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Economic Rights in Catholic Social Teaching

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Research Panel: The Importance of Social Justice and Human Rights in Economics

Presenters: Andrew Beauchamp, Wright State University; Jason Heron, Mount Marty College

Title: Economic Rights in Catholic Social Teaching

Abstract:

Catholic social teaching has a vision of the economy that is very closely aligned with the tradition of civil humanism, dating at least from the Italian Renaissance. In the course of contemporary discussion of economic concerns, Catholic social teaching often asserts human rights in and related to the economic sphere. However, it regards these economic imperatives not in terms of an autonomous, rights-bearing individualism, but rather within the thick web of relationships characterized by civil virtues, including reciprocity and gratuitousness.

Thus the Church conceptualizes the economy as part of a larger social ambit that includes fundamental social virtues. This vision leads to alternative prescriptions when rights are violated.

About the presenters:

Andrew Beauchamp is an associate professor of economics at Wright State University.

Jason Heron is a visiting assistant professor at Mount Marty College.