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Human Development, Human Rights, and the 50th Anniversary of Populorum Progressio

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The Social Practice of Human Rights: Charting the Frontiers of Research and Advocacy

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Research Panel: Faith-Based Perspectives

Presenter: Ellen M. MacCarone, Gonzaga University

Title: Human Development, Human Rights, and the 50th Anniversary of *Populorum Progressio*

Abstract:

At the 50th anniversary of the encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, we have a critical opportunity to bring Paul VI's insights to the social practice of human rights. The development of peoples discussed by the encyclical isolates areas of significant concern to the Church and humanity more broadly. This, however, is not to say that there are not other issues overlooked in *Populorum Progressio* that also need to be addressed.

In this paper I argue that the understanding of human development found in *Populorum Progressio* serves as an important yet sometimes overlooked foundation in Catholic social teaching for the advancement of human rights. The particular issues addressed remain challenges for the world, and new issues have emerged. In taking seriously the call to human dignity and development found in *Populorum Progressio*, a discussion of human rights should not be avoided.

I will take two examples to be of primary importance. One is the dignity of work that is explicitly addressed by Paul VI and is often thought of in somewhat contentious terms in human rights discourse. My other example will be gender equity, which is not discussed in *Populorum Progressio* but has clear implications for human rights as well as the reduction of the social ills that are mentioned explicitly in the encyclical.

To conclude, bringing *Populorum Progressio* into dialogue with human rights discourse will provide valuable insights in what it offers and what it overlooks. Its vision of human dignity and the responsibilities of all to work toward human development are critical reminders within Catholic social teaching of what can motivate us to accomplish this work for those most marginalized and also for those most complicit in that marginalization.

About the presenter:

Ellen M. MacCarone, PhD, is an associate professor of philosophy and faculty advisor to the president at Gonzaga University. As an applied ethicist, she works in business ethics, feminist ethics, international development ethics, and food ethics. Recently she returned to an earlier interest in theories of justice.