

“The Entrepreneurial Vocation”
Lecture Notes for the Private Use of Students

- Introduction
 - The title of this talk, “The Entrepreneurial Vocation,” comes from Fr. Robert Sirico’s speeches in the early years of the Acton Institute — eventually turned into essays and videos — to describe the holy calling and mission of a business man. He wrote, “The time has come for religious institutions and leaders to treat entrepreneurship as a worthy vocation, indeed, as a sacred calling. All lay people have a special role to play in the economy of salvation, sharing in the task of furthering the faith by using their talents in complementary ways. Every person created in the image of God has been given certain natural abilities that God desires to be cultivated and treated as good gifts. If the gift happens to be an inclination for business, stock trading, or investment banking, the religious community should not condemn the person merely on account of his or her profession.”
 - The reality was that entrepreneurs as a class were in many places at best tolerated and often calumniated. The images of businessmen in literature, academia, Hollywood and in the news were generally negative.
 - Charles Dickens portrayed Ebenezer Scrooge before his conversion.
 - Marx divided the world into two classes, the bourgeois exploiters and the exploited workers.
 - Hollywood generally showed business people as greedy, exploitative, acquisitive, narcissistic, cutthroat, selfish, proud and vicious.
 - The news would feature white-collar criminals whose practices were illegal and immoral, who exhibited so many of the sins to which human beings are prone.
 - If such images were true, no wonder why entrepreneurs had a bad rap. Coupled with the fact that we’re all troubled by the problem of poverty, hear the cry of the poor when they’re unjustly taken advantage of, and look for someone to blame.
 - Beyond this, there was a particular issues animus in the way many Christian leaders, theologians, and educators approached the subject of money and particular those who had earned or had a lot of it, based on particular interpretations of words and events in Sacred Scripture:
 - Jesus’ encounter with the Rich Young Man and his words that it’s easier for a camel to fit through the eye of a needle than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God (Mt 19)
 - Jesus’ words in the Sermon on the Plain, “Woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. ” (Lk 6:24)
 - Jesus’ Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus in which we see the rich man go to Hell for his failure to care for the poor man dying of hunger at his gates while he feasted (Lk 16).
 - Jesus’ words when someone approached with an inheritance dispute: “Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.” (Lk 12:15)
 - His words about the sudden death of the man with the successful grain harvest: ““You fool! ... So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God” (Lk 12:20-21)
 - His clear teaching, on more than one occasion, about how we cannot serve both God and mammon (Mt 6:24), giving us a clear choice that seems to be like the choice between Christ and Barabbas.
 - Mary’s words in her Magnificat: God “has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. (Lk 1:53).

- And St. Paul's sharp words to St. Timothy, "The love of money is the root of all evil." (1 Tim 6:10)
- These and other sayings, which were clearly warning against the idolatry of money and material things, of placing our faith, hope and love in the things of this world rather than God, led to some treating those who sought to make money in business seem like worshippers of the ancient golden calf, a bias that could often find its way into homilies and sermons, catechetical and Bible School lessons, and more.
- Through the term and theme of the entrepreneurial vocation, Fr. Sirico wanted to focus on the fundamental goodness of the material dimension of human existence and the theology of work in the calling of the businessman, arguing that the creative aspect of the entrepreneur was akin to God's creative activity that we see in the Book of Genesis. That like the vocation of a parent procreating and raising children, so an entrepreneur, perhaps in a less sublime way, would bring enterprises into birth and nurture them to serve others' unmet needs, provide the opportunity for others to grow and support their families, and help so many grow through the fostering of their own vocation to work.
- We're no longer in the same situation where business leaders are universally castigated, but in many places they've finally gotten off the most wanted list and occasionally onto Santa's good side.
 - This is partially, we can say, because of the perseverance and persuasiveness of Fr. Sirico and the Acton Institute over these last 26 years.
 - For Catholics, the change is clearly one of the implications of the Second Vatican Council's universal call to holiness, that business leaders are likewise called to be holy.
 - The recent Popes have likewise had a role in the change.
 - St. John Paul II spoke persuasively about the role of the entrepreneur. In an address to the entrepreneurs of Milan in 1985, John Paul promoted the value of entrepreneurship as a social service: "The degree of well being that society enjoys today would have been impossible without the dynamic figure of the entrepreneur, whose function consists in organizing human labor and the means of production in order to produce goods and services."
 - Pope Benedict authorized the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace to put out a very good document in May 2012 entitled the Vocation of the Business Leader, in which it forthrightly stated, "The vocation of the businessperson is a genuine human and Christian calling. Its importance in the life of the Church and in the world economy can hardly be overstated."
 - Pope Francis called business a "noble vocation" in *Evangelii Gaudium* 203, repeated in *Laudato Si'* 129 and then developed it in his speech before Congress last September. In Washington, after acknowledging the fight against poverty, he said: "The fight against poverty and hunger must be fought constantly and on many fronts, especially in its causes. I know that many Americans today, as in the past, are working to deal with this problem. It goes without saying that part of this great effort is the *creation and distribution of wealth*. The right use of natural resources, the proper application of technology and *the harnessing of the spirit of enterprise are essential elements of an economy that seeks to be modern, inclusive and sustainable*. "Business is a noble vocation, directed to producing wealth and improving the world. It can be a fruitful source of prosperity for the area in which it operates, especially if it sees the creation of jobs as an essential part of its service to the common good."
 - Many, as a result of the way Pope Francis has decried what he thinks is a deification of the market and an obsession with profit have thought that Pope Francis is anti-business and anti-entrepreneur, but the words I just read are not the words of someone who disparages business. In a message to the World Economic Forum in Davos he showed his high appreciation for the work of entrepreneurs in development, writing about "the fundamental role that modern business activity has

had in bringing about these changes, by stimulating and developing the immense resources of human intelligence.”

- So while the title of the Entrepreneurial Vocation is no longer controversial, or quasi blasphemous, that doesn't mean it's well or deeply understood. That's what I'd like to do today in this lecture, to understand the call of the entrepreneur more profoundly from a theological and practical level with the hope of:
 - Nourishing the understanding of those engaged in business so that they may live out their vocation more ardently;
 - Helping those in ministry or future ministry support better those in business and strengthen them to live out their vocations to the full.
 - Helping all of us to see that there's supposed to be an entrepreneurial dimension to every Christian vocation.
- This presentation will involve a few steps and parts.
 - The calling of everyone to holiness, since the calling of the entrepreneur must, like every Christian vocation, be understood within the more comprehensive call to holiness.
 - A theological discussion of the vocation of every person to work.
 - A specific theological focus within that discussion on the calling to work on the specific calling of the entrepreneur.
 - Some practical considerations about how to live out this vocation faithfully.
- The vocation of every person to holiness
 - A vocation is a calling from God.
 - Often we think about the word calling in the context of calling the apostles from their boats or their money tables, or Saul from persecution. In other words, calling has to do with preaching the Gospel primarily, leaving behind family, lands, occupations for the kingdom. These are real callings, but they're not the only callings.
 - The fundamental vocation every Christian has received through Baptism is be holy, to be perfected.
 - Every vocation is built on the calling every one has received from Jesus to “be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect,” (Mt 5:48).
 - 1Ths. 4:3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification.
 - Lev. 19:2 Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.”
 - Holiness is simply becoming more and more God-like. It involves a progressive graced appropriation of divine attributes so that the deepest source of our human identity, namely our capacity to image God and to be configured to Christ is clearly manifest.
- The Vocation to work
 - How is this vocation to holiness achieved? For the vast majority of people, in the midst of the world. Doing what? Doing work.
 - In the words of John Paul II, “Holiness is not something outside the bounds of normal everyday life. For God calls his people to lead holy lives within the ordinary circumstances in which they find themselves: at home, in the parish, in the workplace, at school, on the playing field.”
 - Each one of us has received a vocation to work. The first command in the Gospel, which we'll be developing much more below, was not what we call the First Commandment, but rather came right after God called us into existence.
 - JP II in *Laborem Exercens* 13. We must go back to the fundamental issue of human work, which ... is of such importance for man-it constitutes one of the fundamental dimensions of his earthly existence and of his vocation.
 - JP II in *Centesimus Annus* 6. Work thus belongs to the vocation of every person; indeed, man expresses and fulfills himself by working. At the same time, work has a "social" dimension through its intimate relationship not only to the family, but also to the common good, since "it may truly be said that it is only by the labour of working-men that States grow rich".
 - The vocation at the beginning (LE)

- Gen 1:26 Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” 27 So God created mankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. 28 God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”
 - This first command, before the Fall, was a command to live in the image of God the Creator, in a two-fold way: first by sharing in the gift of pro-creating with the Creator new human life (referring to a specific type of human activity); secondly by filling the earth and subduing it and having dominion over all living creatures.
 - All of us have received this vocation to work, to co-operate (work with) the Creator in subduing the earth God created for man and having dominion over it.
 - Man is the image of God partly through the mandate received from his creator to subdue, to dominate, the earth. In carrying out this mandate, man, every human being, reflects to some degree the very action of the creator of the universe. This type of work distinguishes him from creatures.
 - After the Fall, this vocation remained, but now would be accomplished “with the sweat of your brow,” but the toil is redemptive. Sweat and toil, which work necessarily involves in the present condition of the human race, present the Christian and everyone who is called to follow Christ with the possibility of sharing lovingly in the work that Christ came to do. By enduring the toil of work in union with Christ crucified for us, man in a way collaborates with the Son of God for the redemption of humanity.
- Work transforms both the worker and the world. We need to focus on both dimensions of work.
 - Pope Benedict in *Caritas in Veritate* 69 introduces us to the two dimensions of work.
 - Technology enables us to exercise dominion over matter, to reduce risks, to save labour, to improve our conditions of life. It touches the heart of the vocation of human labour: in technology, seen as the product of his genius, man recognizes himself and forges his own humanity. Technology is the objective side of human action whose origin and *raison d'être* is found in the subjective element: the worker himself. For this reason, technology is never merely technology. It reveals man and his aspirations towards development, it expresses the inner tension that impels him gradually to overcome material limitations. Technology, in this sense, is a response to God's command to till and to keep the land (cf. Gen 2:15) that he has entrusted to humanity, and it must serve to reinforce the covenant between human beings and the environment, a covenant that should mirror God's creative love.
 - (LE) Work as a transitive activity changes creation in subduing the earth, the whole of the visible world. Man *dominates* the earth by the very fact of domesticating animals, rearing them and obtaining from them the food and clothing he needs, and by the fact of being able to extract various natural resources from the earth and the seas. But man "*subdues* the earth" much more when he begins to cultivate it and then to transform its products, adapting them to his own use. Industry in its turn will always consist in linking the earth's riches--whether nature's living resources, or the products of agriculture, or the mineral or chemical resources--with man's work, whether physical or intellectual.
 - (LE) Work as an intransitive activity develops the worker. As a person, man is therefore the subject of work, and independently of their objective content, his actions serve to realize his humanity. This dimension conditions the very ethical nature of work, involving a subject who decides about himself through freedom and virtue.
 - Work can allow people to develop or to be damaged. This is why John Paul II stated that “the sources of the dignity of work are to be sought primarily in the *subjective dimension*, not in the objective one.”

- This means that workers are not mere “human resources” or “human capital.”
 - *Facere versus agere.*
 - St. Gregory of Nyssa, we are our parents through our work.
 - (LE) Since work in its subjective aspect is always a personal action, an "actus personae," it follows that the whole person, body and spirit, participates in it, whether it is manual or intellectual work. The Church sees as her particular duty to form a spirituality of work which will help all people to come closer, through work, to God, the creator and redeemer, to participate in his salvific plan for man and the world and to deepen their friendship with Christ.
 - This emphasis on the humanity of workers *as they work* gives rise to a *Catholic conception of the business enterprise that is radically different from a conception of an enterprise as a mere engine of profits.* The purpose of a business firm within the Catholic perspective is not simply to make a profit, but to form a community of persons that can satisfy their basic needs through work and contribute to the well being of society.
- All of this leads to what John Paul II called The Gospel of Work (LE)
 - The description of creation that we find in the very first chapter of the Book of Genesis, is also in a sense the first "gospel of work." For it shows what the dignity of work consists of: It teaches that man ought to imitate God, his creator, in working and in resting, because man alone has the unique characteristic of likeness to God.
 - The truth that by means of work man participates in the activity of God himself, his creator, was given particular prominence by Jesus Christ. This “gospel of work,” is particularly powerful because he who proclaimed it was himself a man of work, a craftsman like Joseph of Nazareth.
 - The books of the Old Testament contain many references to human work and to the individual professions exercised by man: for example, the doctor, the pharmacist, the craftsman or artist, the blacksmith --we could apply these words to today's foundry workers--the potter, the farmer, the scholar, the sailor, the builder, the musician, the shepherd and the fisherman. The words of praise for the work of women are well known.
 - In his parables on the kingdom of God, Jesus Christ constantly refers to human work: that of the shepherd, the farmer, the doctor, the sower, the householder, the servant, the steward, the fisherman, the merchant, the laborer. He also speaks of the various forms of women's work. He compares the apostolate to the manual work of harvesters or fishermen. He refers to the work of scholars too.
 - Businesses make a contribution to the community by fostering the special dignity of human work. Employment, just like business, is a noble and essential vocation. ... This means that business must always subordinate profits to generating employment.
- The specific vocation of the entrepreneur
 - As I've mentioned, this phrase doesn't refer just to those who found start-up companies, but to those who have responsibility for the creation of wealth or for its growth in business.
 - The theology of the business vocation, like any vocational theology, needs to provide a vision that identifies the deeper meaning of what someone is doing so that he can begin to see the sacred, and its potential realization, in day-to-day work life.
 - What would be the elements of the vocation of the entrepreneur?
 - The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (PCJP) in the *Vocation of the Business Leader* (VBL) wrote that entrepreneurship is a vocation to a holiness marked by
 - acceptance of risk arising from human realities, some of which cannot be controlled and some (e.g. human freedom) which ought not be controlled;
 - persistence in the offering of beneficial goods and services to others;
 - creative planning to combine the resources of self and others and

- adaptation in the face of initial failures. In pursuing this vocation, the entrepreneur at his or her best embarks on a life that involves the surrender of control, as well as the surrender of all that is provisional and unnecessary.
- St. Bernardine of Siena in 15th century, where the mercantile class was growing, recognized four such gifts in the entrepreneur: efficiency, responsibility, hard work, and risk-taking. The entrepreneur then takes these gifts and combines them with insight about something people need, and works very hard to fill this need in a creative and productive manner. In the process, he employs the labor of others, giving them a meaningful means to support their families. And in the end he has created wealth and prosperity that had not existed before.
- Entrepreneurs share in a particular way in the work of the Creator, to bring out the fullest potential to everything with which God has gifted us.
 - Pope John Paul II viewed enterprise as an activity of God the Creator whose image is impressed upon humanity. The image of God can therefore be seen in the way entrepreneurs combine mind, material, and work to provide products and services that contribute to human well being.
 - Business enterprise is not merely a generator of profits, but contributes to human dignity, helps form community, and provides worthwhile goods and services.
 - Business leaders have a special role to play in the unfolding of creation by helping to shape and steward productive organizations that can extend the work of unfolding creation into the future.
- They share to some degree in God’s providence, his “seeing ahead,” and God’s making us and others free.
 - At the heart of the entrepreneurial vocation is the ability to *pro-videre* (“see ahead”), to envision the possibility of an innovative good or service, to appreciate fully its benefits and to plan the appropriate combination of resources needed to produce the product or service.
 - The entrepreneur demonstrates providential care when he anticipates the future needs of others, and takes risks based on what he or she thinks will be the response of others.
 - The entrepreneur intends to create part of the future, but at the same time recognizes that success or failure will be determined by others who are free to accept or reject the offer made by the entrepreneur. The entrepreneurial response to this dependency on the free decisions of others is not to draw back and conserve wealth, but rather to proceed with persistence and a willingness to change, trusting that the world is (or eventually will be) open to the creative change offered by the entrepreneur.
- They are called to be good stewards of the earth, of themselves and of other persons, as part of the talents entrusted to them by God.
 - In this “stewardship” approach, leaders balance optimising returns today with the need to avoid potentially catastrophic outcomes to ensure the business exists in 50 or 100 years. The failure of this “stewardship” approach is all too evident in modern financial crises and often in environmental damage and insensitivity.
 - One business objective, indicated by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace in *The Vocation of the Business Leader*, is ‘good wealth’, which means generating sustainable wealth and distributing it justly. Businesses should therefore ensure that their activities do not befoul the environment and violate human dignity. This calls a shift from a short-termist to a more sustainable perspective.
 - Other people, creating employment opportunities for those who would otherwise go without so that they can care for themselves and their families.
- They are innovative servants

- They serve others. To be successful, they must focus acutely, even obsessively, on the needs of others, give the public what it needs and legitimately wants, and even discover needs and wants so subtle they are imperceptible to others.
- Jesus stresses service in all of us. “If anyone wants to be the first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all” (Mark 9:35).
- Entrepreneurs have a burning desire to provide a service not readily available—a service that provides people with greater opportunities and level of fulfillment than they had previously. Business is about creating goods and services, jobs and benefits, new wealth that did not exist before. The effective entrepreneur sees (discerns, discovers) unmet or poorly met material needs, designs creative productive strategies to meet those needs, enlists, initiates and coordinates the aid of investors and workers to assist in the production of needed goods and services—in the context of a work dynamic that contributes to a heightened sense of dignity and community among the workers—so as to bring about the economic growth of society.
- “The business leader is not a speculator, but essentially an innovator. . . . For the speculator, building roads and establishing hospitals or schools is not the goal, but merely a means to the goal of maximum profit. Business serves the common good by creating goods that are truly good and services that truly serve.
- Display the virtue of inventiveness, imagining new possibilities.
 - They are vigilant practitioners in the art of discovery, for by it they, as Good Shepherds, will create
 - The entrepreneur is generally oriented to an anthropology of freedom and a cosmos open to continuous creativity, seeing the need for new consumer goods, new methods of production or transportation, new markets, new forms of industrial organization that enterprise creates.”
- They take risks, acting on Jesus’ command “Be not afraid!” and “Put out into the deep!”
 - They take risks. Long before entrepreneurs see a return on their ideas or their investments, they must give up their time and property. They pay out wages even before they know whether they have accurately forecast the future, with no assurance of profit.
 - This was compared by one theologian to Christ’s kenotic love in giving before he knows even the response of others.
- They tutor others, by example and mentorship, how to become independent and to produce wealth themselves.
- Several Scriptural Passages that talk about the virtues of those who are rich:
 - Zacchaeus (Lk 19): “Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.”
 - Joseph of Arimathea (Mt 27), who gave his tomb to Jesus.
 - Good Samaritan. As Cardinal Pell said in a Jan 2016 interview: “If the Good Samaritan had been without capital he could not have paid for the care of the man who was beaten and robbed on the road to Jericho.”
 - The apostles in the New Testament were fishermen first, who learned about hard work and diligence in a market setting. Was this one of the reasons why Jesus chose them in the first place? Is it one of the reasons why he chose an entrepreneur — Peter — to be first among the apostles?
- But the most important Scriptural Passage in elucidating the entrepreneurial vocation is the Parable of the Talents
 - The Passage Itself
 - Mt 25:14 “For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; 15 to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. 16 The one who

had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. 17 In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. 18 But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. 19 After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. 20 Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' 21 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' 22 And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' 23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' 24 Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; 25 so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' 26 But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? 27 Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. 28 So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. 29 For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. 30 As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

- Exegesis and Commentary — There's so much within this passage that sheds light on the entrepreneurial vocation and how each of us needs to be entrepreneurial in response to using our God-given capacities and resources.
 - With regard to the material world, this is a story about capital, investment, entrepreneurship, and the proper use of economic resources. In terms of our Christian life and the life of the entrepreneur, there's a clear connection between entrepreneurial opportunities and the Master's command to be watchful of his return and good stewards of his property.
 - This involves fundamentally how we use the gift of the graces God has given us. The entrepreneur is the one who precisely "invests" the "talents" God has given him.
 - The talent of his life.
 - The talent of his health, education and know-how
 - The talent of his work.
 - The talent of natural, spiritual, and material gifts.
 - The talent of his opportunities.
 - God gives us talents to create more wealth, understood not simply in monetary terms but in terms of developing ourselves, others, and the world. The master expects his servants to seek material gain. Rather than passively preserve what they have been given, they were expected to invest the money.
 - The wealth is always the Master's, and we are called to use it for the Kingdom.
 - The Master carefully assesses the natural abilities of each servant, but he is very generous to each.
 - A talent was the largest denomination of the time, equivalent to 6,000 days wages, about 16 years worth of work, so it was a huge amount. Even if one were making \$12.50 an hour, it would be \$600,000 in today's money.
 - It is not immoral to profit from the resources, wit, time and work God has given us.
 - God's extraordinary reward:

- “Well done, good and trustworthy servant; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your Lord.”
- To those who develop their talents God will grant an increase.
- The problem with the third servant
 - The master was angered at the timidity of the servant who had received the one talent. God commands us to use our talents towards productive ends. The parable emphasizes the need for work and creativity as opposed to idleness. The Master is displeased with the wasting of his talent.
 - In the rabbinical teaching of the age, it was possible to hide the money in the ground. Burying, in fact, was regarded as the best security against theft. If a person entrusted with money buried it as soon as he took possession of it, he would be free from liability should anything happen to it, something that would not obtain in the case of money that one had hidden in some other way. In the Parable, Jesus went against cultural convention to make the point about putting God’s gifts to use to encourage reasonable risk-taking. The Master considered burying the talent— and thus breaking even—to be foolish, because he believed capital should earn a reasonable rate of return.
 - The ferocity of the Master’s reaction to the wasting of opportunity is noteworthy: He calls him “wicked and slothful” and banishes him forever. Apparently it is not just the servant’s sloth that brings such wrath on his head. He has also shown no contrition, and has blamed the master for his timidity. His excuse for not investing the money is that he viewed the master as a hard and exacting man, though he had been given generous resources. Out of fear of failure, he has refused to even try to succeed.
 - The lazy servant hypothetically may have been able to avoid his dismal fate by being more entrepreneurial. If he had made an effort to trade with his master’s money and came back with less than a talent, he likely would not have been treated so harshly, for he would have labored on behalf of his master.
- The importance of solidarity and trust
 - The master allows his servants to decide upon the best manner of investment. In this regard, they have full liberty. He doesn’t micromanage but unleashed their gifts.
 - The principle of subsidiarity is rooted in the conviction that, as images of God, the flourishing of human beings entails the best use of their intelligence and freedom. Human dignity is never respected by unnecessarily constraining or suppressing that intelligence and freedom.
 - In a workplace, the more participatory it, the more likely workers will develop. They should have a voice in the work they do, especially in the work that they do on a day-to-day basis. Initiative, creativity, and a sense of shared responsibility, should be fostered. Employees on a lower level who are trusted, trained, experienced, know precisely their responsibilities, and are free to make decisions, can fully use their freedom and intelligence, and thus are enabled to develop as people; they may be even perceived as “co-entrepreneurs.” For business leadership, this is very demanding. It calls for restraint, and a humble acceptance of the role of a servant of those “under” them to lift them up.
 - God has exercised subsidiarity by entrusting the earth in different “talents” or parts to humans to keep, till and care for it; this makes human beings co-creators with God. Owners, business leaders, managers and supervisors should exercise the same subsidiarity and uphold the full human dignity, the

integral human development, of those they employ and guide as a sacred trust.

- Other lessons
 - This parable makes very clear that an unequal distribution of wealth as such is not unjust—for the first servant received more than the second and third.
 - It makes clear that making a profit cannot be not equated with greed, because it's a proper use of the gift.
 - Leveling of money or the reallocation of resources is not foreseen here. A moral system is one that doesn't try to make everyone the same but one that recognizes and tries to assist each person to use his or her talents to the fullest. We all have the responsibility to employ the faculties with which we have been endowed rather than to lament those we do not have.
 - This parable also tells us something about macroeconomics. The master went on his journey leaving behind a total of eight talents; upon his return it has become fifteen. The parable is not the story of a zero-sum gain. One person's gain is not another's expense. The successful trading of the first servant does not hinder the prospects for the third servant. So it is true of a genuine free market economy: the success of the rich does not come at the expense of the poor. If by becoming rich the most successful servant had hurt others, the master would not have praised him.
- A summary of the Parable with an application to development in general
 - John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* 30: It is logical to conclude, at least on the part of those who believe in the word of God, that today's "development" is to be seen as a moment in the story which began at creation, a story which is constantly endangered by reason of infidelity to the Creator's will, and especially by the temptation to idolatry. But this "development" fundamentally corresponds to the first premises. Anyone wishing to renounce the difficult yet noble task of improving the lot of man in his totality, and of all people, with the excuse that the struggle is difficult and that constant effort is required, or simply because of the experience of defeat and the need to begin again, that person would be betraying the will of God the Creator. In this regard, in the Encyclical *Laborem Exercens* I referred to man's vocation to work, in order to emphasize the idea that it is always man who is the protagonist of development. Indeed, the Lord Jesus himself, in the parable of the talents, emphasizes the severe treatment given to the man who dared to hide the gift received: "You wicked slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed and gather where I have not winnowed? ...So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents" (Mt 25:26-28). It falls to us, who receive the gifts of God in order to make them fruitful, to "sow" and "reap." If we do not, even what we have will be taken away from us. A deeper study of these harsh words will make us commit ourselves more resolutely to the duty, which is urgent for everyone today, to work together for the full development of others: "development of the whole human being and of all people."
- Practical considerations on living the entrepreneurial vocation well.
 - Entrepreneurs are called to sanctity in business, to be good stewards of the Master.
 - If vocation in the Christian context is a call to holiness, empowered through the redemption granted to us by Christ, then intrinsic to any vocation is a call to moral integrity. The vocation of entrepreneurs, therefore, is falsified when entrepreneurs deceive or cheat others, and violate bonds of trust with their associates and constituencies.
 - A market economy must be based on the pursuit of the common good in freedom, but freedom without truth leads to disorder and sin. Without guiding principles and virtuous

leadership, businesses can be places where expediency overcomes justice, where power corrupts wisdom, where technical instruments are detached from human dignity, and where self-interest marginalizes the common good.

- St. Josemaria Escriva described three purposes of work:
 - Sanctify one's work by doing it principally for God, and offering it to him like the first fruits of Abel
 - Sanctify oneself through working virtuously according to this intransitive formation we receive when we work well.
 - Sanctify others through one's work, by doing it out of love for them, by creating a community of workers, by genuinely spreading the light and love of Christ in the workplace as Christ would if he were in the carpenter shop, always open to going deeper on the journey of faith with those who might ask us about the reason for the hope we bear.
- Entrepreneurs must depend on God, receiving his gifts and responding to them.
 - *Caritas in Veritate* 16. To regard development as a vocation is to recognize, on the one hand, that it derives from a transcendent call, and on the other hand that it is incapable, on its own, of supplying its ultimate meaning. ... There is no true humanism but that which is open to the Absolute, and is conscious of a vocation which gives human life its true meaning.
 - How hard it is to enter the Kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to pass through the needle's eye than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God." His disciples were taken aback at this, and wondered then who could be saved. Jesus answers their fears, "For man it is impossible, but not for God." This does not mean that our material success will keep us from heaven, yet it does imply the necessity to order our lives properly before all our material concerns. Our concern for God must come just as the servants thought of their master's interest as they pursued profit. It remains true that for all of our worldly goods and deeds, we rely completely on God to attain salvation.
 - VBL: The first act of Christian business leaders, as of all Christians, is to receive; more specifically, to receive *what God has done for them*. This act of receptivity, particularly for business leaders, people of busy-ness, of action, can be most difficult. As a group, business leaders tend to be more active than receptive, especially now in a globalized economy, under the effects of sophisticated communication technologies and the financialization of business. Yet without receptivity in their lives, business leaders can be tempted by a quasi-Nietzschean "superman" complex. The temptation for some business leaders is to regard themselves as *determining* and *creating* their own principles, not as *receiving* them. Business leaders often see themselves as creative, innovative, active, and constructive, but if they see themselves only as doers, they distort their place within the world and overestimate their own achievements and work. Benedict XVI, before he became Pope, wrote that the person "comes in the profoundest sense to himself not through what he does but through what he accepts," not through what he achieves but through what he receives. Indeed, human accomplishment taken alone leads only to partial fulfillment; one must also know the power and grace of receptivity. The first act that the Church calls for from the business leader is to receive—to receive the sacraments, to accept the Scriptures, to honor the Sabbath, to pray, to participate in silence and in other disciplines of the spiritual life. These are not optional actions for business leaders, not mere private acts separated and disconnected from business.
- Entrepreneurs must beware of all greed
 - Greed is a spiritual hazard that threatens us all, regardless of our wealth or vocation. The term has a proportional element, meaning there is an *excessive* or *insatiable* desire for material gain, regardless of financial status. The desire is excessive when, in the depths of a person's being, it outweighs moral and spiritual concerns.
 - While profitability is the first indicator of organizational health, it is neither the only one, nor the most important measure by which business should be judged. Profit is necessary to sustain a business; however, "once profit becomes the exclusive goal, if it is produced by

improper means and without the common good as its ultimate end, it risks destroying wealth and creating poverty.” Profit is like food, someone has said: An organism must eat but that is not the overriding purpose of its existence. Profit is a sign of a healthy and strong business, but it is a poor purpose.

- But creating wealth cannot be restricted to just profit. The very etymology of the word “wealth” reveals the broader notion of “well-being” especially the moral and spiritual well-being of others. The economic value of wealth is inextricably linked to this wider notion of well-being.
- There’s also a need to avoid looking at profit as some type of divine benediction. Jesus did not preach a “prosperity Gospel,” common in some circles today, based on a Jewish understanding evidenced in some psalms that God blesses materially all those he finds pleasing. This, of course, is violated by the bank accounts of Jesus (who didn’t have a pillow), Mary & Joseph (who didn’t have enough for a lamb at Jesus’ presentation), the apostles (who traveled around with no money bag, no second tunic, etc. and left everything to follow Jesus. Again, profit isn’t a sign of pleasing God.
- Entrepreneurs must strive to maintain a unity of life
 - One of the among the obstacles to the flourishing entrepreneurial vocation is a *divided life*, or what Vatican II described as “the split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives.” Dividing the demands of one’s faith from one’s work in business is a fundamental error that contributes to much of the damage that we see some businesses doing in our world today, including overwork to the detriment of family or spiritual life, an unhealthy attachment to power to the detriment of one’s own good, and the abuse of economic power in order to make even greater economic gains.
 - The entrepreneurial vocation cannot become corrupted through illicit exploitation, the rupture of social solidarity, or other sins that subvert the market and work against the development of wealth.
 - Christians must remain mindful of the words of Jesus himself: “No one can be the slave of two masters. He will either hate the first and love the second or be attached to the first and despise the second. You cannot love both God and money” (Mt 6:24). Business leaders who do not see themselves serving others and God in their working lives will fill the void of purpose with a less worthy substitute.
 - The divided life is not unified or *integrated*: it is fundamentally disordered, and thus fails to live up to God’s call. God has a creative purpose for mankind: that we should flourish in an authentically human way in this world and enjoy eternal happiness in the next with God.
 - Fragmentation of this kind can also ultimately lead to idolatry, an all-too common occupational hazard of business life, a hazard that threatens both individuals and organizations and means abandoning one’s call to relationship with a loving Creator. The golden calf is a symbol of *misplaced devotion*, born of a false idea of true success. There are many surrogates for the golden calf in modern business life. These can include when the sole criterion for action in business is thought to be the maximization of profit, when technology is pursued for its own sake, or when seeking personal wealth, or political influence fails to serve the common good. Each of these “golden calves” amounts to a kind of fixation, usually accompanied by rationalization. Careful attention to avoid the lure of idolatry must be paid, and to trying to serve God on Sunday and mammon the rest of the week.
 - There can be sometimes enormous pressure for business leaders to forget the Gospel call in their daily professional activities. It may seduce them to believe, falsely, that their professional lives are incompatible with their spiritual lives. This kind of fragmentation can often lead to forgetfulness about the transcendent dignity of every person, and a lack of faith in Divine Providence. It can lead them to place excessive confidence in material resources and/or worldly success. When this happens, business leaders risk valuing status and temporary acclaim over lasting accomplishment.
 - What is also tragic is when Christians who, while not committing illegal or scandalous activities, have accommodated themselves to the world, living as if God does not exist. They

not only live *in* the world, but they have become *of* the world. When Christian business leaders fail to live the Gospel in their organizations, their lives “conceal rather than reveal the authentic face of God and religion.”

- Entrepreneurs must strive to form a community of persons
 - The purpose of business, John Paul states, “is not simply to make a profit, but is to be found in its very existence as a *community of persons* who in various ways are endeavoring to satisfy their basic needs, and who form a particular group at the service of the whole of society.” While the phrase “community of persons” is not common in business literature today, it actually gets closest to the full realization of what a company and corporation can be. The etymology of the words “company” and “companions” (*cum*, with, and *panis*, bread) suggests “breaking bread together.” The etymology of the word “corporation” (the Latin *corpus*, body) suggests a group of people “united in one body.”
 - *Caritas in Veritate* 19. Finally, the vision of development as a vocation brings with it the central place of charity within that development. ... Underdevelopment has an even more important cause than lack of deep thought: it is “the lack of **brotherhood** among individuals and peoples... 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, teaching us through the Son what fraternal charity is.
 - When we consider a business organization as a community of persons, it becomes clear that the bonds that hold us in association with one another are not merely legal contracts or mutual self-interests but commitments to real goods, shared with others to serve the world. Too often business has been considered simply as a “society of shares” where self-interests, contracts, utility, and wealth maximization exhaust its meaning. An important characteristic of work, however, is that “it first and foremost unites people. People are ends in themselves, not mere instruments available for their utility.
 - There is a danger of treating employees as no more than “resources,” treating the business itself as no more than a commodity, making money out of products that are not truly good or services that do not truly serve, or exploiting natural resources in a destructive way. These need to be resisted.
- Entrepreneurs must seek true solidarity with the poor
 - One can be a good steward without feeling connected. We also need to care, to allow oneself to be affected by another, so much so that one’s path and priorities change. Good parents know this.
 - Businesses maintain solidarity with the poor by being alert for opportunities to serve deprived and underserved populations and people in need.
 - The important developments of microenterprises, microcredit, social enterprises, social investment funds, and so on, have played an important role in humanizing markets so as to serve the needs of the poor.
- The entrepreneur is called to be charitable in his work and as a result of his work.
 - The business leader is called to *give* in a way that *responds* to what has been received. This giving is never merely a legal minimum; it must be an authentic entry into communion with others to improve. The self-gift of the person inquires not “how far it *must* go, but how far it *may* go.” (VBL)
 - As creators of wealth and prosperity, businesses and their leaders ought to be leaders in generosity, in finding ways to make a just distribution of this wealth to employees (just compensation), customers (fair prices), owners (fair returns), suppliers (fair prices), and the community (fair tax rates, philanthropy, etc.).
 - John Paul wrote, “the Church is aware that her social message will gain credibility more immediately from the *witness of actions* than as a result of its internal logic and consistency.”
- Entrepreneurs ought not facilitate the metastasis of consumerism

- Businesses contribute to the common good by producing goods that are truly good and services that truly serve. This is hindered, says Pope Francis, when the market promotes consumerism and when people are caught up in a “whirlwind of needless buying and selling.” It is also hindered when technological development is not guided by moral wisdom.
 - Needs ought to be contrasted with mere wants, which might be characterized as those desires that are not essential to human well-being. In extreme cases, satisfying mere wants may even be detrimental to human well-being as, for example, in the sale of non-therapeutic drugs, pornography, gambling, violent video games, and other harmful products. This preoccupation with wants — “consumerism” — severs production and consumption from the common good and impedes the development of the person. (VBL §42)
 - For the business leader, this entails creating goods that are truly good and services that truly serve; organizing work where employees develop their gifts and talents, and creating sustainable wealth so that it can be distributed justly.
 - Entrepreneurs must properly value rest and take it.
 - Just as God rested on the Sabbath, so we’re called to rest lest we become slaves to work, to the money we make, or to what that money can provide.
 - At a deeper level, the Sabbath is not a break from work, but perhaps paradoxically, it is what allows us to see work’s deepest meaning, by pressing the reset button on our life in our relationship with God and with others.
 - Pope Benedict explains this connection by stating “that the biblical teaching on work finds its coronation in the commandment to rest.” To rest in God places our work in a new context—the context of the continuous unfolding of God’s abundant gift of creation. (VBL)
 - Sacramental worship is not an *escape* from the world of business—it gives us the space to see more deeply into the *reality* of the world and to contemplate God’s work. God’s revelation, which can only be received and not achieved, reveals that His Spirit pervades materiality, that grace perfects nature, and that worship makes work holy. (VBL)
 - Without a deep well of prayer and reflection, it is hard to see, for example, how business leaders can resist the negative dimensions of information technology, for instance, that foster speed and efficiency at the expense of thoughtful reflection, patience, justice, practical wisdom, and above all a logic of gift. Information technologies encourage us towards instantaneous decisions; thus they can create their own logic that undermines the social principles of the Church, unless they are used in an ordered way by contemplative practitioners.
- Conclusion
 - As the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace’s *The Vocation of the Business Leader* beautifully says, “The vocation of the business person is a genuine human and Christian calling. Its importance in the life of the Church and in the world economy can hardly be overstated.”
 - Pope Benedict wrote in CV 17: A vocation is a call that requires a free and responsible answer.
 - It’s a response to having been chosen by God. “It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain” (Jn 15:16).
 - Pope Benedict CV 18: Precisely because God gives a resounding “yes” to man, man cannot fail to open himself to the divine vocation to pursue his own development.
 - In the Gospel, Jesus tells us: “From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked” (Lk 12:48). Businesspeople have been given great resources and the Lord asks them to do great things.
 - This is your vocation of the entrepreneur, to whom God has entrusted great talents for the building up of his kingdom, to whom he gives his help to develop them!

Bibliography

These were the various sources I consulted (some of which were copied and pasted into these notes verbatim during research).

- John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html
- John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus.html

- John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html
- John Paul II, Speech to the Members of the Christian Union of Entrepreneurs and Directors, December 14, 1985, https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/speeches/1985/december/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19851214_membri-ucid.html
- John Paul II, Speech to Entrepreneurs and Economic Agents, May 22, 1983, https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/speeches/1983/may/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19830522_impreditori-milano.html
- Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html
- Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html
- Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html
- Pope Francis, *Speech to the Joint Session of the Congress of the United States*, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/september/documents/papa-francesco_20150924_usa-us-congress.html
- *The Vocation of the Business Leader*, Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, https://www.stthomas.edu/media/catholicstudies/center/ryan/publications/publicationpdfs/vocationofthebusinessleaderpdf/PontificalCouncil_4.pdf
- Fr. Robert Sirico, *The Entrepreneurial Vocation*, <http://www.marketsandmorality.com/index.php/mandm/article/view/608/598>
- Fr. Robert Sirico, "The Entrepreneurial Vocation," <http://www.acton.org/public-policy/business-society/entrepreneurship/entrepreneurial-vocation>
- Fr. Robert Sirico, "The Biblical Case for Entrepreneurship" <http://www.acton.org/pub/religion-liberty/volume-11-number-1/biblical-case-entrepreneurship>
- Fr. Robert Sirico, "The Entrepreneur as Servant," <http://www.acton.org/pub/religion-liberty/volume-6-number-2/entrepreneur-servant>
- Fr. Robert Sirico, "A Worthy Calling," <http://www.acton.org/public-policy/business-society/entrepreneurial-voc/worthy-calling>
- Fr. Robert Sirico, "Saint Businessman," <http://www.acton.org/public-policy/business-society/entrepreneurial-voc/saint-businessman>
- William J. Toth, *The Entrepreneurial Calling: Perspectives from Rabner*, <https://www.stthomas.edu/media/catholicstudies/center/documents/businessasacallingpdf/04Toth.pdf>
- Rob Tribken, *The Image of God and the Entrepreneurial Vocation*, <http://fieldnotesmagazine.depre.org/the-image-of-god-and-the-entrepreneurial-vocation/>