

Foreword

The Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* came out in summer 2009. From 1991, when *Centesimus Annus* appeared, this was the second document of such stature, devoted to the social teachings of the Catholic Church. Many expected that the encyclical on a social topic would appear already in 2007 – to mark the 40th anniversary of the appearance of *Populorum Progressio*. However, this did not occur. Pope Benedict XVI clearly delayed its appearance while the events of the last few years – especially the challenges of globalization, the world economic crisis, ecological problems, the issue of the growth of social inequality – forced him to more carefully approach the text of the document. As a result, what appeared was probably one of the most radical teachings of the Church about economic life in which the Pope urged economic activities characterized as “gratuity” and “communion”. Unquestionably, the scientific, technical, and social progress is one of the most indicative and unquestionable achievements of modernity, although the globalization processes, which have become an integral part of contemporaneity, warned the Pope, demonstrate also the threat of “unprecedented damage” and can “create new divisions within the human family.”¹ “Pope Benedict has encouraged the state leaders

to create rules so that this sort of worldwide economic crisis isn't repeated," and "I also saw this as an order to work toward a social market economy in the world," stated German Chancellor Angela Merkel in supporting the Roman Pope.²

However, the name of the encyclical – *Love in Truth* – and its argumentative logic were proof of a somewhat greater intention of Benedict XVI: he was concerned about renewing that fundamentally humanistic perspective which is built around the values of human life and is expressed in direct care and attention to others – both on the personal and collective levels. In the center of this perspective – its most valuable kernel, Christ, embodied Truth.

In March 2014, at the Ukrainian Catholic University, an international philosophical conference was held, named "Reflections on Global Theory," dedicated to significant social and political issues in Ukraine and the world. This period was especially significant for Ukrainian society – the events of the Kyiv Maidan had not yet ended, while simultaneously a new threat hung over the nation, namely the occupation of the Russian army into Crimea. However, already then, it was evident that there were some irreversible processes taking place. The Revolution of Dignity placed new challenges on the Ukrainian people: overcoming the corrupt government and the building of a decent state, respecting the dignity of a person and creating a real civil society, structured on the principles of solidarity and humanity.

The sub-title of the conference indicated – "With Special Reference to *Caritas in Veritate*." What did this mean in October 2014? It was clear that the discussions would not concern the world economic crisis – the air in Ukraine was too electrified to resort to general topics or abstract generalizations. The importance of the encyclical in this context lay in reference to those moral

principles which are the basis of the development of humanity. Leading philosophers and theologians from Ukraine, Poland, Germany, France, Lebanon, the USA, and Canada gathered together in order to make a connection between the potential path of evolution for Ukrainian society and those basic foundations without which there is absolutely no real progress possible. For many of them, it was also an opportunity to personally immerse themselves into the atmosphere of the Revolution of Dignity, to experience it together with Ukrainian citizens. The present collection is a harvesting of participants' thoughts from this special gathering at Lviv, in March 2014.

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Endnotes

¹ Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* [33].

² "Pope calls for a 'global authority' on economy," *Reuters*, 7 July 2009.