

# **The Power of the Imagination in the Catholic Social Tradition**

**Thinking with the Church on Social Concerns**

**2014 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering**



UNIVERSITY *of* ST. THOMAS  
MINNESOTA

VERITAS INSTITUTE

# Imagination

## How We See the World

“The most important change that people can make is to change their way of looking at the world. We can change studies, jobs, neighborhoods, even countries and continents and still remain as we always were. But change our fundamental angle of vision and everything changes – our priorities, our values, our judgments, our pursuits. Again and again, in the history of religion, this total upheaval in the *imagination* has marked the beginning of a new life... a turning of the heart, a ‘*metanoia*’ by which men see with new eyes and understand with new minds and turn their energies to new ways of living.”

Barbara Ward

# Imaginative Vision



- Seeing Things Whole and not just Parts
- Seeing Fact and Value and not just Numbers
- Seeing beyond “neighbors” – to *fraternity* (Benedict XVI)

“As society becomes ever more globalized, **it makes us neighbors but does not make us brothers.** Reason, by itself, is capable of grasping the equality between men and of giving stability to their civic coexistence, but it cannot establish fraternity. This originates in a transcendent vocation from God the Father, who loved us first . . .” -- *Caritas in veritate*

# Imaginative Vision

- **Challenges to the Imagination**
  - Ideology (distorts the moral imagination)
    - ❖ Logic of the Contract
    - ❖ Logic of the Market
  - Abstraction (distorts the practical imagination)
- **The Logic of Gift: the Soil of Imagination**
- **The Importance of Catholic Social Tradition in Revealing the Logic of Gift**

# Case Study: Wages

**Our incomes are like our shoes,  
if too small,  
they gall and pinch us;  
but if too large they cause us  
to stumble and trip.**

**Charles Colton (English Clergyman, 1822)**

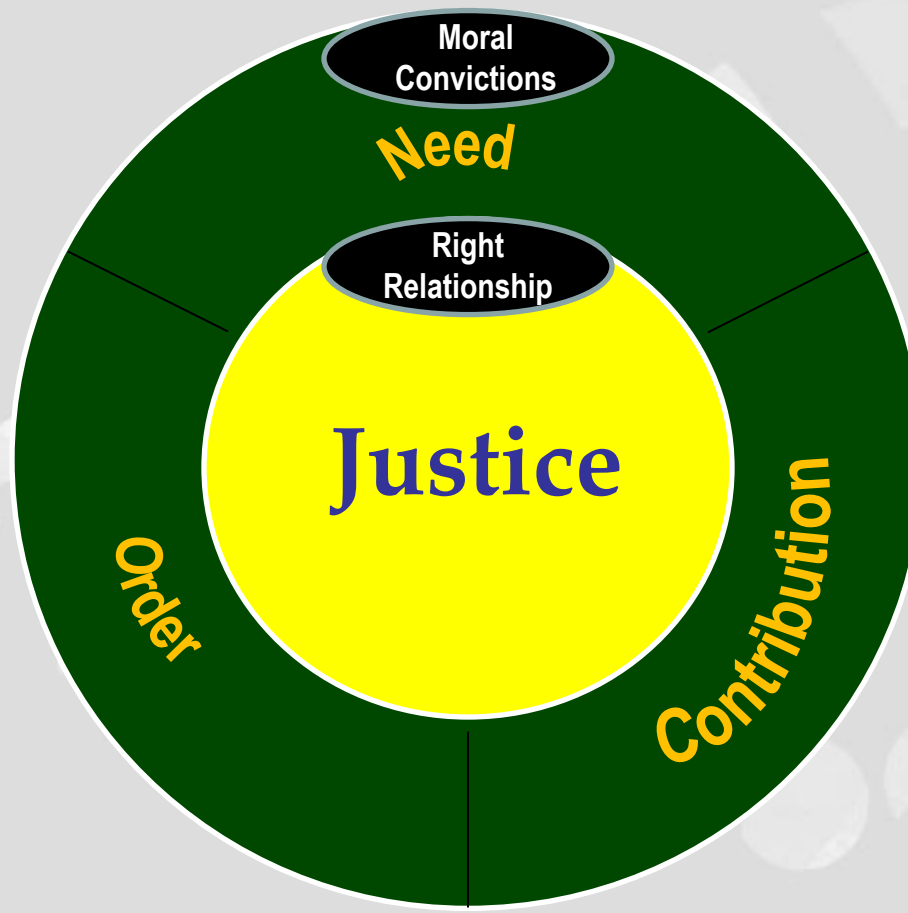
# The Logic of Justice



# The Imaginative Insight

- **A Relationship not Only an Exchange:** In order for there to be a “right relationship” between employee and employer, both need to recognize that *work can never be reduced to or exhausted by the wage given*. The wage given can never fully account for the labor done, precisely because work is always “more” than its economic output or instrumental value.

# Three Convictions of a Just Wage



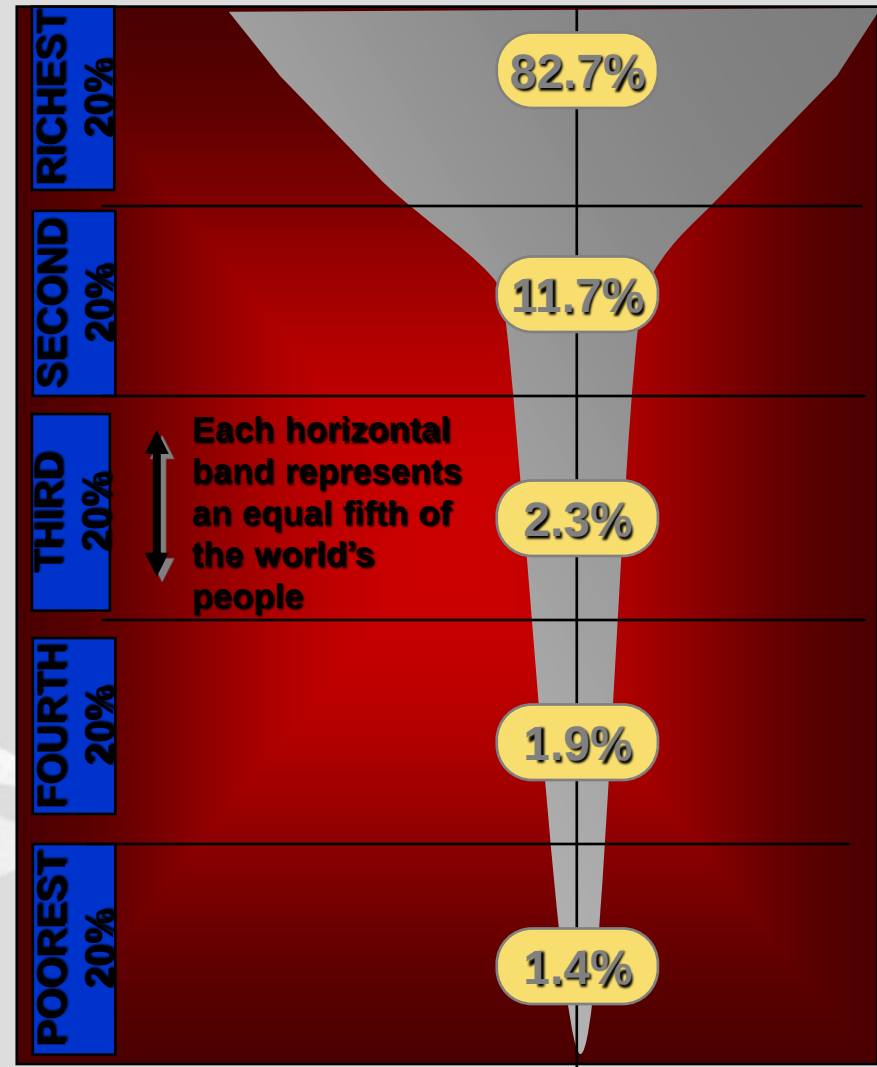


# The Conviction of Need and a Living Wage

- A living wage is *the minimum amount due to every independent wage earner by the mere fact that he is a human being with a life to maintain and a personality to develop.*
- A wage that fails to meet the needs of an employee (in particular a full-time adult) is a wage that will struggle to carry the weight of a real relationship and community of persons.

# Champagne Glass

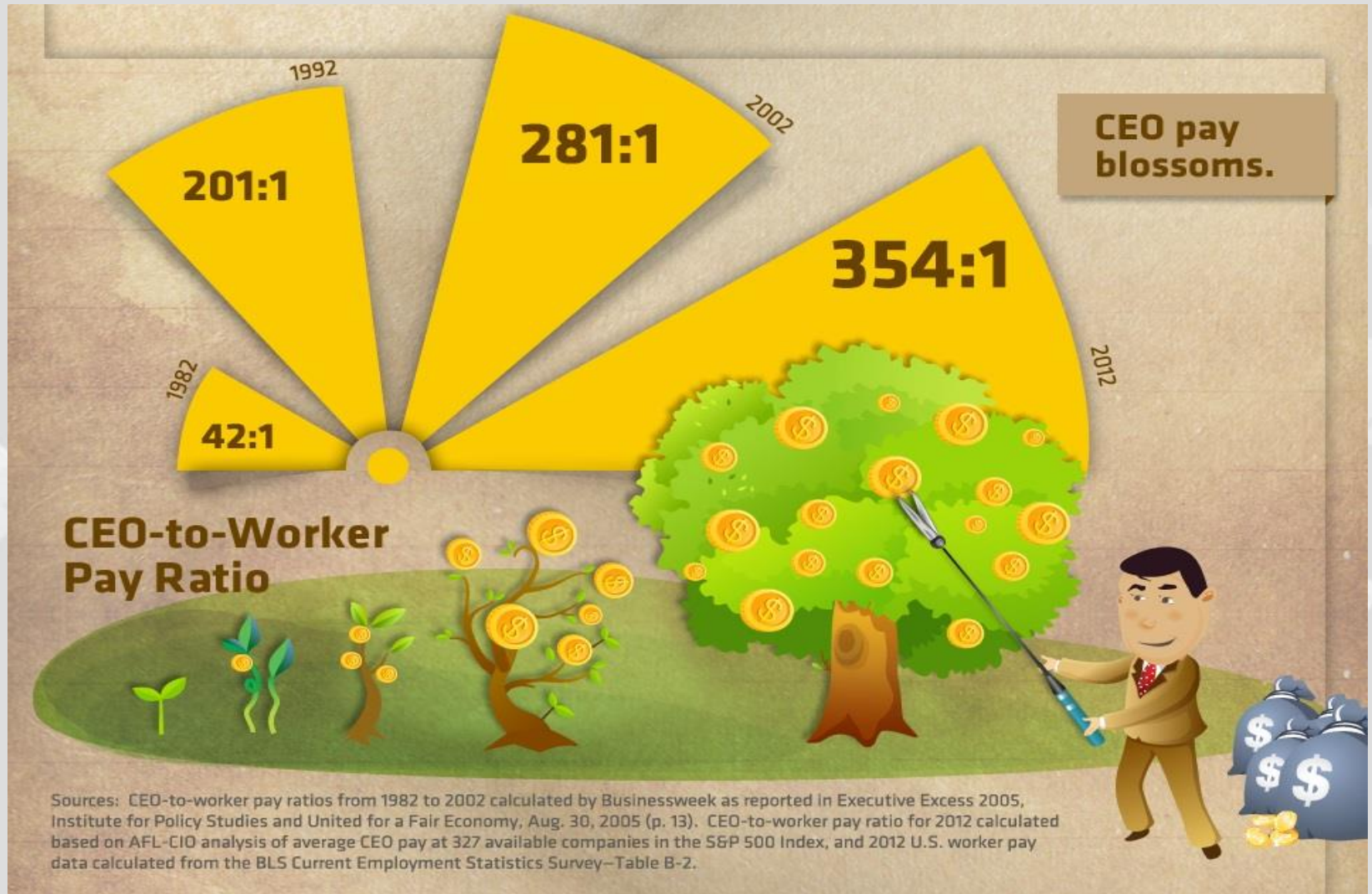
Distribution of  
Global Income of  
Total Quintiles of  
Population Ranked  
by Income



# The Conviction of Contribution and an Equitable Wage

- *An equitable wage is the contribution of an employee's productivity and effort within the context of the existing amount of profits and resources of the organization.*

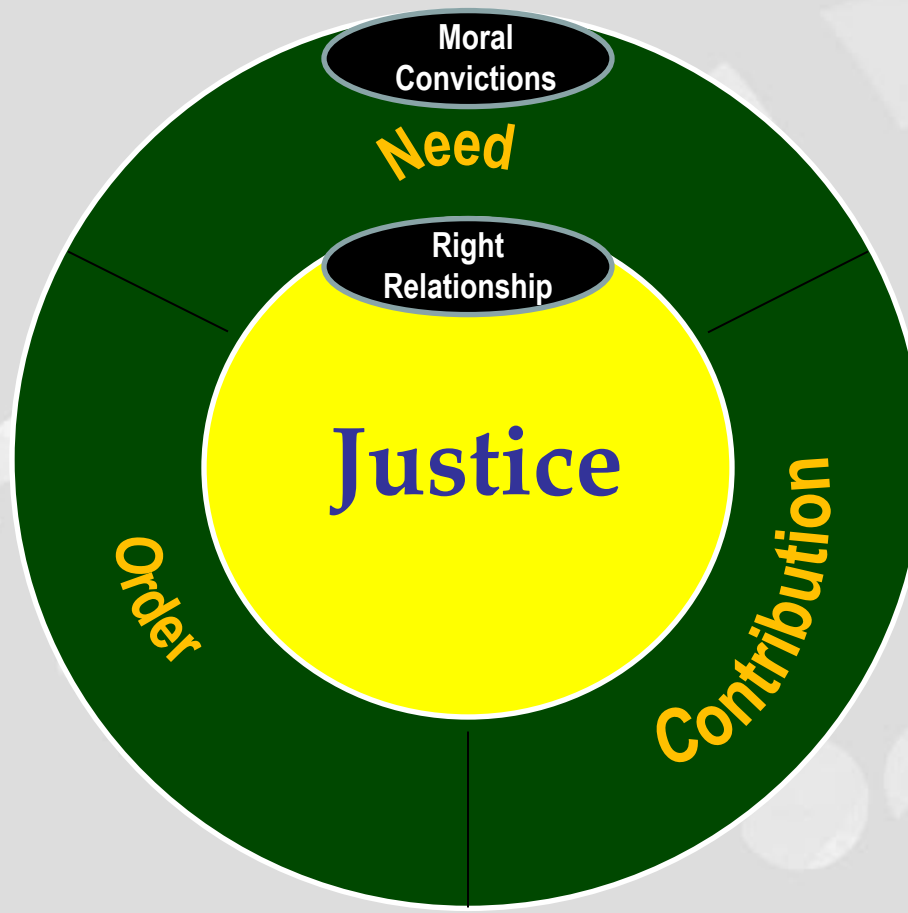
# Equitable Pay?



# The Conviction of Economic Order and a Sustainable Wage

- A sustainable wage *is the organization's ability to pay wages that is sustainable for the economic health of the organization as a whole.*

# Managing the Tension





# Reell Case

- **Market Wage:**  
\$7 an hour, \$14,000 a year
- **Living Wage:**  
\$11 an hour, \$22,500 a year
- **Gap:**  
How to make up the difference?

# A Response

- **Living Wage**
  - Distributors of Justice not Market Technicians
- **Equitable Wage**
  - Redesigning Work: Teach, Equip, Trust
- **Sustainable Wage**
  - Reducing Labor Costs while increasing Labor Rates



# Recap

- A Just Wage is not only an Exchange or a Contract, but it is part of a *Relationship*.
- Because it is a relationship, the price of the wage does not exhaust the work that is done.
- This relationship when it is guided by the three convictions of need, contribution and order, should create a stronger community at work that will be more mission driven and identity focused.

# Institutionally Embodied

- **Living Wage Policy:**
  - **Target Wage :** distance between a market wage and a living wage—developing associates skill level and contribution.
  - **Index Benefits to Salary:** make benefits more affordable to lower paid employees **or** create a solidarity fund for unusual situations that lower paid employees face.
- **Equitable Wage (variable Pay):**
  - **Bonuses:** reward everyone as well as recognize the talent and sacrifices of leaders in the organization.
  - **Equity Ratio as Guide**
  - **Employee Ownership**
  - **Be on Guard of Disordering Incentives**
- **Sustainable Wage**
  - **Decreasing percentage of labor cost to business**

# Institutionally Embodied

- **Indirect Employer:** Indirect employers include institutions and persons such as the state, unions, community groups, and any other intermediary group in the community that can have some effect on compensation. The most obvious and influential indirect employer is the state.
- **Examples of Indirect Employers:** Minimum Wage Legislation, Living Wage Campaigns, Collective Bargaining, other income generating programs such as the Earned Income Tax Credit, etc.

# Logic of Gift



“He [Peter Maurin] did not begin by tearing down, or by painting so intense a picture of misery and injustice that you burned to change the world. Instead he aroused in you a sense of your own capacities for work, for accomplishment. He made you feel that you and all (people) had great and generous hearts with which to love God. If you once recognized this fact in yourself you would expect and find it in others ‘the art of human contacts’ Peter called it happily.”

Dorothy Day

# Gap/Bridge Exercise

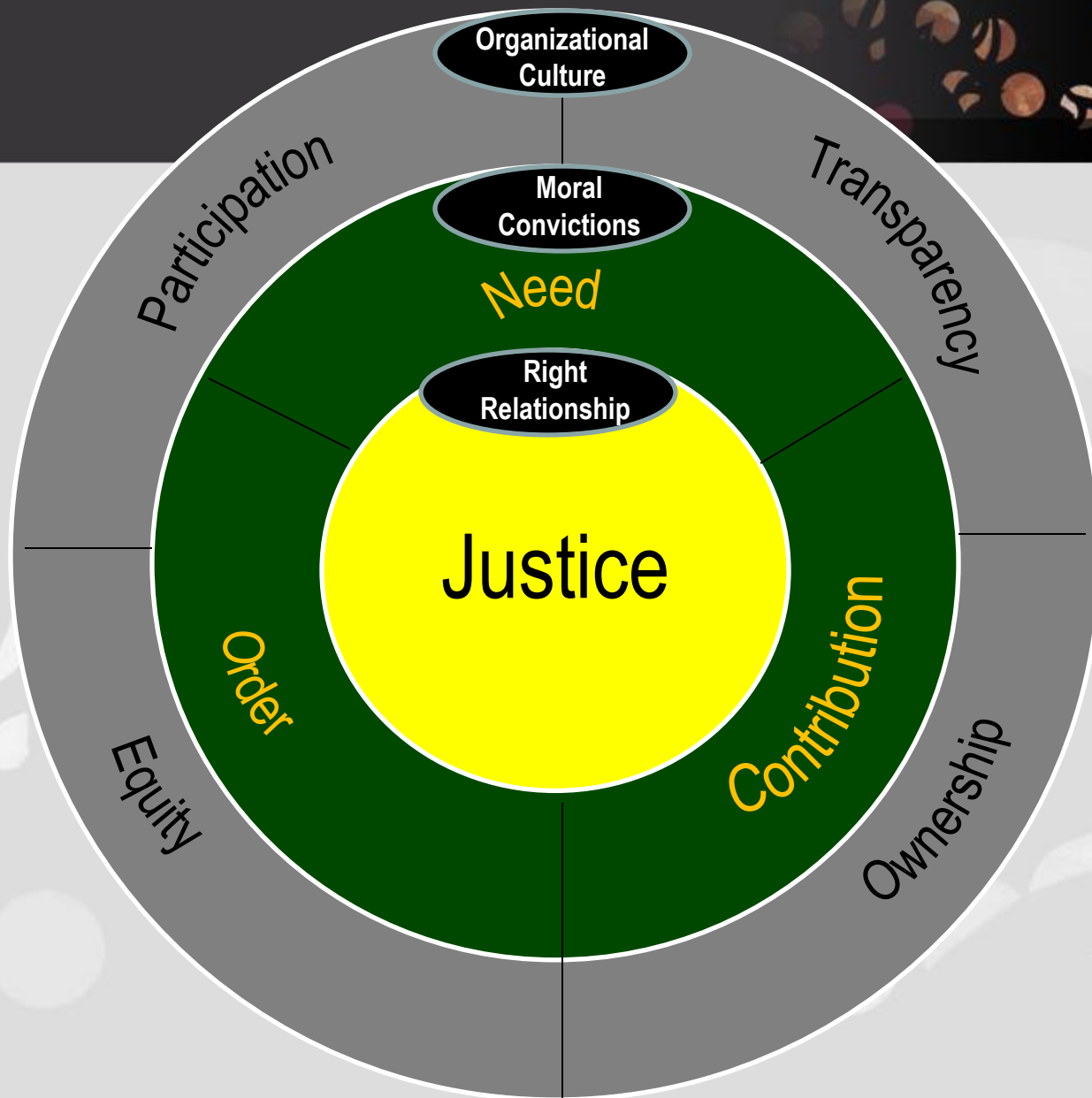
- **Gaps:** What do you see are the gaps, challenges and/or obstacles of communicating and living the Catholic social tradition in the work you do (parish, diocese, school, social services, health, etc.)?
- **Bridges:** What are some effective remedies in overcoming these gaps, challenges and obstacles?

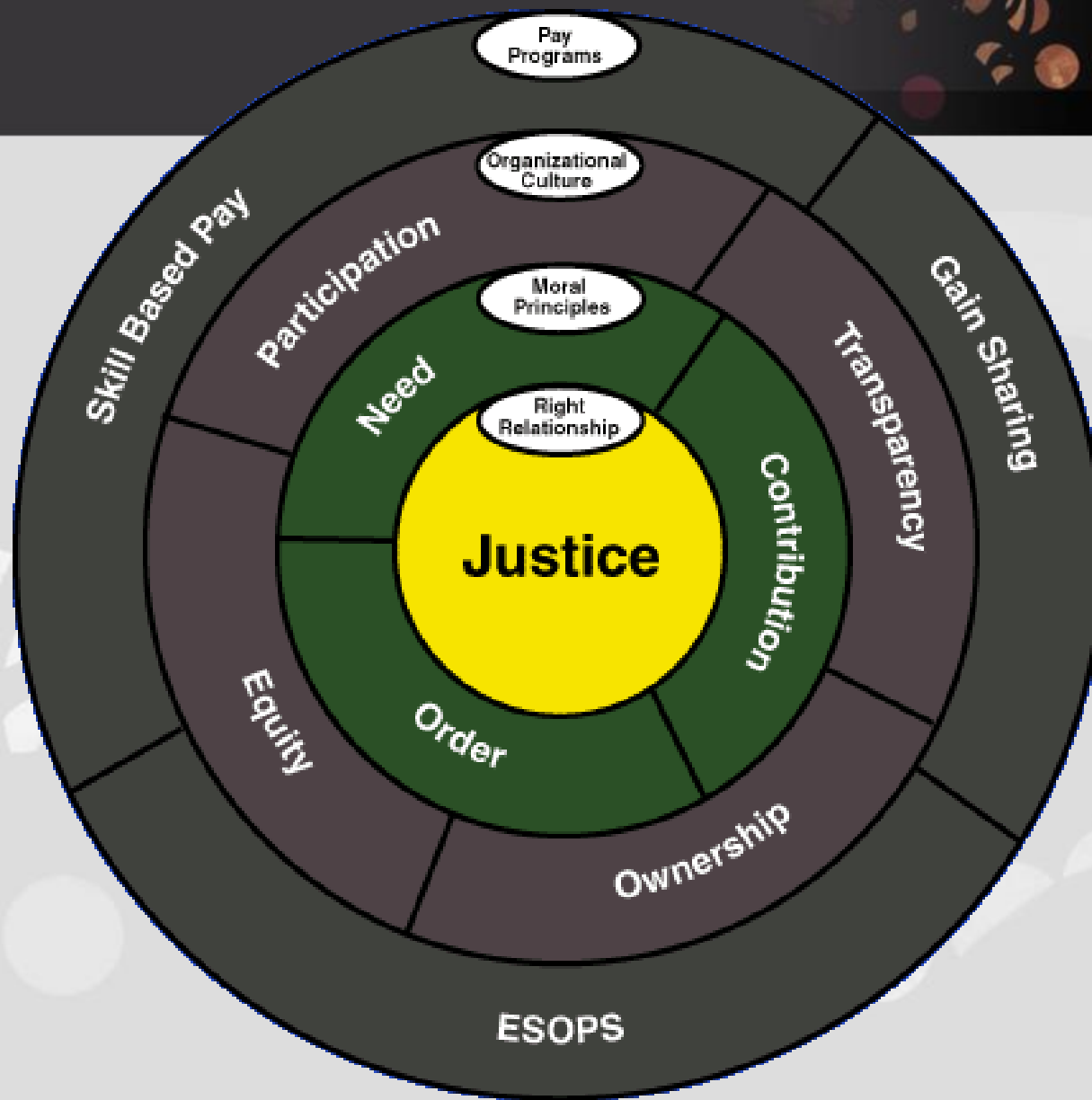
# Vocation: Being Chosen

- “There is no more feeling more desperate than that of being free to choose, and yet without the specific compulsion of being chosen.
- “After all, one does not really choose; one is chosen. This is one way of stating the difference between gods and men. Gods choose; men are chosen.
- “What men lose when they become as free as gods is precisely that sense of being chosen, which encourages them, in their gratitude, to take their subsequent choices seriously.”











## Average CEO to Average Worker Pay Ratio



Source: Institute for Policy Studies-United for a Fair Economy (2007)

# Extra: sublation, Abstraction

# Catholic Social Tradition

- **Catholic Social Teachings**
- **Catholic Social Thought**
- **Catholic Social Practice**

# Catholic Social Tradition



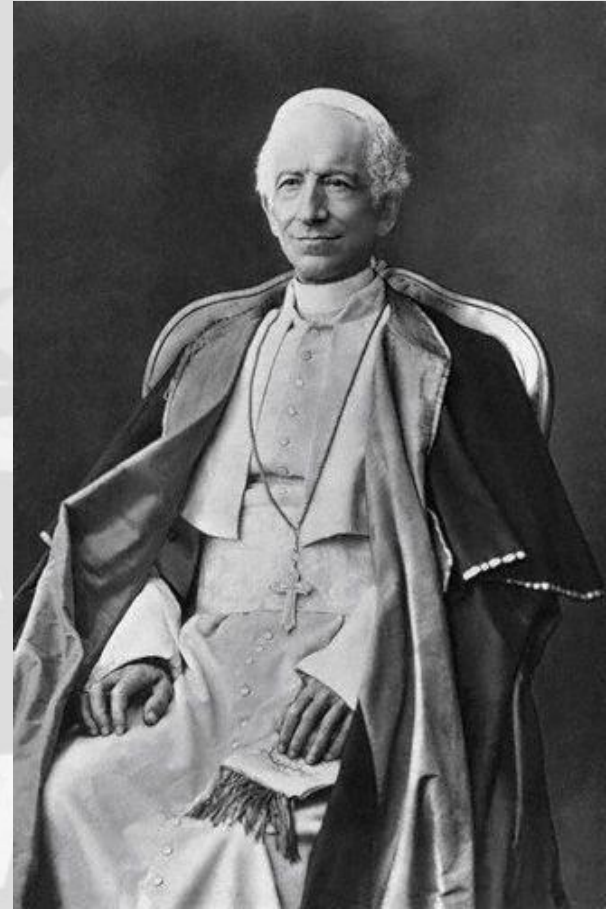
## Sources

- **Catholic Social Teaching**
- 

# Catholic Social Tradition

## Sources

- Catholic Social Teaching
- 1891: *Rerum novarum* (“New Things”)



**Pope Leo XIII**

# Catholic Social Tradition

## Sources

- Catholic Social Teaching
- 3 Social Encyclicals
  - *Laborem exercens* (1981)
  - *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (1987)
  - *Centesimus annus* (1991)



**Pope John Paul II**

# Catholic Social Tradition

## Sources

- Catholic Social Teaching
- TBD



**Pope Francis**



# Catholic Social Tradition

## Sources

- Catholic Social Teaching
- **Catholic Social Thought**

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## Sources

- Catholic Social Teaching
- **Catholic Social Thought**



**Monsignor John A. Ryan**

# Catholic Social Tradition

## Sources

- Catholic Social Teaching
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**Dorothy Day**

# Catholic Social Tradition

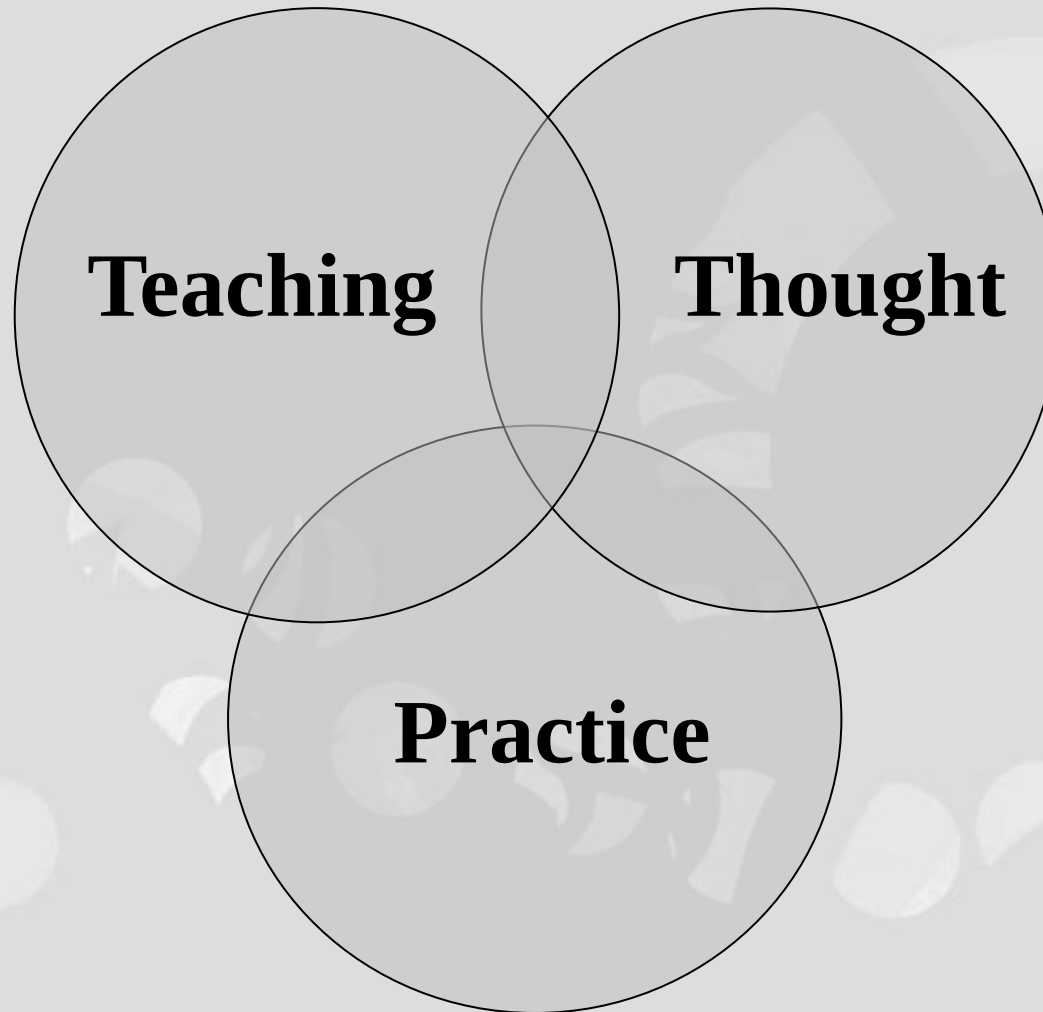
## Sources

- Catholic Social Teaching
- Catholic Social Thought
- **Catholic Social Practice**



**Leon Harmel**

# Complementarity in the Catholic Social Tradition



# Imaginative Dimensions of the Catholic Social Tradition

## Sources

- Catholic Social Teaching
- Catholic Social Thought
- Catholic Social Practice

## Dimensions

- **Theologically Grounded**



# Theologically Grounded

- “Politicians may reiterate a thousand times that the basis of the new world order must be universal respect for human rights, but it will mean nothing as long as this imperative does not derive from respect for the miracle of the universe, the miracle of nature, the miracle of our own existence.”

(Vaclav Havel)





# Catholic Social Tradition

## Sources

- Catholic Social Teaching
- Catholic Social Thought
- Catholic Social Practice

## Dimensions

- **Theologically Grounded**
- **Publicly Expressed**
- **Institutionally Embodied**

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