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Addressing Public Policy from a Catholic Social Thought Perspective: An Irish Experience

*Seán Healy, S.M.A. and Brigid Reynolds, S.M.*¹⁶⁵

Catholic Social Thought

Jesus summed up the way of life of the Christian as ‘loving God and loving the neighbour as oneself’. The core value is love and life is to be lived in right relationship with God, people and the environment. Catholic Social Thought is about concretising this understanding in the historical reality of the time.

The Catholic Social Thought Tradition encompasses a large and diverse body of teaching. Among the main themes are the following: dignity of the human person and human rights, the common good, the universal destination of goods, concern for the poor, family, the dignity of work, the right to work and the rights of workers, subsidiarity, solidarity, participation, peace, international cooperation for development, care of the environment etc. This tradition looks at the pressing social issues of the day. In analysing these issues it critically assesses the negative dimensions of society that diminish ourselves, dehumanise others, and degrade the environment and it promotes the positive forces in society that dignify, humanise, and sustain the delicate bonds that unite us all as a human family.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ An earlier version of this paper was presented to the conference *The Call to Justice: The Legacy of Gaudium et Spes* in Vatican City, March 2005.

¹⁶⁶ Daniel G. Groody, *Globalisation, Spirituality and Justice*, Orbis, New York 2007

The goal of Catholic Social Thought is not to offer an answer to every economic or social question but instead to offer a lens through which to view specific social and economic problems. This perspective argues that economic and social actions are inherently moral actions. Yet the assertion that values matter is a contested issue in many policy areas. Catholic Social Teaching is not a fixed unchanging body of doctrine but a developmental understanding of the church's social mission in a dynamically changing world. While it draws heavily on theology, it also bases its reflection on philosophy, economics, sociology and other social sciences. It is addressed to all people of good will and it seeks to understand better the challenges of the current world and to provide an ethical foundation for global transformation. It provides a particular challenge to groups like CORI Justice who commit to living the Christian way of life.

CORI Justice's rationale for social engagement based on Scripture and the Catholic Social Thought tradition

CORI Justice subscribes to the values of both human dignity and the centrality of the community. The person is seen as growing and developing in a context that includes other people and the environment. Justice is seen in terms of relationships as proclaimed in Christian scriptures where justice is understood as a harmony that comes from fidelity to right relationships with God, people and the environment.¹⁶⁷ CORI Justice works from the understanding that a just society is one that is structured in such a way as to promote these right relationships so that human rights are respected, human dignity is protected, human development is facilitated and the environment is respected and protected.

¹⁶⁷ For a more detailed presentation see Seán J. Healy and Brigid Reynolds, *Social Analysis in the Light of the Gospel*, CORI 1983

CORI Justice's analyses and reflections have led it to the conclusion that the society of today is not the kind of society envisaged in the Scriptures and the Catholic Social Thought tradition. It does not accept the divisions it sees. Like many others it wishes to work for a society where the hungry are filled with good things (Luke 1:53). Taking inspiration from the Beatitudes it seeks to work with Christ and all who share His values, for the coming of the Kingdom where the poor will be happy because they have sufficiency, where those who hunger and thirst for what is right will see their vision concretised in the structures of society, where the gentle (or 'the lowly') will be guaranteed their right to a part of the earth's resources (Matthew 5:4). With St Paul it is conscious that the entire creation is groaning in one great act of giving birth (Romans 8:22). It strives to play a positive role in this great act of giving birth to a future society based on Christian values.

CORI Justice is challenged, energised and encouraged by this Scriptural vision as it is carried forward in the Catholic Social Thought tradition. From Pope Leo XIII who began the call for major changes in the socio-economic order to the present day, the Church is calling us to transform society. Pope Paul VI called for *bold transformations, innovations that go deep*.¹⁶⁸ His exhortation, that *it is not enough to point out injustices and to utter pious words and denunciations; such words lack meaning unless they are accompanied by responsible political and social action*,¹⁶⁹ directs the agenda. The Synod of Bishops (1971) echoed this appeal when it asserted that *action on behalf of justice and the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel*.¹⁷⁰

More recently Pope John Paul II called for a complete analysis to reveal unjust structures so that they may be examined and transformed to build a just earth.¹⁷¹ It is not possible to transform society until the present "form" is known. This requires a rigorous social analysis to

¹⁶⁸ Pope Paul VI, 1967, *Populorum Progressio*, no. 32

¹⁶⁹ Pope Paul VI, 1971, *Octogesima Adveniens*, no. 48

¹⁷⁰ Synod of Bishops, 1971, *Justice in the World*, no. 6

¹⁷¹ Pope John Paul II, 1981, *Laborum Exercens*, no. 2

*scrutinise the signs of the times and to interpret them in the light of the Gospel.*¹⁷² Secondly it is necessary to articulate a vision of the transformed society that is in keeping with Christian values. This vision needs to engage the imagination of others and so involve them in the debate. It also needs to be sufficiently practical so that people can envisage new structures to bring about the new reality. This is a process of empowering people to be transformers of society so that they have *reasons for living and hoping.*¹⁷³

Later Pope John Paul II talked about the virtues needed to be involved in this transformation. *To destroy such structures (of sin which impede the full realisation of those who are in any way oppressed by them) and replace them with more authentic forms of living in community is a task which demands courage and patience.*¹⁷⁴ He also alerts us to our responsibilities to change the structures that cause destruction of the environment. *Today the ecological crisis has assumed such proportions as to be the responsibility of everyone...there is an order in the universe which must be respected...the ecological crises is a moral issue.*¹⁷⁵

Structural analysis and working for structural and systemic change are cornerstones of the agenda of CORI Justice. As our societies have grown in sophistication the need for appropriate structures has become more urgent. While the aspiration that everyone should enjoy the good life, and the good will to make it available to all, is an essential ingredient in a just society, the good life will not happen without the deliberate establishment of structures to facilitate its development. In the past charity, in the sense of alms-giving by some individuals on an arbitrary and ad hoc basis, was seen as sufficient to ensure that everyone could cross the threshold of human dignity. Calling on the work of social historians it could be argued that charity in this sense was never a *sufficient* method for dealing with poverty. Certainly it is not an adequate methodology for dealing with the problems of today.

¹⁷² *Gaudium et Spes*, Vatican II Council, 1965, Orbis Books, no. 4

¹⁷³ *Gaudium et Spes*, Vatican II Council, 1965, Orbis Books, no. 31.

¹⁷⁴ Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, no. 38

¹⁷⁵ Pope John Paul II, Message of January 1, 1990.

As world disasters consistently show, charity and the heroic efforts of voluntary agencies, which are very admirable and inspiring, cannot on their own, solve these problems on a long-term basis. Appropriate structures are required to ensure that every person has access to the resources needed to live life with dignity, and to give long-term protection to the environment.

Few people would disagree that the resources of the planet are for the use of the people, not just the present generation but also the generations still to come.¹⁷⁶ In Old Testament times, these resources were closely tied to land and water. A complex system of laws about the Sabbatical and Jubilee years (Lev 25: 1-22, Deut 15: 1-18) was devised to ensure, on the one hand, that no person could be disinherited, and on the other, that land and debts could not be accumulated or the land exploited.

Interdependence, mutuality, solidarity, connectedness are words which are used loosely today to express a consciousness which is very Christian. All of creation is seen as a unit which is dynamic, each part is related to every other part, depends on it in some way and can also affect it.¹⁷⁷ When we focus on the human family this means that each person depends on others, initially for life itself and subsequently for the resources and relationships needed to grow and develop. To ensure that the connectedness of the web of life is maintained, each person is meant to reach out to support others in ways that are appropriate for their growth and in harmony with the rest of creation. This thinking respects the integrity of the person while recognising that the person can only achieve his or her potential in right relationships with others and the environment. All of this implies the need for appropriate structures and infrastructures to ensure that every person and all people¹⁷⁸ have access to the resources needed to enjoy fullness of life (John 10:10). The compelling conclusion from studying Catholic Social Thought is that

¹⁷⁶ *Gaudium et Spes*, Vatican II Council, 1965, Obis Books, no. 69.

¹⁷⁷ An interesting analysis of the connectedness of all creation can be found in two books by Fritjof Capra, *The Web of Life*, Harper Collins, London, 1996 and *The Hidden Connections*, Harper Collins, London 2002.,

¹⁷⁸ Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, 1967, no. 14

Catholics are called to be involved with the socio-economic and cultural reality of their time in a way that contributes to their own development, the development of other people and the care of the earth simultaneously and in solidarity.

In summary then CORI Justice understands its role as a call to analyse reality, to take action to transform what is destructive and dehumanising and to cooperate in building structures that promote the reign of God.

Linking theory and action

CORI Justice believes that if these themes are to be actualised in the real world then various outcomes must be realised for all people on the planet. This would require, among other things, that every person have:

- Sufficient income to live life with dignity,
- Meaningful work,
- Appropriate accommodation,
- Adequate healthcare,
- Relevant education,
- Cultural respect, and
- Real participation.

This is not an exhaustive listing but it identifies key aspects of any future that would be consistent with the Catholic Social Thought vision. These and related issues also place a series of responsibilities on individuals, on governments and on society as a whole. They have implications for what is expected of individuals and of how these conditions are to be secured.

CORI Justice is involved in addressing the policy and implementation dimensions of a wide range of issues crucial to securing this future for all. These include:

- Poverty,
- Income distribution

- Work, unemployment and job-creation
- Housing and accommodation
- Taxation
- Sustainability
- Public services
- Education¹⁷⁹
- Healthcare¹⁸⁰
- Rural and regional development
- Participation
- Third World Aid
- Migration
- Social exclusion

Again, this is not an exhaustive list of the issues addressed .

CORI Justice has believed from its inception that initiatives based on on-going action and reflection were crucially important if change was to come and if its work was to be credible. The themes already identified have provided a framework to underpin its agenda. Talking about solidarity is not enough. It is crucial that action is taken to generate the necessary change to build solidarity. CORI Justice understands that building the reign of God involves doing what we can to move the present reality from where it is towards the Gospel vision of a just society. This provides a context and a framework for the work. It involves CORI Justice in:

- *Identifying what the present reality really is.* Much of the work is underpinned by detailed social analysis. In doing this work CORI Justice follows a relatively standard approach in trying to identify the economic, political, cultural, social and historical reality. It also draws on and engages with the work of Ireland's major research institutes and providers of statistical data.

¹⁷⁹ Within CORI work on education is led by CORI Education

¹⁸⁰ Within CORI work on healthcare is led by CORI Healthcare

- *Developing some awareness of what alternatives to the present situation are viable or possible.* From the perspective of faith, CORI Justice believes that if it is to play a role in moving the world from where it is towards a future consistent with the Gospel vision, then it is essential that it seek alternatives to what is being offered in the present reality. From the perspective of the wider world which is experiencing so much change CORI Justice believes it is also important to seek alternatives to the vision guiding current policy. Consequently, it puts a lot of work into seeking out alternatives, re-imagining the way things might be and assessing what could be both desirable and viable.
- *Discovering which of these are closest to the Gospel vision.* Much effort is invested into assessing the various possibilities and deciding on which, if any, to promote or support. In doing this CORI Justice has developed a series of mechanisms including ‘round tables’ and ‘conversations’ involving theologians, social analysts and people working on the issues or areas being addressed, together with its members, in a process of analysis, reflection and discernment to discover what the Gospel might be calling them to do in the situation being considered.
- *Taking action to move towards these alternatives.* Following on the preceding steps CORI Justice seeks out models of good practice that could lead towards the desired alternative or involves itself in designing action to reach such a goal. This results in involvement in a range of activities that must be addressed if the ‘vision’ issue is to be treated seriously by others who are sceptical or threatened. In practice this has involved CORI Justice in a wide range of activities ranging from piloting programmes to researching issues to organising conferences and seminars and workshops to advocating positions. As in other stages of this process, a wide range of people and organisations are involved.

- *Recycling the process on an ongoing basis.*

In practice the CORI Justice develops its work through four programmes:

- Public Policy
- Enabling and Empowering
- Spirituality
- Advocacy and Communication

Within these programmes there are more than twenty projects.

In the *public policy* area the major projects include:

- involvement in national Social Partnership (cf below);
- an integrated Budget project that provides a detailed analysis and critique of the Irish Government's annual Budget.
- Production and publication of an annual Socio-Economic Review.
- Organisation of an annual public policy conference on a specific issue of relevance to the time.

In the *enabling and empowering* area the projects include:

- Development of an MA in Social Justice and Public Policy accredited by Dublin City University and taught in All Hallows College..
- Anchoring of two national networks involving substantial numbers of people in addressing issues of social justice and public policy from a values perspective.
- Workshops, Seminars, Teaching

Under the heading of '*spirituality*' the projects include:

- 'Spirituality for Social Engagement' which involves conferences, seminars, publications and local groups focused on this issue.
- Development of a series of 'conversations' on this topic involving a range of people from different disciplines in various locations across the country.

In the area of ‘*advocacy and communication*’ projects include:

- Production of a range of publications annually which include three books, five policy briefings and a regular newsletter.
- Ongoing implementation of a media strategy that includes regular coverage of the issues under consideration.
- The website is updated regularly to keep pace not only with the activities of CORI Justice but also to publicise relevant reports and papers from other sources. This ensures that the website is a useful tool for students and practitioners of public policy.

In line with the Catholic Social Thought tradition CORI Justice seeks to involve people from all strata in society in debate on the issues of concern. It recognises and acknowledges that it does not have all the answers. Rather, it is always struggling to get more accurate answers to the questions it asks and trying to seek out and develop better alternatives to what is already available. It offers its analysis and vision and proposals for action to the wider society for comment and critique on a regular basis. It seeks an ongoing dialogue on these issues with the wider society as well as with those who share its Faith.

Social Partnership

Social partnership as it is structured in Ireland today emerged in the late 1980s when Ireland’s economic and social development was in dire straits. There was deep recession, falling living standards, declining employment, very high unemployment levels, large-scale emigration, huge exchequer borrowing requirements and a debt/GNP level that was unsustainable. O’Donnell¹⁸¹ concluded that “by the mid-1980s, Ireland’s economic, social and political strategy was in ruins, and its hope of prospering in the international economy was in considerable doubt”.

¹⁸¹ O’Donnell, R. (1998) *Ireland’s Economic Transformation*, University of Pittsburgh Centre for West European Studies.

Social partnership emerged from a concerted effort by Government, trade unions, employers and farming organisations to address this reality. The National Economic and Social Council (NESC), of which all of these sectors were members, produced a strategy document which, in turn, provided the basis for a three-year national agreement entitled *The Programme for National Recovery*.

Following this programme there have been six further national agreements, five of which covered a three-year period. The sixth (i.e. the current) programme is a ten-year framework covering the period 2006-2015 (with regular reviews). In this process the various social partners did not give up their own goals, objectives or tactics. However, they did agree “an inclusive overview of options, challenges and trade-offs, in the period covered by each of these strategy reports” according to McCarthy.¹⁸²

Three pillars negotiated and agreed the first three programmes with Government, namely, the business community, the trade unions and the farming organisations. During that time CORI Justice frequently pointed out that a large section of society was not represented in this process but was affected by the decisions made. Among the (overlapping) groups identified by CORI Justice as not being represented in their own right were poor people, unemployed people and women. Eventually, the Government decided to add a fourth pillar to the process representing the Community and Voluntary sector. A number of groups, including CORI Justice, were invited to be social partners in 1996. Since then CORI Justice has been one of the social partners that negotiated and signed four national agreements covering the period 1997 to 2015.

¹⁸² McCarthy, D. (1997) “Building a Partnership” in Reynolds, B. and Sean Healy (eds) *Social Partnership in a New Century*, CORI Justice, Dublin

Strategies

Social analysis and vision building

In its various programmes and projects and especially in the social partnership arena CORI Justice approaches its work from the perspective already outlined. Social analysis is the basic tool. The stance taken in approaching this analysis is the perspective of securing the human dignity of poor and excluded people. This analysis is updated each year. On the academic side CORI Justice engages with the many pieces of analyses produced by a number of reliable and credible research institutions both State and private. This analysis is also tested ‘at the coal face’ against the experience of people who are excluded from the benefits of decision-making and by our many members who work with these groups.

Communication and dialogue

CORI Justice has regularly articulated and shared its analysis of the present situation, its vision for the future and its ideas of how the Irish situation could be moved towards this vision. It has been involved in an ongoing dialogue with all the various actors in Irish society involved in these processes. It has sought to involve as broad a range of Irish society as possible. In conducting this ongoing dialogue with those who share its Faith and with the wider society it has developed the bilingualism required to ensure these dialogues are fruitful. It seeks to translate this perspective into a language that can be understood by the wider society that does not share its faith and uses all modern means of communication to share this perspective with as wide an audience as possible.

Impact in specific areas

In its efforts, from a Catholic Social Thought perspective, to engage with various disciplines and impact on Government, Social Partners, others involved in various public policy arenas and the wider society, CORI Justice has been involved in a wide range of issues in recent

years. We list some of these below, together with a key impact CORI Justice has seen emerge from its work. In each case CORI Justice:

- Produced an analysis of the issue (sometimes updated on an annual basis).
- Identified the problems as seen from CORI Justice's values-based; perspective as outlined above;
- Articulated an alternative or series of alternative initiatives or courses of action that would see the issue addressed to produce a situation more in keeping with a Gospel-based view of the world;
- Provided the research to support its position;
- Communicated its position on the issue in a wide range of arenas including public media;
- Developed an advocacy campaign on the issue;
- Conducted an ongoing dialogue with those involved in policy development (politicians and others) to test and/or advocate its proposals;
- Revised its proposals in the light of the responses it received if the critiques provided were seen as valid.

In some cases CORI Justice had to pilot its ideas (e.g. on turning welfare payments into paid jobs for many people) or produce original research (e.g. on issues related to Basic Income) to convince a wider audience of the viability or validity of its proposals.

Below we list the impact, or otherwise, we had in the following areas

Issue	Impact of CORI Justice
Income Adequacy	Got agreement that the lowest social welfare rate for a single person should be set at 30% of gross average industrial earnings. This was a huge improvement on the previous situation and was necessary as 50% of those at risk of poverty in Ireland live in households headed by a person who is neither employed nor among the unemployed. They are outside the labour force (i.e. elderly, ill, caring, disabilities) and depend on social welfare payments. The Government committed itself to reaching this level of payment for the lowest social welfare rates for a single person by 2007 and delivered on that commitment.
Work	Promoted the recognition of unpaid work, much of it done by women in caring roles in the society. This issue is now on the national policy agenda. There is a growing recognition of the need for work/life balance as it is called in Ireland. The major challenge is to ensure that people will have sufficient income to underpin the emergence of such a balance. Ireland is still some distance, however, from giving appropriate recognition to unpaid work. The need to provide some form of basic income for people in this situation is being progressed slowly.
Housing and Accommodation	Played a key role in having Government accept that social housing should be a major priority in policy. Targets have now been accepted for the first time that, if implemented, would lead to the elimination of ‘waiting lists’ for social housing, a reversal of the trend of the last two

decades when the number of households on these lists remained consistently high. Implementing these new targets will require very substantial financial investment. The outcome will have a huge impact on people's access to appropriate accommodation - a basic requirement if human dignity is to be respected.

Migration, refugees, asylum-seekers and racism

Highlighted the need for an integrated migration policy that encompassed migrant rights, refugees, asylum seekers and racism. Government has now taken a number of key initiatives towards developing such an integrated policy. CORI Justice is directly involved in this policy development.

The issue of what constitutes 'progress'

Challenged the generally accepted measurement of progress and sought to broaden it from GDP/GNP to encompass a wide range of other issues. CORI Justice played a key role in having a comprehensive list of progress indicators produced by the Central Statistics Office (funded by Government). These are now measured on a regular basis and the results are published. CORI Justice also contributes to the work being done by the OECD to generate a standard set of progress indicators to be measured by all countries.

MA in Social Justice and Public Policy

Developed, and continues to play a major role in, a Masters Degree programme that integrates the study of social justice and public policy. This MA programme emerged from CORI Justice's internship programme, implemented over a ten-year period, where all the modules were originally developed.

The ‘Lisbon’ Agenda	Sought to ensure that the EU did not promote competitiveness and growth at the expense of social inclusion and social cohesion. Despite much work in this area there is little evidence as we write that CORI Justice has been successful in this regard. It has, however, succeeded, with others, in putting it on the Irish Government’s agenda.
Third World Aid	Played a leading role in the grouping of organisations that convinced Government to commit to meeting the UN target for Third World Aid (0.7% of GNP) by 2012. After a shaky start, progress towards meeting this commitment is now on target.

These are just some of the issues addressed. There are many more that could be listed and elaborated. CORI Justice has not always been successful in its efforts. However, any fair evaluation of the past twenty five years would acknowledge that CORI Justice has addressed many difficult issues and has developed widespread credibility across the spectrum. The Catholic Social Thought perspective has been and is a very valuable lens through which to view issues and discern action.

Engagement with Policy-Making Structures

Reflecting on the experience of CORI Justice in its various projects and efforts to influence the shape of society a number of conclusions emerge.

- CORI Justice is now deeply engaged in the policy-making process in Ireland particularly through its recognition as a Social Partner and its involvement in the negotiation and implementation of national agreements.
- CORI Justice is represented in a wide range of other policy-making arenas that flow from its involvement in social partnership. For example, it is currently a member of the Board of

COMHAR, the national sustainable development partnership forum. Since 1992 it has had a seat on the National Economic and Social Forum. Since 1997 it has been elected to membership of the National Economic and Social Council. It was also a member of the National Strategy for Women Review Group. It is, or has been, a member of a range of working groups addressing issues such as housing, taxation policy, poverty and social exclusion, equality, Travelling People, Third World Aid, etc.

- CORI Justice produces about twelve publications a year. These publications form part of the landscape of policy development and are widely used by a range of actors in the various policy making arenas.
- CORI Justice has good working relationships with all political parties who have elected members in the Dail and Seanad.
- CORI Justice also meets from time to time with civil and public servants who are dealing with the various issues it seeks to have addressed.
- It is involved in enabling and empowering a wide range of other organisations and individuals to play an active part in promoting the issues it addresses. This involves training, mentoring and a range of other activities.
- It facilitates two national Networks focused on social justice and public policy
- Its annual Budget project is recognised as a comprehensive, competent, timely body of work on which a large number of actors in policy-making arenas draw. This project includes research, publications, meetings, media interventions and a range of other work before and after the Government produces its annual Budget each year.
- CORI Justice has developed links and a structured, ongoing dialogue with a wide range of other actors in civil society.
- When appropriate CORI Justice seeks and receives media coverage (electronic and print; national and local) for its initiatives.

Being Credible

Developing and maintaining credibility is crucial if a Church body such as the CORI Justice is to have an ongoing impact and engage constructively with the various institutions working on policy development. From our experience with CORI Justice we suggest a Church body should meet the following seven requirements if it is to be a credible actor in the economic, political, cultural and social spheres. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list but these seem to us to be especially relevant given our experience in the social partnership and related contexts of Ireland at the start of the 21st century. The seven we suggest are:

- *Social analysis*
For the most part there is no one, clear, obvious, unambiguous reading of reality. However CORI Justice seeks to underpin its work by a detailed and objective as possible social analysis.
- *Dialogue - the issue of conversation*
This involves dialogue with CORI Justice's own membership and constituency, with the wider society and with the policy-making process.
- *Being bilingual*
Dialogue involves CORI Justice in two different 'conversations' going on all the time. These dialogues or conversations are with those who share our Faith and with the wider society. The conversation CORI Justice conducts with the wider society is deeply informed by the conversation it conducts with those who share our Faith. The stance taken in the wider society stems from the insights being shared in the Faith conversation.
- *Vision-building*
CORI Justice believes that if we are to be serious about the reign of God then we must be serious about this issue of vision-building. We need to be willing to envisage alternatives that are attainable. This is especially important in the Irish context, as much of Ireland's development is dependent on the wider world providing a positive environment.
- *On-going action*

CORI Justice seeks to design actions that could lead towards reaching that alternative future. This results in CORI Justice being involved in a range of activities that must be addressed if the ‘vision’ issue is to be treated seriously by others who are sceptical, threatened or comfortable with the status quo.

- *Being prophetic and resisting the temptation to be absorbed by the status quo*

The more one is involved in the wider reality the greater the danger that one will be absorbed by the status quo. Instead of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ and working for a world that is closer to its core message, there is a temptation to accept the dominant core meaning underpinning the status quo. This must be resisted.

- *Realising credibility comes through involvement*

Credibility never comes by ‘speaking from on high’. Involvement is essential for credibility to be present. Being a voice is not enough. One must also be involved in action. If CORI Justice is to be credible in the economic, political, cultural and social context then it is crucial that it be involved in a real way.

Ongoing Challenge

CORI Justice always offers its analysis, critique, vision, alternative ideas, and activities etc. as contributions to the public debate on the specific issues addressed. It seeks responses to its positions. It realises that dialogue and conversation with the wider reality are crucial aspects of seeking the truth. It is also aware that it must be open to change in response to what emerges in the dialogue. This dialogue gives new meaning to the challenge presented by the Second Vatican Council when it said: ‘The future of humanity lies in the hands of those who are strong enough to provide coming generations with reasons for living and hoping’ (Gaudium et Spes 31)