127} But to pose as a major player in recovering “the common good, as a plausible social aim for the Church requires careful consideration of [its] role of in public life.”\textsuperscript{128} Where children have been sexually abused by the clergy and religious, love has broken down. Hollenbach is adamant that the convictions of clerics of these felonies poses a crisis in credibility for the Church as an institution, community of the faithful, and as an advocate of the common good.

4.7 **Clerical Sexual Abuse Scandals and Integrity of the Church**

The sentencing of clerics for sexual abuse of the underaged or those most vulnerable to the misuse of power and authority has held the leadership of the Catholic Church in disrepute in most of the western world. Hollenbach is especially critical of those Catholic Church leaders who are protective of themselves and not those they serve. He cites where the Holy See declared that “when there are accusations against a cardinal, the competence rests solely with the pope; others may have an advisory role always with the proper respect


\textsuperscript{128} Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, 87.
for the person.” To acquiesce to Church authority in this way, Hollenbach argues, is a grave departure “from the communion and solidarity found in a just community”.  

These scandals, as well cast grave doubts on Hollenbach’s affirmation of John Courtney Murray’s trust in the Church’s ability to take a lead role in public life. The dishonour rendered members of the clergy convicted of these charges, predictably diminishes confidence in the Church’s potential to be a primary and active participant in the common good. These wrongdoings actually test Hollenbach’s contention that the involvement of the Catholic Church in politics and the public arena is foundational to its role in the wider issues of global challenges and ethics; they just about undo his disputation that the “religious mission [of the Catholic Church] can be a source of ‘commitment, direction, and vigor in building up the human community’ and in initiating action ‘for the benefit of everyone in need’”.  

The overriding question remains how this Church, the ‘people of God’ can serve as a catalyst to the common good when the relationship between its own leadership, the general community and its own faith community is so broken? But the Church is for sinners who are in need of Christ’s redeeming grace. Hollenbach urges us to look for where the signs of “the healing of human brokenness that will be fulfilled in the kingdom proclaimed by Jesus has

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130 Ibid., 181.


already begun among us.”

Where and how can this wounded Church begin to correct the sins of its sordid past?

Canadian theologian and social activist, Mary Jo Leddy resolves that the Church as a repentant sinner cannot turn inward on itself; but must resolve to rise up, unafraid, not yielding to apathy nor surrendering to naïveté. Only in the quelling of its own self-importance and stifling of its delusions of self-sufficiency, can it humbly accept that “it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me.” (Gal.: 2:20). Only then can it move forward, repentant, healed and reconciled, to be an active participant recounting at each step a newer, Christ-like, fresher approach to the common good.

A more healed Church is free to be more open and deferential to the needs of the common good. Hollenbach believes that the common good as a movement of faithful Christians, committed within their own Church traditions to work together for the advancement of true social justice is an authentic response to the needs of the hour.

### 4.8 The Church: Justice and the Common Good

After Vatican II and especially after the 1971 synodal document, *Justitio in Mundo: Justice In The World (JW)*, justice became a call to “Christians to join with all persons of good will to overcome injustice … [with] an emphasis on the Church being concerned not simply with personal conversion, but with the social transformation of the world.”

Hollenbach draws on *JM* and on the great treasury of Catholic social teachings, to respond to the demands of justice in the world today. He points out that “the major encyclicals from Leo XIII to the present … appeal to a bond of love that lies at the root of the obligations to

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133 Hollenbach, *Justice, Peace and Human Rights*, 64.
135 Kenneth R. Himes, “Commentary on Justitio in Mundo (Justice in the World)”, Himes et al., 333.
In *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, he provides a very thorough description of a contemporary Catholic vision of justice, that is social justice that can be useful for analyzing contemporary issues of human development, not only in settings of urban poverty but also in areas where poverty is accelerating within the phenomenon of globalization.

Social justice is based on the rights that flow from and safeguard human dignity. It induces us to work with others to help make the Church and related political and social institutions better serve the common good. Social justice in the Catholic ethical tradition refers to the obligations of all citizens to aid in the creation of patterns of societal organizations and activity that are essential both for the protection ... and the creation of mutuality and participation by all in social life. It is based on the form of human interdependence which occurs through the state. Citizens have a personal obligation, mediated through political obligation, to help create a society in which concerns of agape can be made effective.\(^{137}\)

Participatory justice requires each and every citizen to give all that is necessary to the society in which they live for the benefit of the greater good. This sense of agency which enables people to actively participate in the public realm invokes the principle of subsidiarity so as to meet the demands of life in community.\(^ {138}\)

### 4.8.1 Subsidiarity and Justice

While the principle of subsidiarity does not give concrete indication of how a society, political or religious institution should be structured or how it should behave, it does give a norm by which structures and policy decisions can be measured. Subsidiarity is a compelling invitation to fuller participation in the mission and witness of the Church, expressed in a deep

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\(^{137}\) Ibid., 27.

regard for what is entailed in sharing and respecting individual and collective responsibilities. For just as the human aspect of the Church can never be totally separated from the divine aspect, neither are members of the faith community disconnected from the overall citizenry. Because Christians have civic responsibilities before God, Hollenbach concludes that “justice is not the concern of the political community alone, nor is it to be administered solely by the state.” Rather, justice is also the work of the Church. It is a kingdom responsibility.\(^{139}\)

Where the Church’s social mission is to claim the earthly kingdom for the kingdom of Christ, this moves it beyond the spiritual realm to such domains as politics, economics, industry, education and the environment. Given this range of jurisdictions, the role that the Church should play in public life is a difficult one. There is the apprehension that whatever benefits religion might confer privately, when directed towards public aims they may be divisive and/or destructive. Hollenbach however counters that the Christian Church can be a vital force for public morality and ethical action. To continually meet the needs of the common good, compels the Church not to draw a clear line of demarcation between things civil or temporal and things ecclesiastical or spiritual.

4.9 The Common Good: Church-State Relations

The issue of the separation of church and state is one that has prompted much debate. Hollenbach trusts that when Christian and even non-Christian religious communities encourage their members to undertake interactive and mutually respectful engagement in the life of civil society, they can make very valuable contributions to the common good. By playing a public role in civil society and culture, [they] can strengthen the public life of a free society in democracies and help bring it into being where it has been suppressed by authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. …what demands such a role in support of the common good on the self-understanding of religious communities and Christian Churches in particular. Churches have distinctive identities and missions of their own that are shaped by their theologies and moral

\(^{139}\) Hollenbach, *Justice, Peace and Human Rights*, 81.
beliefs [that] influence the issues around which church members are recruited to become politically active.  

But even in societies with a high level of religious participation and a tradition of tolerance, there is a fear that religious groups may use public policy to force their beliefs on others. There is also a suspicion that “the presence of religious communities in the public square will be a threat to public freedom.” Within the Catholic Church itself, there are opposing positions among theologians. Michael Baxter C.S.C., for example, opposes the public Church model. He “repeatedly defines himself against those following in the tradition of Murray”. Baxter argues “that if the Church participates in the agenda of the state to provide or attempts to provide an ethic for the wider society, it will end up aligning itself with the interests of the nation at the expense of fidelity to the gospel”. As with Hauerwas, Baxter’s perceives that “the Church’s only role should lie in the example it sets by being Church.”

But Hollenbach counters that a Church doing the will of God must address the moral and religious dimensions of political questions. This insists on an indirect engagement in the

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140 Hollenbach, The Common Good and Christian Ethics, 112 and 108. Note: Hollenbach substantiates that the non-violent efforts of religious communities other than Christian have more inclusive communities. This is documented in the labors of Mahatma Gandhi in India and Buddhist primate of Cambodia, Samdech Preah Maha Ghosananda in wake of Khmer Rouge atrocities.


political arena.\textsuperscript{145} He brings forward the Ignatian vision that “the pursuit of worldly aspects of the common good [is] an imminent responsibility of the Church.”\textsuperscript{146} Meanwhile, he does not suggest that Christianity arrives with ready-made solutions. The requirements of the common good vary according to specific situations. Wide participation is needed to determine those requirements that Christians and others must seek together. Here, Hollenbach’s discipline of “intellectual solidarity” can help guide public discussion about the human good. Everyone who speaks to the public must do so with a certain empathy for other ways of thinking and believing; and with a kind of intellectual creativity that presents the ideas of human good that are central to one’s own tradition in terms that make them as persuasive as possible to others.\textsuperscript{147}

While Hollenbach affirms Pope Benedict’s stance that the Church cannot replace the state, he distinguishes that “differentiation” between Church and state does not suggest separateness; nor does it relegate religion to the private sphere. Rather, “it is a relation of the two institutions with each having a different role and mode of activity.”\textsuperscript{148} Hollenbach defers to Augustine’s City of God, to show that the temporal good of the human city is an important responsibility of those who await the city of God. Augustine differentiates that although the Christian community is separated from the public square, it is not “isolated from or dominant over it”.\textsuperscript{149} There is no need for the church to withdraw from society. The church by its nature strongly supports the virtues and values that are required in a republic. But Augustine makes a distinction between what can be accomplished for the common good on earth and

\textsuperscript{145} See Hollenbach, The Global Face of Public Faith, 89.

\textsuperscript{146} Hollenbach, The Common Good and Christian Ethics, 5.

\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., 142-143.

\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., 118. See also Pope Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est, # 28.

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., 120.
what is the eschatological hope of the City of God. Hollenbach explains that Augustine’s emphasis on the transcendence of God rightly “desacralizes politics; it distinguishes what can be achieved politically from what Christians ultimately place their hope in.”150 Such an understanding in the Thomistic sense weighs significantly on the personal and social dimensions of the human good, which are completed by the eternal good of relationship to God.

To Hollenbach, “the only absolute is God, with whom human beings enter into full relationship in the heavenly Jerusalem, the City of God. But the political domain has the potential to become the partial embodiment of the full human good. This will be the politics that seeks the common good in freedom - the common good in the community of freedom.”151 This understanding helps free the Church to intervene in problems of public life.

Hollenbach’s argues that there are critical social, economic and environmental problems that simply cannot be solved through a policy of tolerance or when Church and state are operating in isolation of each other. The problems require thinking that goes beyond the prevailing values of tolerance and non-judgmentalism. To deal with these issues requires a renewal in the Church that permits it to participate in such a way in public life that reverses the trend toward privatization of religion, characterized by liberal democracy in our times.152 Hollenbach contends that people can only be free to live and experience the common good, when they are “bound together by a love whereby each citizen loves his neighbor as he loves himself [sic], for love of neighbor is the active work in the moral domain that gives expression to love of God.”153

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150 Hollenbach, The Common Good and Christian Ethics, 125.
151 Ibid., 121, 125, 133-136.
152 Ibid., Chapters 4, 5 and 6.
153 Ibid., 122-123.
4.10 Conclusion

Hollenbach’s proposition for the ordering of society toward the common good encourages renewed efforts in addressing issues of poverty, marginalization, social and economic inequality, and ecological and environmental degradation. His common good reinterpreted makes a distinct contribution to the debate on justice, human rights, political responsibility, church-state relations, and individual and collective participation in the work of the overall community. His emphasis on community and the relation of the Catholic Church to community, leads to an understanding of the common good that goes beyond customary recognition of political civil rights, to one that is also conversant with socio-economic-eco-environmental and political concerns of the day. Hollenbach’s vision of the common good reenergizes Catholic social teaching, specifying that the needs of the poor take priority over the wants of the rich; the freedom of the dominated takes priority over the liberty of the powerful; and the participation of marginalized groups takes priority over the preservation of an order which excludes them.\(^\text{154}\) The distinctive substance of his writings relevant to rural, urban and global contexts proposes that all human beings by virtue of their humanity are rightfully equal participants in the shared life of community.

Chapter Five attempts to retrieve Hollenbach’s vision of the notion of the common good in light of the relationship of the Catholic Church in Newfoundland and Labrador to the fisheries catastrophe of 1986-1992. Based on Hollenbach’s common good reinterpreted, this Chapter makes the case that by largely disengaging itself from a fishery in crisis, the Newfoundland and Labrador Catholic Church hierarchy failed to treat this crisis as a crisis of the common good.

\(^{154}\) Hollenbach, Claims in Conflict, 203-207.
Chapter Five

David Hollenbach’s Reinterpretation of the Common Good and the Relation of the Catholic Church in Newfoundland and Labrador to the Fisheries Crisis of 1986-1992

5.0 Introduction

The Church functions in nearly all of David Hollenbach’s theological reflections as a paramount source, locus, hermeneutical principle and chief catalyst of the common good. In deference to Catholic social tradition, Hollenbach stresses that the vocation of this human/Divine community is to be a herald and conduit of the common good, both in the constituency in which it serves and globally. This chapter attempts to retrieve Hollenbach’s reinterpretation of the notion of the common good in view of the failure of the leadership of the Catholic Church in Newfoundland and Labrador to treat the crisis in the fisheries as a crisis of the common good.

Despite the lengthy tradition of Church social teachings on the common good, the institutional Church-local in essence neglected to share responsibility in this major socio-economic-spiritual-ecological travesty. The movement/trajectory of this chapter therefore is on the relation of the institutional Church to the common good of these ocean people. At stake is the integrity of a Church-local establishment unresponsive to suffering fishing communities, denied their human right to work and live in relation with their primary resource. The decimation of the fish stocks not only meant loss of work, but it also deprived fishing communities of their way of life, creating a crisis in their cultural and social identity.¹

¹ See Yetman, “The Catholic Church and The Fisheries Crisis”.

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5.1 **The Church: Agent of The Common Good**

Hollenbach’s hope for the common good in today’s world is that religion cannot be wholly privatized and excluded from the public sphere. The Newfoundland and Labrador Church in a few centuries, became far removed from Augustine’s symbolic *City of God* in which the Christian community is separated from the public square “without being either isolated from or dominant over it.”² In Hollenbach’s view, Church leaders engaging in active agency with the people while their fishery is in crisis are not looking to control the state; instead, they are strongly supporting the virtues and values required in a republic.³ By retreating from a fishery on the brink of disaster, they failed to encourage good citizenry “bound together by a love whereby each citizen loves his [sic] neighbor as he [sic] loves himself, for love of neighbor is the active work in the moral domain that gives expression to love of God.”⁴

Hollenbach is resolute that the Church is called to model the ethical teachings and ministry of Jesus. In Jesus, faith becomes profoundly identified with love of neighbour. Christians “can enter into the life of the *polis* with a spirit marked by solidarity in love for neighbour.”⁵ This love requires the Church in Newfoundland and Labrador to engage in mutual efforts for the sake of the civic good and undertake joint action for this good, together with fellow citizens. “When Christians act in this way in civil society, they will be building up the terrestrial common good as a real though imperfect image of the heavenly city.”⁶

Well beyond the years since the sack of Rome, where Augustine’s *City* sought to anatomize the corruption of Romans’ pursuit of earthly pleasures, “grasping for praise... they

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³ Ibid., 122.
⁴ Ibid., 123.
⁵ Ibid., 129.
⁶ Ibid., 129.
wanted to hoard glory”7, Catholic spiritual leaders in Newfoundland prevaricated on the Christian virtues and ways of life exalted in the City of God and its own social teachings. Bishops, clergy and religious, still remained circumspect of any restructuring of image of Church and were wary to be “the people of God”8; they neglected to take into hand the vital issues of life and nurture in this maritime society. The five hundred year old Catholic culture prevailed. The notion of the common good, although deeply embedded in its tradition still did not gain currency in the Church-local’s response to the issues of poverty and social injustice consuming the constituent people.

Could the leadership of the Church-local justify the extent of their exclusion from this grave travesty by pleading ignorance, not knowing what to do? By the time of the fisheries crisis, more than two thousand years of social teachings, and more specifically, approximately one hundred years of Catholic social teachings and some fifteen years of CCCB documents had already given precedence to Church advocacy for the needs of the poor and the vulnerable. The CCCB ethical reflections under chair, Bishop Remi De Roo emphasized that the “goal of serving the human needs of all people in our society must take precedence over the maximization of profits and growth.9 In 1986, when the crisis in the east coast fisheries peaked, de Roo’s Cries of Victims, Voice of God is published. This book expands on the public statements of the Canadian Bishops in an attempt to illuminate the relationship of the gospels to the world we live in; the Christian mission is to transform the

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7 Hollenbach, The Common Good and Christian Ethics, 121.
8 Vatican II, Gaudium et Spes, # 3.
world by building community and reaching out, rather than dividing people. During the fisheries crisis, this Church by the sea failed in this mission and purpose, to be the active sign of God’s salvation to their own people.

5.1.1 The Church: Prophetic Voice for Public Engagement

Affirming J. Bryan Hehir, Hollenbach asserts that GS compels the Church to “move deeply into interaction with the modern world. [He cites DH that] the Church’s social role must be religious in nature and finality. Nevertheless, the exercise of this role will frequently have significant political consequences”.

Church leaders in Newfoundland and Labrador did not bring their competence to bear on the turmoil overwhelming the people and their fisheries. Conditioned and inured by an ecclesial and state organizational system and network of power relations, the leadership of this regional Church in Hollenbach’s words became too “historically naive” to cultivate a community of love open to growth or change. Over the centuries in this maritime culture, both clergy and religious tended to be elitist. They functioned largely beyond scrutiny in the society, remaining above any form of criticism. Their propensity towards reification inclined them to distance themselves from pressing socio-economic-ecological needs of ordinary citizens. In their ecclesial sanctuary, even in the flowering years of Vatican II, they continued to find security in their preconciliar doctrines and dogma. In Hollenbach’s words, they “did

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10 Bishop Remi De Roo, Cries of Victims, Voice of God (St. Paul University, Ottawa:Novalis, 1986). Note: This book is about the public's response to the 1983 Ethical Reflections On The Economic Crisis, written by the Roman Catholic bishops of Canada. The focus is on the needs of the poor and those who frequently become the victims in economic reform.


12 Ibid., 19.
not seek to mediate between faith and society but rather to defend the Christian tradition against the corrosive currents of modernity.”

The degree of clerical superiority seems to have functioned to the degree to which the Church and community together had been institutionalized. This post-Vatican II local ecclesia persisted in constituting itself as a hierarchical institution. It failed to recreate itself as a Eucharistic community in its ever changing environment and circumstances. Bishops, priests and religious did not heed the sobering reality that Jesus’ charge to His Church from the beginning has not been a building, an organization, or an institution. This Christian community by the sea ignored its obligation to be the agape, love of God, committed to God’s highest good for the one loved, regardless of cost. Hollenbach reminds: “The fulfilment of love in God’s reign is the Christian eschatological hope.” Unmindful of love, and rather than opting to be a prophetic voice to a fisheries in crisis, did toleration push the Church and people away from issues of social justice and force these matters into the private or “non-public” domain?

5.1.2 Tolerance

When the cod fishery was dying, the Church-local practiced “tolerance as the safest path ... rather than the pursuit of the common good.” While tolerance “does not go so far as to suggest that people are better off when they are alone. ... it does regard communal interaction with suspicion.” As Hollenbach reminds that “persons do not and cannot live

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13 Hollenbach, “Commentary on Gaudium et Spes”, Himes et al., 276.
15 Ibid., 24-25.
16 Ibid., 24.
17 Ibid., 57.
alone, so it is a fundamental mistake to presume that isolation or non-interference is the way to protect equality and freedom.”\textsuperscript{18}

Given the tensions between the inshore and offshore fishing sectors, Church leaders likely found security in tolerance, thus disregarding the Church’s own social teachings. This begs the question as to whether the common good is over and done with in the minds of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians today. Even though the principles of the common good had been compromised, the institutional Church in Newfoundland and Labrador evidently left all decisions regarding the fate of this primary industry and way of life in the hands of Ottawa based politicians and bureaucrats. These government officials were effectively coerced by the more monied, large fish company magnates.\textsuperscript{19} Tolerance helped veil the threat of branding the Canadian offshore fleet as the adversary.

While tolerance as in religious tolerance has done much to open avenues of healing and opportunity among sectarian divisions in the province, it has also left too many political and economic structures in place that continue to exclude the poor from participating in the fullness of life. In Newfoundland and Labrador, tolerance left intact and perhaps even strengthened the structures that keep the poor, poor. Rather than assuming unquestioningly that elected officials and public servants have carte blanche authority to decide the good of a five hundred year old industry, a more prescient vision of the common good was needed to take industry, the union, the province, the country and the Church itself beyond the stalemate of tolerance. Practicing tolerance eluded the theological challenges raised by Vatican II to

\textsuperscript{18} Hollenbach, \textit{The Common Good and Christian Ethics}, 49.
\textsuperscript{19} See Chapter One, 38-40. See also Joseph Gough, \textit{Managing the Canadian Fisheries}, 410- 426.
come to “deepened recognition of the Church’s understanding of its mission in society for the way Christians should understand the most basic norm of social morality, namely justice.”

5.2 The Church: Justice and the Common Good.

Hollenbach determines that Vatican II reinterpreted the Church’s social mission to “become more tightly linked to the bible, to Christology, eschatology, ecclesiology and other central doctrinal perspectives than at any time in recent centuries.” The ethical requirements of justice, for example reflect “the traditions concern for mutual claims of concrete persons. ... distinguished by the different types of human relationships and interdependence. All express the demands of agape”.

The official Church in Newfoundland and Labrador was apparently insufficiently formed to recognize that its own spiritual and moral growth and development depended on cultivating healthy relationships with everyone, especially the needy at home. As Hollenbach emphasizes, the Church is obligated to live its vocation to serve justice through the mutual interdependence “analogous to the common good of the union of human beings with God and with each other in God.”

The lasting effects of the legacy of colonialism, the political pressure and economic domination by ruling governments, resulted in poor people becoming poorer. Small numbers of the privileged merchant elite holding a monopoly of power and wealth profited from exploiting settlements of fishers meagrely earning their living from the ocean. An important observation here is that poverty in Newfoundland and Labrador did not arise purely from natural causes or from the lethargy of the people pursuing the fisheries for a living. The

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20 Hollenbach, Justice, Peace and Human Rights, x.
21 Ibid., 7.
22 Ibid., 26 and 27.
23 Hollenbach, The Common Good and Christian Ethics, 134.
deprivation, distress and hardship of these maritime people at the time when the fish were being fished out was a consequence of injustice. When the fisheries crisis reached catastrophic proportions, the institutional Church-local did not prevail upon its own social teachings, particularly Justitio in Mundo (JW)\(^24\).

The Church establishment in Newfoundland and Labrador failed to untie itself from its preconciliar moorings and secure its anchor to JW’s teaching, that “the mission of the Church within the Christ-life insists on the Church’s greater involvement in the world ... [to] stir up a new resolve to eliminate the social evils caused by injustice.”\(^25\) The aims and purpose of JW to foster a common concern for and commitment to the world were thought no more of, as the Church establishment largely separated itself from the socio-economic-spiritual needs of their people in crisis. JW invites openness, thinking ethically, advancing the idea of learning how to construct a newer, more broadly conceived social-spiritual vision of justice. It points Church leaders away from defensiveness and protectiveness of their positions and institution. It is here that the virtue/principles of solidarity and subsidiarity can guide the Church-local to actively commit to the common good of their constituent people.

### 5.3 Solidarity and Subsidiarity

Given that solidarity provides a check against the manipulations of any person, group or institution, even the state itself as “we are all one family in the world”,\(^26\) Hollenbach adds that the principle of subsidiarity, assures that this “key normative basis of politics is the primary locus in which human solidarity is realized. Its strength is essential to the success of


\(^{25}\) Kenneth R. Himes O.F. M., “Commentary on Justitio in Mundo”, Himes et al., 335.

\(^{26}\) Pope John Paul II, *Solicitudo Rei Socialis*, # 38.
participatory government.” 27 As the Government of Canada and large fish companies mismanaged the fisheries, the Church in Newfoundland and Labrador was not disposed to invoking the principles/virtue of subsidiarity and solidarity with their congregations.

Where subsidiarity and solidarity in the Church’s social teachings avoids big government, big industry solutions, the wisdom and experience of anguished fishers would have proven invaluable to helping articulate the cause of the vanishing cod. Instead, Church leaders did not offer to create venues for such dialogue within their own faith community. Hollenbach resolves that “reason must open its eyes to the fact of suffering.”28 Bishops, clergy and religious largely dishonoured the aims of solidarity and subsidiarity, when they failed to listen to people in their misery; they did not seek to bring them together to dialogue about their common concern, as they weathered the storm of the harshness of their local territorial reality. They did not consider the compelling question: “Who best understands the ways and habits of the marine life inhabiting the ocean - the fisher who for centuries watches fish breed, feed, aggregate and rest as they daily drop their line into the deep?; or the scientist whose life’s work is devoted to studying ocean organisms or other marine bodies in laboratories far from the sea?

For the Church as the people of God to acknowledge the duality/nonduality of this question, it is obligated to speak to the fact that every person has exactly the same right as the person next to them to think, to say, to seek, to probe, to contribute and to participate in matters common to their good. This equal opportunity at the basis of the Church’s social tradition, finds its reconciliation in the concept of the common good. If the Church in Newfoundland and Labrador is to intentionally read the signs of God’s presence in human

28 Ibid., 67.
history and affect a deep solidarity with its people, it is constrained to invoke its balancing principle of solidarity-subсидarity.  

Solidarity-subсидarity in action authenticates that the very nature of the common good requires that all members of the state be entitled to share in it, although in different ways according to each one's tasks, merits and circumstances. For this reason, every civil authority must take pains to promote the common good of all, without preference for any single citizen or civic group…. Considerations of justice and equity, however, can at times demand that those involved in civil government give more attention to the less fortunate members of the community, since they are less able to defend their rights and to assert their legitimate claims.

The Church’s silence during the crisis in the fisheries, in Hollenbach’s view calls for a “renewal of an ethic of the common good….to address the need of a cultural orientation that places considerably higher value on interdependency, solidarity and the common good.”

At this point, the principle/virtue of solidarity benefits greatly with the added discipline of intellectual solidarity.

5.3.1 Intellectual Solidarity

Intellectual solidarity presupposes a commitment to mutual listening and speaking. In practice, it is strong enough to break the socio-economic-political structures that impede the progress of people in distress. This more “compassionate solidarity” has the capacity to cultivate more engaging relationships.

Although nearly thirty years inside Vatican II, local bishops, clergy and religious, together failed to encourage such spirit of “active compassion”, namely between the disputing inshore/offshore sectors. Given, the tensions driving a wedge between all sides, Hollenbach’s intellectual solidarity rooted in natural law and nestled in the virtue/principles

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29 See Pope Benedict XVI, Caritas in Veritate, # 58.
30 Pope John XXIII, Pacem In Terris, # 56.
32 Ibid., 48.
34 Hollenbach, The Global Face of Public Faith, 65. See also 22-26, and 93-100.
of solidarity-subsidiarity would help smoothe the progress of seeking moral agreement across these ideological divides. The Divine gift of natural law\textsuperscript{35} assures that human reasoning is not the exclusive domain of the Church hierarchy or government officials or industry and union bosses. All people regardless of socio-economic status, class, clime or religious affiliation are equal before God.

Intellectual solidarity although involving complex interactions, allows for further discussion and growth. It provides a basis for internal community development, for dialoguing and engaging opposing viewpoints. Hollenbach makes clear that intellectual solidarity does not imply that all views are equally true or false. But the disposition allows that the pursuit of truth is worth the difficult task of disciplined conversation. The object is to come to greater consensus, over time on a range of issues. In the case of a very troubled fishery, this “stimulus to engagement”\textsuperscript{36} admits the witness of those who contribute, those who give and those who are in disagreement, so as to establish “common moral ground” for all parties involved.\textsuperscript{37}

With the fragments of human history dissipating in the ruins of a once vibrant community, nourished and sustained by an abundant fishery, intellectual solidarity offers to cultivate more productive relations between Church and State.

5.4 Church-State Relations

Hollenbach provides that “strongly and civicly active churches play a key role in the political empowerment of those with lower social-economic status. [Thus if] more active,
more egalitarian representation in democratic politics is judged desirable, more church activism, not less seems called for.”

Citing GS, he clarifies that where the church’s mission is religious and not directly political, the Christian community does then have a responsibility to help shape public life in accord with created human nature and in a way that is open to ultimate fulfillment in God’s kingdom. ... The fact that the church is religious and not political does not mean that the Church is an otherworldly community with no role in public life. [Yet] churches do not exist to encourage active participation in politics ... they have properly religious ends: worship of God; response to the deepest questions of human beings about the deepest meanings of life, love, work and death that enable people to live in accord with that meaning. Nonetheless, religious belief has consequences for the whole of human life, not only that part which occurs on Sunday morning.

Hollenbach believes that “churches can provide an institutional base for political mobilization, as has been evident across the political spectrum from the civil rights movement to antiabortion campaigns.” As JW contends “action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel.”

But this integral aspect of proclaiming the good news was evidently understated by the institutional Church in Newfoundland and Labrador when the cod were disappearing. Church leaders were largely non-compliant with the invitation of Vatican II to “become a truly world church”. Even though the social and cultural circumstances of life, globally had changed profoundly, it did not seem to truly impact the Newfoundland and Labrador Church’s “understanding its social role and its approach to social teaching.”

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39 Hollenbach, “Commentary on Gaudium et Spes”, Himes et al., 275-276; and The Common Good and Christian Ethics, 107
41 Synod of Bishops, Action in the World, #6.
institutional Church of the day, did not stir the Church-local to political intervention, despite the different precedent set by its preconciliar predecessors.

Though picking and choosing their political quarrels, the interventions of such metropolitans as Howley and Roche attest to the institutional Church’s varied involvement in public debate on educational, political, religious and even fisheries matters. While *RN* justifies Bishop Howley’s interventions on the dispute over the French Shore, *QA*’s principle of subsidiarity would have misgivings with both Howley’s and Roche’s assail on the formation of the Fisher’s Union in the hungry thirties. Ecclesial impediments imposed on Catholic fishers to join a union, actually prevented fishers from questioning abuses by higher-level commercial and political authority. The shattering of their spirit of freedom and initiative, further limited fisher’s accessibility to the common good as members of society. And Roche’s heated opposition to union with Canada not only continued to fuel Catholic-Protestant animosities, but also denied Catholics their human right to vote as free human beings. Could such extraparliamentary means of expression have been an impetus for his successor, Archbishop Skinner to proceed with trepidation in his new appointment in this newest province of Canada?

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44 See Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*. Here, Leo pointed out that the poor are equal in citizenship to the rich (# 49), and their work is the source of the nation's wealth (# 51). In making these points, he challenged the position of those who belittle and look down on the poor, and consider the poor, even the working poor, a burden on society. Even more significantly, he challenged the position of those who use religion to support their oppression of the poor. In a clear anticipation of what would later be known as the preferential option for the poor, Leo XIII let it be known that the favor of God seems to incline more toward the poor as a class (# 37).

45 See Pope Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*, #79.
46 His political standoff actually earned Roche the nickname among some pro-Confederates: “The Placentia Machiavelli, the Borgia from Branche.” See John Edward Fitzgerald, “The True Father of Confederation”, 188.
5.4.1 The Post-Conciliar Church of Vatican II and Post-Vatican II

Archbishop Patrick J. Skinner’s episcopacy emerged almost totally separate from civil society. He did not risk a level of ecclesial intervention that would in some way support such provincial and national interests as the Canadian 200 mile limit negotiations, which came into effect in 1977. On the other hand, in Skinner’s time, the contribution of Father Des McGrath to the fishers union transgressed boundaries presumed between Church and state, at the time.47

In the post-conciliar Church, however, Archbishop Alphonsus L. Penney gave the Catholic Social Action committee the mandate to be the Church’s public voice on local socio-economic and political issues of the day.48 But divesting the issue of the crisis in the fisheries away from this archdiocesan appointed committee to an interfaith committee, in fact minimized the urgency and magnitude of this massive ecological, social, economic and spiritual destruction. The interfaith committee consisting solely of clerics of various Christian denominations (Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian and United Church), had little or no knowledge of the cataclysm besetting the fisheries. At the luncheon meeting with NIFA executive director, their questions were more concerned with new modes of secondary processing and producing new fish products to improve export capability. They did not seem to grasp that the dream of improving the economics of the industry with new products, was

47 Father McGrath’s involvement in the fishers union was unprecedented for a priest of his time. However, as noted in chapter two, a precedent was set more than a hundred years before by Father Duffy who served under the episcopacy of Bishop Fleming. Although, Father McGrath belonged to the West Coast diocese, his assignment took him well beyond the boundaries of his home diocese. In fact, a greater core of his labours was executed in area of the St. John’s archdiocese, where the head office of the NFFAWU is located.

48 At the time of the crisis, the Catholic faith community and general community were familiar with the committee’s active involvement in union strikes and fish plant closures in the outports. See previous chapters one and two, 23 and 96-98.
virtually futile when the fate of the cod fishery itself was at stake.⁴⁹ In any case, any diocesan or interfaith committee was subordinate to their bishop(s) who had the final say in decision-making, spending money, and taking actions.

Given that Church-local hierarchy kept at arm’s length from the crisis, Hollenbach reminds that since Vatican II, Christian Churches have played important roles in “opening up political space for self-governance in a number of Latin American countries... Religious communities can play an important role in sustaining and strengthening public life without either controlling or being controlled by the state.”⁵⁰ A vital gift of the Council was to see that the Church and world were not in opposition to each other. Hollenbach explains that the “distinction between the public sphere and the domain of governmental power was central to the discussion of the relation of the Catholic Church to democracy.”⁵¹ Kristin Heyer further clarifies that the consequences of DH in differentiating the relationship between Church and state is that “religion is relevant to the life and action of society. In one respect, the impact of DH has been the depoliticization of Church-state relationships, and the impact of GS has been the legitimization of social ministry... Taken together, their legacy has been to plunge the Church more deeply into the political arena”.⁵²

⁴⁹ Reference here is made to the luncheon meeting, where the executive director of NIFA (the author) made a presentation to the interfaith committee. As noted in Chapter two, the date of this meeting was not recorded, but it was held sometime in 1987.


⁵² Heyer, Prophetic and Public. 32 and 33. Cf John Courtney Murray S.J., “Notes to Dignitatis Humane, Abbot and Gallagher, The Documents of Vatican II, 683 11; and Hehir, “Church - State and Church World,” 58, and “Continuity and Change in the Social Teachings of the Catholic Church”; John W. Houack and
Read alongside GS, DH helps believer and non-believer alike to understand the role of the Church in confronting secular ideologies, materialism, and in combating the use of manipulative technologies.\textsuperscript{53} In the case of the troubled fisheries in Newfoundland and Labrador, the official Church-local failed to translate the prophetic resonance of these documents in its own life’s work and mission. Here, Hollenbach and Shannon strike a chord, reminding that “when religious freedom is exercised to advocate legislative policy to enforce certain moral standards, like opposition to abortion or same-sex marriage, the role of civil law in the enforcement of moral norms comes to the fore. When and how is civil legislation an appropriate means for the promotion of the moral norms taught by the church’s magisterium?”\textsuperscript{54}

Where Church leaders are so ready to act on moral issues and reticent to take a role in social justice matters, the social encyclicals of Pope John Paul II such as CA, issued at the time of the destruction of the fishery actually reproves their reserve and leeriness to walk with their own community enduring untold hardship. Hollenbach draws on CA to show that “the active presence of [the Church] in public life in the country can strengthen rather than threaten democracy. If one fears that public life is becoming increasingly fragile, the prescription would appear to be for more Church involvement in public life, not less.”\textsuperscript{55} The question remains, “what would happen if the Church leaders at this time of crisis listened more intently to the people who filled the pews, those in life-long intimate relationship with

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\textsuperscript{53} Pope Paul VI, \textit{Dignitatis Humanae}, #2. Note: The technologies referred to in this document are biomedical. Nonetheless, the reference has merit as the fisheries has been seriously exploited by so-called progressive, human engineered fishing technologies.

\textsuperscript{54} Hollenbach and Shannon, “A Balancing Act”, \textit{America}, para. 4

\textsuperscript{55} Hollenbach, \textit{The Global Face of Public Faith}, 158.
this primary food source and way of life?” Would the Bishops in their letter to the Prime Minister, expressing grave anguish over this catastrophe still have “arrived at the scene a little breathlessly and a little late?”

As the cod fishery declined, this Church-local hierarchy failed to distinguish that the crisis in the fisheries was a crisis of the common good. And the sexual abuses of the underaged committed by priests and religious cannot be absolutely declared the root and cause for the Church’s silence at this pivotal time.

5.5 Clerical Sexual Abuse Scandals and Integrity of the Church

The cries of an endangered fishery were some ten years old, before news of these scandals broke in 1988. It was only with the revelation of these abuses that the institutional Church was rendered virtually ineligible to speak on any matter-religious, political, social. Against public outcry of betrayal, duplicity and treachery, the deafening hush of bishops, clergy and religious was merely punctuated with denials or excuses for wrongdoing. The cover up was seen as a strategy for the Church hierarchy to protect itself as an organization. This tactic evoked spiritual and moral damage as the perpetrator was once a pedestalized religious leader. In Newfoundland and Labrador, children were taught from early childhood to revere priests who tell them about God and religion; they were of impeccable moral

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56 I write this as a Newfoundlander and Catholic. With the gift of theological studies, has come the evoking of my own questions.

57 Bernard Lonergan, “Epilogue”, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan: Insight, A Study of Human Understanding, Fred Crowe and Robert Doran, eds (Toronto: Lonergan Research Institute, 2000) 755. Note: reference to the September 1992 bishops letter to the Government of Canada. This letter was issued two months after the moratorium was imposed. See Chapter Two. Here, reference is made to the 1992 and 1996 letters from the Newfoundland bishops to the Prime Minister of Canada, after the moratorium was imposed. The first letter was issued two months after the cod moratorium and the latter, some three years after the collapse of the fisheries. See chapters one and two.
The hallowed opinion of the ordained priests not only prevailed in matters of Church, but also had broader political and socio-cultural import. In a pejorative manner, the clerically-centred Catholic outport had become almost an ecclesiolatry. When the sexual abuse cases reached news headlines, Church leaders issued disclaimers against any accusation of impropriety. They resisted acknowledging that “the evils of sin, pride, and domination can be found in those who make up the Church.”

Eventually, when legal suits were brought against priests and religious accused of pedophilia, Church hierarchy failed to acknowledge the sheer ethical size of this problem. Reaching court settlements for financial compensation is just one of the tools of healing. The sexual abuse of children is not only a legal, but also a grave moral issue. The contrast between a consecrated clergy or religious and a perpetrator who sexually exploits children, demands stronger ethical response. Priests who used their position of trust and the presumption of moral integrity as a cover for sexual activity with the underaged and vulnerable, not only pervert the meaning and purpose of their office, but also the word of God. Such contempt shown for the dignity of their priestly office, raises the question as to how Church spiritual leaders in denial could care for the fish, the lives of their people and their way of being in community, when they did not care for the good of their children?

Where Hollenbach has urged the magisterium to apologize publicly for the wrongdoings of its ordained clergy, he challenges the Church establishment and the people to live in healthier relationship with one another. This compels the Church leadership to name

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58 In rural Catholic Newfoundland and Labrador, especially places like all-Catholic St. Mary’s, priests were regarded as being almost sinless. A pyramidal understanding of the Church with the ordained priests at the top and lay people at the bottom, prevailed, allowing little room for collegiality. The priest had a very visible identity in the community. People, despite their legacy of contribution to the parish community had little or no notion that they were co-responsible for the life and mission of the Church.

59 Hollenbach, The Common Good and Christian Ethics, 128.
and own its own sins, namely the sexual abuse of children. This issue can no longer be shrouded under the veil of secrecy, if the Church is to once again work out its mission with the people. Theologian and social activist, Mary Jo Leddy concludes that for the Church to acknowledge it is “a beaten-down reality” is also a paradox, for

the Church has to speak within culture. The Church should and could say to political and social leaders of our country: we too were once and powerful; we too were once listened to and respected. We too were once the center of our particular world. Now we have been humiliated; we have become powerless and without influence. Nevertheless, we still have the capacity to do good. We have to let go of the illusions of greatness so that we can be good once again. 60

The on-going public exposure to clerical sexual abuse charges, despite the humiliation, actually gives the Church the opportunity to awaken itself to the insufficiencies of its own past. Once official inquiries and media interest fades in these scandals, it will be revealed that these bringers of religion, culture and education to Catholic Newfoundland and Labrador had not really continued to engage in the life-giving issues of the people. During the fisheries crisis, bishops, priests and religious did not strive to empower people to act together “in reciprocal respect for one another’s dignity.” 61 Such action can be a primary incentive for helping restore a sense of loyalty between Church and the general community. Hollenbach allows: “Building a community that empowers everyone to attain their full potential through each of us respecting each other's dignity, rights and responsibilities makes the world a better place to live.” 62

5.6. Common Good: Community Identity

He adds that where people are naturally called to participate in community, “they presume the existence of a moral community to which all human beings belong. At the

60 Mary Jo Leddy, The Other Face of God, 138.

62 Ibid., 138.
minimum, being treated justly means being treated as a member of the community and in accord with the common human dignity shared by all people.” Hollenbach elaborates that “when communities are small or intermediate in size, they enable persons to come together in ways that can be vividly experienced. The bonds of communal solidarity formed in them enable persons to act together, empowering them to shape some of the contours of public life and some of its larger social institutions such as the state and economy.” This organically structured character of small communities almost instinctively inclines members towards the common life, the goals and commitment to these home places.

But at the same time, small rural communities such as those spaced along the Newfoundland and Labrador shoreline need not be idealized. They should not be simply assumed places of mere cordiality, courtesy, or sociability. Such romantic sentimentalization is prone to conceal their cruelties, shortcomings and failures. The history of rural Newfoundland and Labrador is telling: residents are not strangers to the sins of commission and omission of fallen humanity. Most familiar sins are those attested to in years of fishers tolerating abuse by fish merchants, their government allies, and more recently the overfishing of the northern cod. The extinction of the first inhabitants - the Beothuks, countless episodes of sectarian rivalries erupting in violence and fierce fracases between settlers, are all evidence of sins committed by our own people to our own people.

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64 Hollenbach, *The Global face of Public Faith*, 177.
65 The Beothuk peoples, a hunter-gatherer society who probably spoke an Algonkian language, were indigenous to the island of Newfoundland. This is recorded in the annals of European explorers. These people either met violent deaths at the hands of European settlers, or died from starvation or from a tuberculosis epidemic. By 1829, the Beothucks were declared extinct. See James P. Howley, *The Beothuck or Red Indians of Newfoundland* (Toronto: Prospero Books, 2000).
66 See D.W. Prowse, *A History of Newfoundland* (Portugal Cove: Newfoundland: Boulder Publications, 2002). The first addition was published in 1895. Prowse was a judge. As a trained jurist, he had intimate knowledge of the competitions, jealousies and enmities brought before the courts in his day.
Their rustic narrative almost overrun with quixotic, adoring lore of a hard-working, independent, gratifying way of life has been the bearer of much worry and misery of biblical proportions. There are years in which they fished and caught plenty and then fished and caught nothing (Lk. 5:5). The destruction of the cod is clear evidence that not all is wholesome, eventful and imaginative in these outports. The reality is that their society has changed radically since the Europeans first lowered into the deep, to come ashore.

For five hundred years, fishing helped deepen community self-understanding. Now that the fish have gone, community identity has been critically distorted. Profiteering ambitions prompted by greed, disintegrated the traditional way of life. These small places are no longer actively functioning as fishing communities. As with the boats, the people are left idle with little option but to access government subsidies and increments available for the short term. For the young labour force, this is hardly a viable option. So, they move away.

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67 The Atlantic Fisheries Adjustment Program was initiated in 1990. A sum of $604 million was allocated over an eight year period. By 1993, two-thirds of the funds had been spent. The Northern Cod Adjustment and Recovery Program (NCARP) was a two-year program, instituted in 1992 to support fishers and fish plant workers, and to provide economic adjustment. These included provisions for retraining, early retirement and licence retirement. The $1.9 billion Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS) program was introduced in 1994. As with NCARP, the program had both income support and economic adjustment components. Unlike NCARP, the program had an explicit adjustment objective: a fifty percent reduction in capacity in the industry. As with NCARP, the income support component of the program was oversubscribed, attracting over 40,000 applicants. As a result, the government announced that the income maintenance program would terminate a year early, in 1998. This program with both income support and economic adjustment objectives ended up producing considerable income maintenance, but almost no economic adjustment. See Dr. Noel Roy, *The Newfoundland Fishery A Descriptive Analysis* (St. John’s: Department of Economics, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1997). Prepared for a Symposium on the Efficiency of North Atlantic Fisheries, Reykjavik, Iceland, September 12-13, 1997, accessed Mar. 4, 2015, http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~noelroy/NfFishery.text.html.

5.6.1 Outmigration From Community

Inadequate employment opportunities force mainly the young workforce to leave their rural homes. Large differences between wages offered in government-make-work projects in Newfoundland and Labrador, and those of the tar sands of Alberta, lure the younger generation to settle permanently or commute West on a regular basis. The labour phenomenon is changing the face of Newfoundland and Labrador. Prospects of at home community growth - economic, social and cultural, are dulled with low income and low productivity.

The exodus from rural Newfoundland and Labrador which intensified in the 1990s has been costly to community identity. The overharvesting of the cod fishery deprived most of these small places of their economic base. The end result is a way of life that cannot be sustained through traditional local labour and income. The exit out of the province displaces families, changes the nature of the labour force, the household and the economy itself. A substantial percentage of whole families and children, the only living hope of the future of rural Newfoundland and Labrador, are growing up in the province’s larger centres or elsewhere in Canada and the world.70

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69 Alberta’s oil patch at Fort McMurray estimates that about 20 per cent of the employees working for its contractors are Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. As many as 1,700 are commuters from Newfoundland and Labrador. They’ll fly in for 20 days of work and then fly back home for eight days. The cycle is repeated again and again. Workers are drawn to jobs that often start above $100,000 per year, not including overtime. See “Long Commute, Huge Rewards: Alberta Oil Patch Changing N.L. Labour Force”, CBC News Newfoundland and Labrador, (Oct. 29, 2007), accessed Mar. 10, 2015, http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/long-commute-huge-rewards-alberta-oilpatch-changing-n-l-labour-force-1.650537 .

70 While the greater percentage of the migrant population lives in or is working in Alberta, there is also a percentage of the young trained workforce, such as engineers and geologists who are employed in places like Texas or as far away as Australia. Another significant portion of the educated workforce have found employment in St. John’s.
Hollenbach protests “that one of the basic rights of people is not to be driven from their homes. Put positively, people have the right to remain at home.” He points out that when people of entire communities have been systematically blocked from their right and opportunity to access their primary natural resource, social, political, economic and ecological exclusion follows. People such as those still choosing to live in the outports, for example are beginning to count less and less in the nation’s human family. Those who decide to stay in their remote communities become victims of such defamatory slurs as those of Globe and Mail columnist, Margaret Wente:

This hallowed policy of siphoning money from the haves to the have-nots, so that everyone can be equal, has turned Canada into a permanently aggrieved nation, in which every region of the country is convinced that it’s being brutally ripped off by every other region.... Newfoundland’s population has dwindled. Because of stupendous political malfeasance, it is at least $11 billion in debt. But it still has seven federal seats. And so we send more money so that people can stay in the scenic villages where they were born, even though the fish are gone and there’s no more work and never will be. Rural Newfoundland (along with our great land north of 60) is probably the most vast and scenic welfare ghetto in the world.

Native Newfoundlander, Rex Murphy replies:

Try going to Long Harbour, or Burgeo, or Lamaline, or St. Anthony, or Port de Grave and meet with some of the men and women who have worked, really worked, for a living, Margaret -- and try telling them to their faces they’re the spoiled delinquents of your furious imagination. Try telling the same to those who, after a life of work, have nothing, and have abandoned their homes and history to find work elsewhere. As for the money being poured into Newfoundland while we stare out the scenic bay, keep in mind the billion dollars a year going outward from Churchill Falls. Churchill Falls alone nullifies the equalization debt. ... Restock (and return) the Continental Shelf, turn back Churchill Falls and, one last thing, rescind the contemptible practice - - that obviously has appeal to very limited natures -- of dealing in caricature and stereotype, and maligning an entire province on the basis of little more than ill-acquaintance and condescension.

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72 Hollenbach, The Common Good and Christian Ethics, 81
Murphy’s retort lends dexterity to Hollenbach’s contention that “exclusion should be challenged from a normative perspective that sees the protection of human dignity and the achievement of social participation” in their own home.\textsuperscript{75} The loss of the cod resulted in young people moving away, and ageism rapidly catching up on the life-expectancy of these small-scale fishing communities. Where itinerancy supplants permanency, traditional and well-integrated patterns of social and economic relationships have broken down. They have not been replaced with new ones. Citizens of these once thriving fishing communities are denied a basic human right, the right to work.

5.7 Human Work: Fishing – A Human Right

Hollenbach, in deference to the rights and dignity of the worker, restates \textit{LE} that “the Church finds in the very first pages of the \textit{Book of Genesis} the source of her conviction that work is a fundamental dimension of human existence on earth.”\textsuperscript{76} No person, for this reason, should be prevented from engaging in productive employment. Hollenbach warns that idleness or habitual unemployment is anti-social and is destructive not only to the dignity and self-worth of the human person but also to the community as a whole.\textsuperscript{77} The collapse of the North Atlantic cod fishery debased the dignity of those 40,000 people dismissed to joblessness. Unemployment played havoc on the health and stability of hard-working fishing communities.

\textsuperscript{75} Hollenbach, \textit{The Common Good and Christian Ethics}, 222. In this case he is referring specifically to African countries; but his considered opinion is consequential for any place bearing the burden of socio-economic-political marginalization.


\textsuperscript{77} Hollenbach, \textit{Justice, Peace and Human Rights}, 62.
communities. Absence of work devalued the worth of the human labours of the citizenry. No fish just about ended this 500 year old industry and way of life.78 To reiterate Trinity Anglican minister, Michael Calderwood, “if the fishermen can’t fish, it puts their whole identity into peril.”79

LE singles out work as bearing “the particular mark of a person operating within a community of persons”; work is the vehicle through which communities and a person’s creativity can prosper.80 Self-employed inshore fishers in Newfoundland and Labrador are experienced business people. They had to be skilled at their trade, knowing the when, where and why of fishing. Hollenbach recognizes that “through such contributions, individual persons are in turn enabled to discover the meaning and value of their own lives as children of God, the creator.”81

But lack of employment diminishes their sense of value and self-worth. Chronic unemployment gradually erodes their fishing expertise and their familiarity with their skills handed down to them by their ancestors. A community without work experiences a mammoth crisis of their common good. Hollenbach elaborates:

When citizens tolerate such conditions when remedial steps could be taken, injustice is being done and the common good undermined. One can hardly think of a more effective way to deny people active participation in the economic life of society than to leave them facing unemployment for years, even over generations. ... The extent of their suffering shows how far we are from being a community at all.82

Although central and intrinsic to the narrative and history of this maritime society and culture, the Church in Newfoundland and Labrador failed to affirm its own social teachings,

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78 See Yetman, “The Catholic Church and The Fishery Crisis”.
79 Ryan Cleary, “Fishery Failure Puts Our Identity In Peril: Minister”, The Evening Telegram. Note: Trinity, Trinity Bay is a fishing community located on the east coast of Newfoundland and Labrador.
80 Pope John Paul II, Laborem Exercens, “Initial Blessing”.
81 Hollenbach, Justice Peace and Human Rights, 59.
and protect the dignity of fishers, by honouring their work as a human right. Work induces people to breathe life into the common ethos of empathy and mutual respect in communion with each other. Hollenbach determines that “a Christian theology of work should insist work’s prime meaning is bonding to community. This kind of work ethic is close to the heart of Christian faith.”

The fishing occupation confers not only “important markers of self-identity on individual persons and community, but a satisfaction bonus as well, which cannot be measured on economic grounds alone”. Among many inshore fishers who work at sea year after year, fishing is regarded not merely as a means of ensuring their livelihoods, but as a desirable and meaningful way of spending one’s life. Hollenbach corroborates that “the imago dei motif ... emphasizes that in work human beings, must remain true agents and that both means of production and fruit of labour are at the service of the work. .... work is not simply merchandise to be brought and sold.”

These members of small-scale fishing communities who for generations fished at sea with the ocean at their door, had ready access to living marine resources. This enabled them to lay claim to many human skills, competencies, beliefs, values, commitments, and abilities.

83 *Rerum Novarum* recognized the rights of the worker in light of the overwhelming power the employer or owner held over the means of production. *Centessimus Annus*, #54 upheld the worker as the “the firm’s most valuable asset”. *Laborem Exercens* declares that the interests and rights of labour as taking precedence over those of capital.


86 On many occasions, from 1986-1989, fishers at the Petty Harbour Co-op reminded the author that they loved fishing. They did not fish for the money as they could earn much more elsewhere. They just got a lot of satisfaction from rising in the early morning, navigating their small boats to the fishing grounds, and just catching fish.

Fishing at sea requires high degrees of independence, self-reliance, autonomy, risk taking, and outdoor work challenging nature. What all of these characteristics hold in common is their capacity to address socio-economic-eco-environmental challenges as theological-ethical issues. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God’s creation.

5.7.1 Human Work: Fishing and the Environment

Fish long preceded human presence in these North Atlantic waters. In 1492, John Cabot reported such abundance of cod there that they could be caught with a basket lowered over the side of a boat. The traditional hook and line gear to follow extended from the side of a small boat helped shape and constrain the organization, conduct, and productivity of fishing activities. Inshore fishers for centuries had little to rely on but sail and oar power. The technologies and associated materials they utilized, figure importantly in their fisher-community-cultural-ecological-environmental identities. Inshore fishing methods demand that a fisher fishes responsibly and respects the species pursued. These simple fishing technologies are user-friendly and adaptive to the marine ecosystem.

The harvesting potential of more traditional inshore fishing gear is immeasurably smaller than that of the offshore dragger fleet. Unable to fish very far from shore, fishers stay out fishing for shorter periods of time. Catches must be landed before they spoil. In the late twentieth century, this left them at a disadvantage with their offshore competitors. Their

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90 See Peter Firstbrook, The Voyage of The Matthew, 129.

value became undermined with the emphasis on financial gain. Fishing methods became automated, to fish mainly for money.

Switching from traditional technologies to new ones has resulted in heightened levels of ecosystem destruction and resource depletion. Pope John XXIII notified: “The result is a vast expenditure of human energy and natural resources on projects which are disruptive of human society rather than beneficial to it.” The devastating impact on recipient Newfoundland and Labrador fishing communities is almost analogous to introducing an unfamiliar species of unidentified origin in a marine ecosystem, without first assessing its potential impact on the indigenous species already living there. Hollenbach adds that in this analogical scale are non-personal beings such as rocks, plants and non-human animals. These form collectivities whose members are in coordinated interaction with one another. The shared good of such an aggregation of non-personal beings is the harmonious interaction of a physical system, a hive or a herd. The non-personal shared good is intrinsically valuable, as environmental concerns certainly reveal.

This ecological-environmental travesty begs questions whether the right of humans to work automatically gives them complete discretion to regulate and utilize planetary resources; what are the outcomes if these resources are managed exclusively in the interests of the privileged elite of the human populace? The vast pace of so-called development has led to many unwanted results.

Hollenbach’s theology establishes that the existence of the ecosystem is critical to understanding the patterns of life on earth. He points to the inescapable inter-relatedness of all life. All living and non-living creatures, human and non-human live within some kind of ecosystem and relate or influence each other and their environment. The distribution,

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abundance of living organisms and the interactions among and between these organisms and their environment, authenticate the reciprocal relationship of all in our entire planet.

The understanding of the human person as wholly relational within the ecosystem is validated by the personal communion of the Trinity. The relevance of the Trinity to the communion of human persons and the universe at large, generates a unified sense of the sacred community of life that is essential to the good. As Thomas Berry puts it: “The universe story is the divine story, the story of the trees, the story of the rivers, of the stars, the planets, everything”. We are human and also a part of our natural environment. The Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I affirms:

Each of us must do our part so that our natural environment as it has been handed down by God to the first created people of the Garden of Eden, to work and keep the earth of the garden unharmed. ... The rapacious exploitation of natural resources which derives from greed and not from extraordinary circumstances of need entails a debilitation of nature to the extent that it cannot renew its own cultural productive power.

The gratuitous exploitation the northern cod fishery, its destruction of the flora, fauna and variety of dependant environs, resulting in the loss of thousands of jobs, shows just how catastrophic overfishing can be for people as well as the environment. This can hardly be regarded as inconsequential to the good of the person, the community, the earth and to the attainment of the higher good. The fact that human engineered technologies manipulated the North Atlantic ocean’s diversity of life and threatened its deep sea habitats, vindicates

Hollenbach’s expressed unease with the human-dominated view over nature stressed in Catholic social teaching.  

The collapse of the Canadian east coast cod fishery imposed profound ecological-environmental change not only on this maritime community, but it also deprived a significant portion of the world’s population of its food supply. The overfishing, reflective mainly of an excessive Canadian offshore effort, may have been avoided if Church leaders had sought and encouraged the “cooperation of many people working towards a common goal”.  

5.8 Church and Community.  

The Church, in Augustine’s view is the symbol and model of human society as intended by God. His vision of a heavenly city or kingdom, ruled by love ultimately triumphs over all self-indulgent earthly empires ruled by pride. For this reason, the Church on earth is called to help ensure stability on socio-economic-ecclesial-eco-environmental levels. Hollenbach maintains that the “ordinary and prophetic role of the Church is in developing principles and advocating the Christian perspectives that should shape the day by day decisions of citizens and public figures.” He is confident that both the Church and the world can learn from each other:

The chief implication of this for the Church’s social mission of the church today is that the church’s participation in public affairs must proceed according to a mode of dialogue and persuasion....This role can be played, however, only to the extent that faith and theology are seen as participants in the drama that involves numerous other actors. The church is not the producer or director of this drama. God is-.”

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97 Hollenbach, *Justice, Peace and Human Rights*, 38. While Hollenbach identifies this as a problem in Catholic social teaching, here, he is more specifically referring to *Laborem Exercens.*
98 Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, #32. Decisions as to allocating fish catches were and continue to be a Federal Government responsibility.
99 See St. Augustine, *City of God.*
101 Ibid., 13.
A fisheries in crisis saw the leaders of the Church-local unformed or strengthened by a Vatican II ecclesiology; they were circumspect as to what questions to ask and how to act with principle. The fisheries failed and neither crew nor clergy could properly discern their vocational calling to share in the responsibility of this unfolding drama of their own experience in history. Despite the Church’s historic centrality to the culture and way of life of these fishing communities, the detachment of Church leaders from the struggles of these communities demonstrated a grave insensitivity to the needs of these people in their time and place. Douglas Hall elucidates “not only caring about the *time* but also caring about the *place* in which one is called gives a reason for one’s hope. Sensitivity to *place* is vital... is sensitivity to the *times*.\(^{102}\)

The Church in Newfoundland and Labrador failed itself as a Eucharistic community. The Eucharist distinguishes it from all other communities. In this most central celebration of Christian identity and community, Hollenbach sees a moral imperative to do justice.\(^{103}\) This daily celebration of the common meal commissions this faith community to enter into the experience of deep love with each other and all God’s kingdom. Despite human differences, the Church is redeemed by Christ to live the Beatitudes to our full humanity and foster a deep solidarity with God and all God’s creation. Hollenbach’s notion of the common good demands “full respect for the many different forms of interrelationship and community in which human beings achieve their good in history.”\(^{104}\)

The problem with the Church in Newfoundland and Labrador at the time of the fisheries disaster, is that it was almost totally and utterly clerically-centred and disincarnated

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\(^{104}\) Hollenbach, *The Common Good and Christian Ethics*, 8 and 139.
from daily life. Today, Pope Francis reminds that the Church is not the exclusive domain of the clergy. The Church “is not ours, but God’s; and how many times do we, consecrated men and women, think that the Church is ours!... But it is not ours! It is God’s. The field to be cultivated is his”.105

This Church as the people of God is called to meet change within itself by particularly remembering events that continue to shape its relationship with Christ. This includes willingness to recall and forgive the sins of its own past, those of government, industry and even its own clergy who fell into disrepute. The Church on this rock within the sea106 is not dead. In faith this is not the last word. As one, holy Catholic community, its strength is contingent on its coming of age, in conceding to its own brokenness and growing up in Christ (Eph.4: 15).

The Church in Newfoundland and Labrador is constrained to readjust its time-honoured structure and infrastructure to the needs of the erratic, blustery, tidal culture and society of its time. The Church’s mission presses it to outgrow its own insularity and tie its centuries of traditions and customs to the needs of this ocean populace. The Church’s lived reality has time and again midwifed the painful and challenging experiences of these people. This Church knows that these experiences in themselves, symbolically and in reality engender a consciousness that only deepen the expressions of their maritime identity.

Hollenbach contends that “that the moral imagination of Christians is shaped by all the fundamental symbols and doctrines of the Christian faith.”107 The symbol of Church as a

105 Pope Francis I, Homily to Seminarians, Novices and Those Discerning Their Vocation, # 3.
106 Farley Mowat, A Heritage Lost: This Rock Within The Sea, Photographs by John de Visser (Toronto: McLellan and Stewart, 1968). This book is a testament to the strength and genuiness of the people of the south coast of Newfoundland. These people were slowly forced from their communities by government policies, into the larger centers in the province.

107 Hollenbach, Justice, Peace and Human Rights, 195.
“holdin’ ground”, a firm, secure place in the ocean floor to drop anchor, I propose, best epitomizes the vocation of today’s Church in Newfoundland and Labrador. In 1972, Newfoundland playwright, Ted Russel reflected through his iconic Uncle Ben:

Thinkin’ about how weak are things that try to pull men apart-differences in colours, creeds, and opinions – weak things like ripples tuggin’ at the schooner’s chain. And thinkin’ about how strong are the things that hold men together-strong like Joe’s anchor, and the chain and the good holdin’ ground below. Why in Pigeon Inlet we’ve got things stronger even than dyin’.108

The Church in Newfoundland and Labrador in its most profound expression of its lived reality is their “holdin’ ground.” A Church offering safe harbour to its people, as “the sacrament of Christ, this human community in which the saving grace of Christ is made visible through the presence of grace ... comes to its most symbolic expression [of] God’s covenanted love, the most radical basis of unity and solidarity.”109

5.9 Conclusion

During the fisheries crisis, this Church by the sea seemed not to think of this vast, rich, renewable natural resource as a gift of God, as a shared inheritance. By closing in on itself and its past, this Church in the words of Pope Francis “betrayed her own identity.”110 By merely seeing its role as parochial ministering to harbour front communities, the institutional Church did not avail to work through the religious, spiritual, social and material realities of these maritime people. It failed to treat the crisis in the fisheries as a crisis of the common good.

Hollenbach’s Christian faith community renewed is committed to a shared local, national and global vision of the common good. He is convinced that the good of human

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109 Hollenbach, Justice, Peace and Human Rights, 195.
beings “regarded one at a time cannot exist without some measure of sharing in the common good.”

His communal emphasis on human nature attested to in the doctrine of the Trinity, provides a strong foundation on which to build a vision of the common good in Newfoundland and Labrador, in the aftermath of their ill-fated fishery. His theological vision reinforces Pope John Paul II’s recognition of the legitimate voice of the faithful of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador as “the guiding principle in looking for alternate solutions.”

Hollenbach’s emphasis on the inextricable link between the socio-economic-eco-enviro-spiritual well-being of each and every place, territory and nation gives blessing to a Church willing to be more open to itself. A more open Church is free to offer critical reflection that affects its practice not only in its own life of faith but also to those outside it. A Church determined to support those riding the tides of upheaval and uncertainty, more than ever is the earthly embodiment of the common good: “If one member suffers, all suffer together with it: if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it”. (1 Cor. 12: 26).

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112 Pope John Paul II, *Address to Members of the Fishing Community*, #3.
Chapter Six

Conclusion

In this thesis, I set out to establish that the relation of the leadership of the Catholic Church in Newfoundland and Labrador to the fisheries crisis of 1986-1992 was inadequate. Considered alongside the other major participants - governments, industry and the fisher’s union, this institutional Church-local, in my judgment failed to respond to the crisis in the fisheries as a crisis of the common good. When the world’s largest cod fishery was being decimated, this home Church by the sea did not see that the crisis summoned them to action and leadership.

The Christian imperative of love, justice and mercy so as to serve the needs of common good, began more than two thousand years ago with the teachings of Christ on the shores of Galilee. When the fate of fishery was meeting its severest test, the principles of the common good - respect for human dignity, community and participation, care for creation, dignity in work, peace and reconciliation, solidarity and subsidiarity were compromised. These complementary principles had been addressed in more than two millennia of Catholic social tradition, and repeatedly articulated in roughly one hundred years of Catholic social teaching. Although insistently restated in the documents of Vatican II and reinforced in approximately fifteen years of CCCB social justice statements, they were effectively ignored by Church leaders in Newfoundland and Labrador. Nine of the major Catholic social encyclicals were promulgated in the years more immediately prior to and during the devastation of the fish stocks.¹ The CCCB statements were issued in the time leading up to and in the middling years of the crisis.²

¹ See “Papal Encyclicals” in the Bibliography section, 286 -287.
² See “Catholic Social Teachings, statements and Commentaries” Bibliography, 287-292.
David Hollenbach’s common good reinterpreted in light of this extensive Catholic social tradition, in my judgment, is sufficiently articulated to examine and assess the relation of the leadership of Catholic Church-local to this massive socio-economic, spiritual and eco-environmental catastrophe. Hollenbach’s experiences in the highly stratified economies of the politically and socially diverse cultures of Africa and the marginalized in urban America, establishes that the needs of the common good are not identical with those of the more affluent western world. Where this thesis affirms that the common good cannot be defined unequivocally, it similarly corroborates that requirements of the common good are not the same in fledgling rural as opposed to highly developed, privileged Western economies. Nor are they the same in times of abundance as opposed to times of scarcity. Yet, over time, the notion of the common good has had consistent interpretations literally and metaphorically. Among the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, there is a general consensus on the meaning and value of what is just, right and fair for everyone. This is why Hollenbach’s notion of the common good is sufficiently authoritative to bring to scrutiny the institutional Church-local’s relation to maritime peoples, suffering the loss of their fisheries.

Hollenbach’s treatise on the common good, in essence takes into question the relation of the official Church in Newfoundland and Labrador to the people, when their primary food source and way of life was being brought to ruin. The untold damage imposed on the progress and stability of these five hundred year old fishing communities, presented immense challenges to the advancement of their social, economic, and spiritual life. Even Pope John Paul II’s 1984 Address to Fishing Communities did not entice local Church leaders to intercede in or attempt to mediate tensions between major participants in the fishing industry, during the crisis. Bishops, priests and religious were not moved to take counsel from the
urgent message of their supreme pontiff, when he spoke to their own people. In doing so, they devalued the importance of their own Church’s social teachings and minimized the end toward which the common good aspires: for people to live in solidarity with each other, society, with God and all God’s creation.

By stressing the higher value of love and advancing the disposition of intellectual solidarity, David Hollenbach creates a spirit by which the common good in Newfoundland and Labrador can flourish. Through encouraging the engagement of all points of view, he esteems the dignity of these maritime people and their right to access, participate in and fully experience the common good. His writings propose the creation of society in which sinful social structures that dehumanize the human person are transformed into structures that enhance the dignity of each person. His vision of a more historically-conscious Church actively adapting its own social teachings to the needs of the society it serves, reproves the clerically-centred Church that prevailed in Newfoundland and Labrador when fishing communities and the resources on which they depended were endangered.

Although Hollenbach acknowledges the non-partisan political relationship, the Church must have with the state, he still contends that the Church’s voice must be heard in culturally, economically, politically, ecologically and religiously diverse environs.³ His notion of the common good is amenable to a Newfoundland and Labrador people who have lost their cod fishery, the basis, source and foundation of their socio-economic, political, eco-cultural and spiritual identity. His vision of a Church committed to the common good, urges openness and attentiveness to the day-day experiences of these people, whose lives are connected either directly or indirectly with the fishery, as fishers, fish plant workers, plant owners, and employees in related or dependent businesses. His common good reenvisioned

³ See Chapter Five, 233-234.
adjures the Church to be wakeful and vigilant to the signs of the times and interpret them in light of the gospel. \(^4\) Hollenbach’s theology of the common good expects the Church to actively respond to the needs and experiences of these vulnerable, marginalized people of the deep.

The first two chapters set the context for framing the thesis question: “During the fisheries crisis, why did the Catholic Church in Newfoundland and Labrador fail to engage its own social teachings on the common good and thus fail to treat the crisis of the fisheries as a crisis of the common good?” A brief summation of the five hundred year old history of Newfoundland and Labrador brought to light the people’s common great tradition of the fishery, distinguishing these fishing communities as unique socially, economically, religiously and culturally. Events leading up to the demise of the fisheries while differentiating the roles of the major participants, sets the stage for a fishery, a Church and a society in decline.

A fiercely partisan, parochial Church leadership in earlier and preconciliar times prefigures a more politically muted Church establishment in the mid-twentieth century. From a Church hierarchy, sparring intensely with government, emerges a post-Vatican II church-local, protective and fearful of actively invoking Catholic social teachings and participating in the near ultimate challenge of their lives, the fisheries catastrophe of 1986-1992. Their discretion and prudence in matters public, conceivably influenced by former years of indiscretion, intolerance and political confrontation of a commanding, strong-willed Church hierarchy, which respected few boundaries between Church and state.

This Church serving fishing communities, as well lost a considerable sense of purpose and unity with the revelations of the clerical sexual abuse scandals. Where this

\(^4\) Vatican II, \textit{Gaudium et Spes}. 
executive style, clerically-centred institutional Church continued to prevail through the post-Vatican II period, its spiritual, social and ecclesial status was put in grave danger with the incarceration and defrocking of convicted priests and religious.

David Hollenbach has renounced the Church’s attempt to conceal clerical sexual abuses of minors. For the Church to mend and repair its reputation and relation to society, he insists that it must come public and name and admit to its own sins. Yet, the crisis in the fisheries was at a near irreversible critical stage when these scandals erupted. In Hollenbach’s way of thinking, this post-conciliar Church leadership demonstrated an inadequate ecclesiology, in its indifference to or tolerance of a fishery in crisis. It discounted the purpose and intent of *Dignitatis Humanae* (*DH*) which advocated for a public role for Church.\(^5\) Hollenbach qualifies that

> the Church’s social role must always be religious in nature and finality. Nevertheless the exercise of this will frequently have politically significant consequences... [Here] moral values and virtues are the mediating link between the religious and the political, and action to strengthen this link is the proper way for the churches to influence the political.\(^6\)

DH countenances Hollenbach’s view of a Church public, which in time of injustices is compelled to actively meet the need of the common good of their people. The Catholic Church in Newfoundland and Labrador, despite frictions and factions within the faith community, had a responsibility to empower these people to defend their right to fish and preserve their dignity as human beings in a way that is open to ultimate fulfillment in God. A Church leadership, unforthcoming to the cries of a people when their way of life and the basis of their vocation in work were coming to a desperate end, defies the purpose and intention of the common good. Hollenbach emphasizes that the teachings of *DH* insists on

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\(^5\) See Vatican II, *Dignitatis Humane*, # 11.
each person’s inalienable right to the common good, in asserting their human dignity.

Vatican II shaped a coherent and sustainable approach to Christian anthropology and Christian statecraft. Both Hollenbach and Thomas A. Shannon accord:

the Catholic tradition requires respect for the church’s right to play an active role in public life. The Catholic understanding of religious freedom stands in sharp contrast to secularizing approaches to public life and privatistic interpretations of the place of religion. Since the Catholic moral tradition sees the promotion of the common good as the principal purpose of law and politics… [this] approach will enable the church to contribute to the common good, remain faithful to its own true identity and respect all its fellow citizens.  

As stated earlier in this concluding chapter and as chapter two substantiates, the Newfoundland and Labrador pre-conciliar Church leadership was not unfamiliar with interventions in state matters. But despite the problematic nature of their partisan political activity, when the fish were being fished out, the post-conciliar Church-local was duty-bound to incarnate Church social teachings in its work and mission with these ocean people. A Church actively witnessing to people’s human right to work - fish for a living, and work with respect and responsibility for the sea’s ecology and ecosystem, Hollenbach points out, cannot be taken to mean as “unjustified meddling in politics.” Even at the time of the crisis, Church-local interventions in such matters of the state as education, abortion, and euthanasia were virtually common place. More than twenty years after the second Vatican Council, this Church by the sea ignored its own lengthy tradition of teachings on the common good. It did not make connections between the health of the fishery and the common good of its own people.

Where Chapter Three bears out that the development of the understanding of the common good is far from a newcomer to Catholic social tradition, that it was not suddenly

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conceived at Vatican II, it also establishes that has been interpreted differently in various times and cultures. But regardless of historical-socio-economic-cultural-ecclesial changes and shifts, the teachings still uphold the human right of each and every person to work and live in dignity. Catholic social teachings proclaim the Church as facilitator, defender and advocate of this right. Pope Paul VI’s *Populorum Progressio* aptly asserted: “when we … oppose the unfair conditions of the present, we are not just promoting human well-being; we are also furthering man’s spiritual and moral development, and hence we are benefiting the whole human race.” Post 1967 encyclicals (LE, SRS, and CA) continued to pick up on the socio-economic and political conditions that widened the gap between the rich and the poor. These encyclicals criticized many features of modern socio-economic life that oppress and diminish human life.

Despite the Catholic Church’s sizeable legacy of teachings opposing unfair social structures and unjust practices that inhibit human development, during the fisheries crisis the institutional Church in Newfoundland and Labrador protectively stood by and watched this industrial carnage, pressing these people to the margins and beyond. Except for the contributions of a few pastors, these consecrated clergy did not give active credence to the urgent pleas of Pope John Paul II who raised awareness to “the kind of insecurity [the people suffered because of] changed conditions in the fishing industry.” Nor did they follow through on his directives for fishers to organize themselves, as he reassured them of their human dignity and worth, while condemning the corporate tendency of major fish companies

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9 Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, #76.

10 Pope John Paul II, *Address to Members of the Fishing Community*, #s 3 and 5.
to reduce them to street merchandise, by “responding only to the forces of the marketplace.”

Considered within the social, spiritual and economic paradigm of the common good, the dignity of these people was belittled by the ominous forces of a foreboding market economy, timorous governments on the defensive, the gluttonous appetite of greedy industry magnates and a nervous, unresponsive Church leadership. In their apprehensiveness, the Church hierarchy gave little authority to the gospel of love, to love one another unconditionally from the depths of our hearts. This benchmark of Catholic social teaching, reconstituted in Hollenbach’s treatise on the common good, was thought no more of as the pleas of victims of a dying fisheries were not supported by those higher up in the home ecclesias.

Hollenbach makes the case that innocent human persons are the principal sufferers of misguided forms of social, political, economic and religious life. His theology of the common good rejects indiscriminate toleration of excessive ecological, social and economic exploitation. A destroyed fishery cannot be accepted merely as fate, predetermined by inevitable conditions or courses of events. The devastation of this enormous, renewable natural resource and way of life cannot be regarded with indifference, or seen merely as the will of God, as being unavoidable because of the way things are and were. Hollenbach emphasizes the need to encourage those immobilized by such unwarranted injustice to build up and renew forms of participatory, reciprocal human relationships using the strength and

11 Ibid., # 4.

integrity of the disposition of intellectual solidarity for the revitalization of their common good.13

Chapter Four in its examination of Hollenbach’s reinterpretation of the theological-ethical dimensions of the notion of the common good, points to “a normative vision of the common good [that] in its full global reach involves commitment to a community that is universal in scope and takes the differences among peoples and cultures with the full seriousness they deserve”.14 He insists that suffering people are entitled to be treated justly; they have the right to work and live in good relation with their environment. This presses the Church to take action on the basis that “the needs of the poor take priority over the wants of the rich… [and] the participation of the marginalized groups takes priority over an order which excludes them.”15 In its negligible response to the pleas and entreaties of these hurting people, the official Church in this easternmost province repressed solidarity and subsidiarity as ethical imperatives of their own social teachings. Solidarity and subsidiarity hold in high regard the dignity of all human beings, harmonizing their relationship with one another and all creation, cultivated through the virtue of love. Love guarantees the absolute right to contribute to, to experience and care for the common good. From Hollenbach’s perspective, the unwarranted silence and passive tolerance bear out that the institutional Church in Newfoundland and Labrador and the faith community failed to honour the requirements of the common good in the homeland of their own people.

Chapter Five establishes that Hollenbach’s theological vision affirms the right of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to participate in the common good at home, in the nation

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13 See Chapter Four, 191-192. See also Hollenbach, The Common Good and Christian Ethics, 22-56 and 137-165.
15 Hollenbach, Claims in Conflict, 203 and 207.
and in the world. This Church on the east coast is ever called to action, to do God’s will for creation. When fishing magnates were overharvesting the vast cod biomass, the Church, by choosing to be an insecure bystander, failed to honour the dignity of the fisher, the dignity of their work, and their human right to fish, considerate of the health of the cod biomass. In doing so, this Church turned its back on PP’s directive, to condemn systems of unchecked liberalism that consider “profits as the key motives for economic progress, … and private ownership of the means of production as an absolute right that has no limits and carries no corresponding social obligation.”\textsuperscript{16} This Church-local as a human/divine community, failed to remember and embrace its Trinitarian nature where unconditional love underlines the interrelationships of the three Persons of the Trinity. The requirements for their aggregate love is their mutual submission and self-giving to one another, to all people and to all that God has created.

Hollenbach explains that the moral obligations of the common good led Pope John XXIII “to understand both civil- political rights and socio-economic rights within a single integrated framework.”\textsuperscript{17} He points out that \textit{PT} provides the groundwork for the protection and coordination of everyone’s right of entry to the common good, a task that calls for organized action within society as a whole.\textsuperscript{18}

For the Church to be all-giving and all-loving, the vehicle of witness and hope against injustices, it must be committed to champion the human right of all Newfoundlanders and


\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 65.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 66.
Labradorians to meet their full potential. This will help breathe a newer, fresher theology into the life of this Church by the sea.

**A WAY FORWARD**

Hollenbach is adamant that the Church as a religious community “can make distinctive and perhaps unique contributions to the strength of civic life and the good of democratic self-government.”

This challenges the Church in Newfoundland and Labrador, clergy and laity alike to act as leaven, to transform attitudes within its own society and culture, and in the process purge it of values that militate against their dignity as human persons living in community. Hollenbach asserts that the “rights which protect human dignity are the rights of persons in community.”

This coastal Church overlooking the North Atlantic is called to be ever alert to the fact that this maritime society cannot flourish if it is excluded from participating in the life of community.

Chapter Three establishes that the Church turns to the example of God’s work in creation to express the great truths about God, human beings and their relation to the world in which they live. While the fish were being fished out, Church leaders in Newfoundland and Labrador failed to teach their members to think about morally difficult and emotionally charged public-political issues which are detrimental to everyone. Reflected on as earth justice, a Church that empowers people to remember the more they distance themselves from their natural world, their place with the sea - the more they struggle for a sense of meaningful accomplishment, of fulfillment. By living in solidarity with their ocean resources, the fish have a chance to return. Such ecclesial action showing care for fish, food and ways of

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21 See Chapter Three, 129-130.
livelihood gives hope to a Church that once seemed not to even care for its children. As the beneficiaries of such ecclesial action, these people, these men, women and children of Newfoundland and Labrador can come to realize that they are integral members of this human/divine family; they are “meant for the service of the common good.” 22

A Church living out its faith in the reality of the human experience of these maritime people, acts in the spirit of aggiornamento. Octagesima Adveniens (OA) further assures that a Church in action brings “a message of hope ... this can be done by brotherhood which is lived by concrete justice.” 23 A Church seeking just solutions for fishing communities reflecting critically on the robust history of more productive days of yore, positions itself to not only raise its own consciousness but the consciousness of the faith community, and of each and every Newfoundlander and Labradorian. These people of God have a right to participate fully in national and global economics and politics, in law and policy from within their own home community. As the instrument of Christ on earth, this institutional Church-local has a special opportunity to empower these seafaring people to actively pursue their own social, economic, cultural and spiritual well-being.

The destruction of this vast marine ecosystem causing untold socio-economic, ecological, cultural, political and spiritual harm, greatly destabilized the everyday life and threatened the very identity of not only the people of this easternmost province, but also the Church that served them. With proper management, the cod biomass had a sufficiency for not only home communities but also for the country and the world. But the presumption that this was an infinite resource which could be fished at will, contravenes the Church’s long-held teachings concerning humans in relation to their world.

22 Pope Francis I, Lumen Fidei, # 55.
23 Pope Paul VI, Octagesima Adveniens, #s 8 and 21.
More than twenty-five years before the cod moratorium was declared, GS had offered a view of wider participation of humans in politics and civil society, so as to contribute creatively to the culture, and build a world based on truth and justice.²⁴ In 1967, PP moved forwards a solidification of the Church teaching on the centrality of human beings within creation and also within human development.²⁵ From the 1970’s through to the early 1990’s, Pope John Paul II’s LE, SRS and CA continued to restate the need for humans to live harmoniously with the natural environment, while striving for social and economic development. The opening lines of Pope John Paul II’s 1990 message for World Day of Peace were “Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All of Creation”²⁶.

These shared teachings of the Church’s common past, presage Pope Benedict’s call to respect the God-like goodness of creation in which we all have a responsibility.²⁷ Pope Francis follows that “it is not enough to think of different species merely as potential resources to be exploited, while overlooking the fact that they have value in themselves”.²⁸ His corresponding concern with the harm inflicted on our “our common home ... by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her [due to] the rapid pace of change and degradation [is] evident in large-scale natural disasters as well as social and even financial crises. [This affirms that] the world’s problems cannot be analyzed or explained in isolation”.²⁹ Francis’s counsel supports the contention that the destruction of the immense cod fish habitat not only threw an ecosystem off balance; it also cast the society and

²⁴ Pope Paul VI, Gaudium et Spes, #s 3 and 55.
²⁵ Pope Paul VI, Populorum Progressio, # 7.
²⁷ Pope Benedict XVI, Caritas in Veritate, #48
²⁸ Pope Francis I, Laudato Si, # 9.
²⁹ Ibid, #s 2 and 61.
culture in a state of flux such that the human dignity of these people was minimized. What
now nourishes the dignity and spirit of these inshore fishers who in 1984 sailed in their small
boats from near and far to hear their Pope deliver a message of faith and hope? More than
thirty years later, the prolonged moratorium on fishing cod in these North Atlantic waters
actually presumes the question: “Is there hope of a future for a people whose whole
livelihood and way of life has been sustained by the sea”?

Pope Francis’s urgent challenge “to protect our common home.... to bring the whole
human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that
things can change”\(^\text{30}\) offers hope to these people wondering if the fish will ever return. His
encyclical *Laudato Si*, in articulating the pre-eminence of the relationship of the person with
God, with oneself, with other human beings and with creation, validates Hollenbach’s
conviction that “religious contributions to the common good are [still] possible and should be
taken seriously.”\(^\text{31}\) For the sake of the present and the future, the Catholic Church in
Newfoundland and Labrador is compelled to recover its past, through embracing the legacy
of its own common social tradition. These teachings contemplated together with
Hollenbach’s discourse on the common good, can only move this Church-local beyond the
insecurity of detached protectiveness and more towards generous munificence.

The communal nature of the Church as a Eucharistic community must resonate in its
everyday life in Newfoundland and Labrador. This Church is morally obligated to encourage
and participate in “a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet ... a
conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing,

\(^{31}\) Hollenbach, *Claims in Conflict*, 88.
and its human roots, concern and affect us all”.  

The Church as the people of God in Newfoundland and Labrador can begin this new dialogue by taking example from its own suffering, but with the will to incarnate its life in the needs of the wounded at home. With the unhealed scars of the sexual abuse charges, the Church in Newfoundland and Labrador in the post-fishery years has the ability to be the wounded healer.  

To enter into meaningful relationship with its own faith and general community, this Church through invoking the imperatives of its own social teachings has a chance to give birth to its own rebirth. To be a primary agent of the common good, it is necessary for this people of God to become truly and authentically a more human Church. On the shores of Galilee, Jesus called fishers (Mt. 4:19), skilled at their trade who had to be conscientious about their civic and religious responsibility. These fishers changed the world.  

So also do Newfoundland and Labrador fishers bring their skills, trade and citizenry to their Church and to the whole of society. As this province of people is challenged by the oil and gas industry drawing “on the resources of ... its most skilled and able people, to serve its own interests”  

, the unsettled question is how do they know if they are drifting or floating in this time of changing ocean resources?  

The current Catholic archdiocesan initiative on fracking is a promising start. Fracking, a process of natural gas extraction is believed to contaminate the water supply and endanger the health of communities, and harm the global balance. Following Natural Resources Minister Derrick Dalley’s announcement of a province wide moratorium on  

32 Pope Francis I, Laudato Si, # 3.  
34 J. D. House, The Challenge of Oil: Newfoundland’s Quest for Controlled Development (St. John’s: Memorial University, ISER, 1985), 2.
onshore-to-offshore hydraulic fracturing, pending further review \footnote{35}, the archdiocese set up a committee to gather information and facilitate an informed public dialogue for the purpose of sharing information on the potential risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing.\footnote{36}

Despite oil and gas exploration and development more recently playing a significant role in the economic growth of the province, the Church in Newfoundland and Labrador has initiated a process that involves public engagement in a matter sensitive to a financially lucrative industry and to government itself. The health and safety of people and the environment is the priority. Where there is a faith community actively working out the mission of Christ, there is hope. And hope is not lost that someday the fish will return. As Newfoundlander and Labradorians await the cod to once again spawn in mass, the home Church, their \textit{holdin’ ground} having survived many storms in these tempestuous seas, can be the securest and firmest place to drop anchor and ride the moor to the common good. This Church with its vastly rich gift of social teachings knows that the good these people of the sea share in common, ebbs and flows with the currents of the North Atlantic washing over their shores.


\footnote{36} Archbishop Martin Currie, interview with the author, March 26, 2014. Here, he noted that the archdiocese had set up a committee on fracting.
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