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Vatican to craft Catholic 'Sullivan Principles'

John L. Allen Jr. | Mar. 1, 2011

Pope Benedict XVI signs a copy of his encyclical, "Caritas in Veritate" ("Charity in Truth"), at the Vatican July 6, 2009. (CNS photo/L'Osservatore Romano via Reuters)

ROME -- Few efforts to cajole corporations into a deeper sense of social responsibility have been more celebrated than the ?Sullivan Principles,? elaborated in the late 1970s by African-American minister Leon Sullivan to apply economic pressure on South Africa to revise, and eventually abandon, its system of apartheid.

By consensus, the ?Sullivan Principles? worked because they condensed volumes of lofty theoretical language about global solidarity and human rights into a short set of concrete, practical commitments, which had a visible impact in the real world.

Building on that model, the Vatican may now be preparing to develop a similar template for business ethics in the 21st century ? a sort of Catholic version of the ?Sullivan Principles? ? based on Pope Benedict XVI?s 2009 social encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*.

That, at least, was one concrete proposal to emerge from a Feb. 24-26 symposium on the encyclical, titled ?The Logic of Gift,? hosted in Rome by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. The event was co-sponsored by the John A. Ryan Institute for Catholic Social Thought of the Center for Catholic Studies at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota.

A working group in the Council for Justice and Peace has been formed to prepare a draft, composed of a handful of experts on Catholic social thought and two officials from the council: Italian Bishop Mario Toso, the secretary, and Monsignor Anthony Frontiero, an American who works in the council.

If anything, the aim of these new ?Sullivan Principles? would be even more audacious than the original ? not to bring down a racist system in one nation, but to reshape an amorphous economy that spans the entire globe, often defying control by anyone, pushing it in the direction of enshrining ?gift? alongside profit as a core economic value.

Read the full story here: **Vatican to craft Catholic 'Sullivan Principles'** [1]

John Allen is in Rome for the next week. Check back toNCRonline.org[2] frequently for more reports and exclusive coverage.

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