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Application of Catholic Social Teaching in Finance and Management

Abstract

In dominating narratives, economics has been portrayed as hard science, based on complex mathematical equations and rigid statistical models. It seems to be overlooked that it belongs to the domain of social sciences and that its roots stem from philosophy and ethics. After all, many classical economists were either ethicists (A. Smith) or clergymen (T. Bayes). Today's managers also seem to be motivated mainly by the desire to increase their company's profits. However, if managers wish to become both effective and respected leaders for their teams, they should build their power on ethical principles deeply rooted in Catholic Social Teaching. The purpose of the present paper is to attract attention to the relation of economics, management and religion. Behavioral economics and management come to our aid here by emphasizing that, when making decisions related not only to financial markets but also to managerial tasks, what matters is not only factors that are strictly financial, but also those are related to psychology or ethics. Using the example of ethical investing and faith-based funds or stock indexes the Authors show that Christian values and the social teaching of the Catholic Church are still important to some participants in the financial markets.

Keywords

Catholic Social Teaching, religion, ethical investing, management, leadership, parables

A classic theory of finance is based entirely on the concept of an economic human, so-called *homo oeconomicus*, and places egoism and cold-blooded optimization at the helm. An ideal representative of this classical model has constant preferences that fulfill a series of axioms, always makes optimal choices, does not exhibit passion, and is generally guided by maximization of their usefulness in accordance with the concept of utilitarianism. However, economists agree that classical economic theories have become less and less useful in explaining financial reality and predicting the future.

Consequently, behavioral economics has replaced rational humans, known as *Econs*, with the *homo sapiens* model, known simply as *Humans*.¹ According to R. Thaler, a Nobel Prize laureate, this new view of economics should encompass all factors that influence investment decisions, especially those allegedly irrelevant ones, known to classical economic theories as SIFs (*Supposedly Irrelevant Factors*). Among them are factors rooted in psychology; those described in economics and behavioral finance theories (intuitive thinking, personality traits, gender); cultural factors described in intercultural management literature (patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving that differentiate members of the given culture from others)²; or ethical factors associated with the concept of socially responsible investing (one's own religion or moral values).

Management theories seem to be very much focused on effectiveness and ability of the manager to make his or her company profitable. However, a closer look at management gurus and deeper analysis of their ideas³, clearly demonstrates that meaningful management concepts have a lot in common with the message of the New Testament parables, as well as with modern Christian thought based on Jesus' teaching.

The main objective of this study is to prove that Christian values and the social teaching of the Catholic Church are still important, not only to some participants in the financial markets, but also to leaders who are not just profit-oriented, but rather, act for the sake of their teams and other stakeholders. Due to the progressive de-Christianization and secularization of societies, applying a religious criterion in the contemporary financial world is a significant matter.

¹ R. H. Thaler, *Behavioral Economics: Past, present, and future*, "American Economic Review" (2016), 106 (7), p. 1578.

² M. Czerwonka, *Cultural, cognitive and personality traits in risk-taking behaviour: Evidence from Poland and the United States of America*, "Economic research-Ekonomska istraživanja" (2019) 32(1), pp. 894–908.

³ T. Hindle, *Guide to Management Ideas and Gurus*, Vol. 42., 2008, wyd. John Wiley & Sons.

The paper is organized as follows. The role of economics in Catholic Social Teaching on the basis of encyclicals and apostolic exhortations are described in Section 1. Ethical investing, as an example of practical application of the teaching of the Catholic Church in the domain of finance, is described in Section 2; and an application of ethics into management is addressed in Section 3. A conclusion to the paper can be found in the final section.

1. Economics in Catholic Social Teaching

In its teachings for the betterment of the society, the Catholic Church does not systematize the concepts of economics, finance or investment. The position of the Catholic Church on matters of economics is included in the so-called Catholic Social Teaching, (CST). It is a relatively new scholarly discipline, established in the late 19th and early 20th century. The subject of interest here is a human being living in various communities and societies. CST is composed of four domains: 1) history, 2) theological and biblical anthropology and the anthropology of philosophical integral personalism, 3) social and economic ethics, as well as 4) applied social and economic ethics.⁴ CST is universal, because it provides universal and objective values and rules, as well as their theological and philosophical justifications. Reference to God does not have to be considered as an expression of confessionalism, because numerous philosophical rationales are also provided.

Aside from CST, the Catholic Church tries to raise issues related to human activities in the financial domain by other means, such as encyclicals or apostolic exhortations. Numerous documents of pastoral papal teaching contain a growing number of thoughts on personal and social responsibility as well as corporate and investor responsibility. According to the Church, investing is never void of social, cultural, and ecological consequences. The Church does not present any alternative law or economic order, but it draws attention to the necessity of connecting the world of finance with ethics (*Caritas in veritate* encyclical⁵), issues

⁴ C.E. Curran, *Catholic social teaching, 1891–present: A historical, theological, and ethical analysis*, 2002, wyd. Georgetown University Press.

⁵ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, Vatican City 2009, http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html (10.07.2021).

of social inequality (*Evangelii Gaudium* apostolic exhortation⁶); the necessity to protect the natural environment (*Laudato Si* encyclical⁷), as well as current social issues associated with the Covid-19 pandemic (*Fratelli tutti*⁸).

Covid-19 pandemic affected many aspects of life, among others people's attitude to religion and economic needs. In the context of post-COVID society, social and spiritual bridging holds significant importance as a means to address and mitigate polarization⁹. In the period after the COVID-19 pandemic, it is necessary to raise the importance of social and spiritual rapprochement as key elements of the renewal of society. Research presents positive correlation between impact of environment, social inequality and pandemic.¹⁰ Post-covid era has decreased the willingness of people to social and economic needs during the financial crisis, that has been making a negative impact on mental health and has led to polarization.¹¹

The "Caritas in veritate" Encyclical

The "Caritas in veritate" encyclical was published by Pope Benedict XVI during the financial crisis of 2007–2009. One of the issues raised is, that the challenge which appeared during the economic and financial crisis is to demonstrate that one must not neglect or weaken such traditional rules of social ethics as transparency, honesty, or responsibility. "This is a human demand at the present time, but it is also demanded by economic logic."¹² Pope Benedict XVI emphasizes that justice refers to all stages of economic activity, because it always deals with

⁶ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, United States Conference of Bishops, (2013), http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html (10.07.2021).

⁷ Pope Francis, *Laudato si*, Vatican City 2015, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html (10.07.2021).

⁸ Francis Pope, *Fratelli Tutti*, Vatican City 2020, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html (10.07.2021).

⁹ V. Judák (eds), *The importance of social and spiritual bridging in relation to post-covid society polarization in Slovakia*, "Acta Missiologica" (2022) 16 no. 1, pp. 126–137.

¹⁰ P. Maturkanic, V. Judak (eds), *Catholic spirituality of north bohemia mission area and its future direction*, "Acta Missiologica" (2023) 17, 2, pp. 20–23.

¹¹ L. Ludvigh Cintulová, P. Beňo, T. Pavlovičová, *Aspects of social services and wellbeing in post covid era*, "Int J Health New Tech Soc Work" (2023) 18 no 3, pp. 106–114.

¹² Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*..., 36.

human beings and their needs. “Locating resources, financing, production, consumption and all the other phases in the economic cycle inevitably has moral implications. Consequently, every economic decision has a moral consequence.”¹³

The Pope underlines that in order to function properly, the economy needs ethics, but not just any ethics, rather “an ethics which is people-centered.”¹⁴ Benedict XVI provides numerous examples of ethical behaviour in the world of business: studies and formative programs in business ethics, ethical certificate systems, ethical banking accounts, ethical investment funds or ethical financing. However, the Pope also expresses his fear of excessive use of the adjective “ethical”. This word, if not used in a -precise way, may refer to highly diverse content, to such an extent that it may also encompass decisions and choices opposite to justice and true human good. “Efforts are needed – and it is essential to say this – not only to create “ethical” sectors or segments of the economy or the world of finance, but to ensure that the whole economy – the whole of finance – is ethical, not merely by virtue of an external label, but by its respect for the requirements intrinsic to its very nature.”¹⁵

In the Pope’s deliberations on economics, we can identify words of clear criticism. The Holy Father is very categorical in stating that economics, since a long time ago, has already joined the domains where the disastrous effects of sin are evident. “The conviction that the economy must be autonomous, that it must be shielded from ‘influences’ of a moral character, has led man to abuse the economic process in a thoroughly destructive way.”¹⁶ Pope Benedict XVI also refers to Pope John Paul II, who cautioned that investing is always of moral, not just economic significance. In the encyclical letter from 1993, *Veritatis Splendor*, John Paul II reminds us that the Church has declared that certain acts are always wrong. Intentions may be noble, people may claim to be acting in good conscience and circumstances may mitigate personal responsibility but certain acts (for example, adultery, intentional killing of human life) are always evil.¹⁷ “All this – it should be stressed – is still valid today, despite the fact that the capital market has been significantly liberalized, and modern technological

¹³ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*..., 37.

¹⁴ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*..., 45.

¹⁵ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*..., 45.

¹⁶ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*..., 45.

¹⁷ John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, Vatican City 1993, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_06081993_veritatis-splendor.html, (21.10.2021).

thinking can suggest that investment is merely a technical act, not a human and ethical one.”¹⁸

Evangelii Gaudium apostolic exhortation (2013)

Evangelii Gaudium is Pope Francis’ first apostolic exhortation. Although proclamation of the gospel in the contemporary world, as well as revival of the Church, are its main themes, it does include many excerpts that refer to social and economic issues, especially poverty and capitalism.

This points to a societal ethos where the pursuit of material goods and individual consumption takes precedence over values such as solidarity, social justice, and compassion. Consumerism, in this context, is seen as contributing to a mindset that prioritizes acquiring possessions over fostering a sense of responsibility towards others.¹⁹ Pope Francis’ statements underscore a critique of a value system that prioritizes financial gains over ethical considerations and spiritual beliefs. He links this shift in priorities to economic crises, wealth concentration, and social inequalities, and urges a reevaluation of societal values and a renewed emphasis on ethical, inclusive, and spiritually grounded approaches to economic and social issues.²⁰

Pope Francis cautions against the globalization of indifference, or disappearance of interest in the condition of the have-nots, replaced by concentration on one’s own consumption. He also criticizes subjecting economics to the laws of rivalry, as well as the culture of consumerism, which leads to objectification of the human factor to production. “Just as the commandment “Thou shalt not kill” sets a clear limit in order to safeguard the value of human life, today we also have to say “thou shalt not” to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills. How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points?”²¹ The exhortation reveals the views of the Head of the Catholic Church on contemporary economics. The paper highlights the potential negative

¹⁸ Benedict XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, 2009, 40.

¹⁹ M. Lichner (eds), *Various aspects of understanding almsgiving in the context of solution of poverty in Aurelius Augustinus*, “Acta Missiologica” (2023) 17 no. 1, pp. 85–96.

²⁰ M. Lichner (eds), *Pope Francis and jews. The proposed possibilities of Jewish-Christian dialogue*, “Acta Missiologica” (2021) 15 no. 2, pp. 301–310.

²¹ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, ..., 53.

consequences of an overly competitive and profit-driven economic system. In this context, we have to draw attention to the adverse effects of a culture dominated by consumerism, where material pursuits take precedence over social and ethical considerations.²² On the other hand, this critique suggests a call for a more compassionate and socially responsible approach to economic practices, one that considers the impact on marginalized communities and promotes a more equitable. Promoting social cohesion, fostering community support, and addressing the systemic factors contributing to poverty are essential steps in improving the mental health outcomes for those facing economic challenges.²³ There is a need for a shift in societal values and economic priorities, advocating for a system that prioritizes solidarity, social justice, and the well-being of all, particularly those on the fringes of every society. The experience of poverty itself can be emotionally taxing, with individuals facing not only economic hardships but also social stigma and exclusion. The absence of a supportive community or network can exacerbate feelings of loneliness and contribute to mental health issues such as anxiety and depression.²⁴

Francis considers prioritization of money over ethics and belief in God as a source of the problem. He compares contemporary fascination with profits, efficiency and infallibility of markets with worshipping the biblical golden calf instead of God. According to the Pope, the ideology that promotes the absolute autonomy of markets has led to mass-scale financial speculations and, as a result, to the global financial crisis. The Pope also remembers other effects of economic system deregulations, such as capital accumulation in the hands of few and the tyranny of the rich over the poor, interpreted as economic violence. This form of economic inequality is interpreted as a manifestation of economic violence, where the marginalized and economically disadvantaged face systemic injustices perpetuated by the powerful elite.²⁵

²² Z. Budayová (eds), *The Impact of Modern Technologies on Life in a Pandemic Situation*, "Journal of Education Culture and Society" (2022) 13, no. 1, pp. 213–224.

²³ L. Ludvigh Cintulová, L. Radková, Z. Budayová, *Mental health of Roma women in post-covid era*, "Acta Missiologica" (2022) Vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 116–129.

²⁴ L. Ludvigh Cintulová, Z. Budayová, I. Juhásová, *Health of Roma People living in marginalized Communities in Slovakia*, "Clinical Social Work and Health Intervention" (2023) Vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 7–15.

²⁵ R. Králik (eds), *Compassion and Solidarity with the poor in Tahakh and Rabbinic Judaism*, "Acta Missiologica" (2022) 16, no. 1, pp. 154–168.

“I exhort you to generous solidarity and to the return of economics and finance to an ethical approach which favours human beings.”²⁶ The Pope appeals to political leaders, as well as financial experts, to consider ethics when introducing reforms. So far, ethics has been disdained as implementation of immeasurable values to the system that aims at bringing down economics to calculations and forecasts. The primary feature of solidarity and the catholic spirituality is the belief in the triune God, whose triunity – relationality transcribed into the ecclesial communion is considered to be the very foundation of every human coexistence, and consequently the variations of diverse social interactions.²⁷

The *Laudato Si* Encyclical Letter (2015)

Laudato Si (On Care for Our Common Home) is Pope Francis’ second encyclical letter, also known as the green encyclical. It addresses the broadly understood protection of the natural environment and care for the future of our planet. In *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis promotes a new lifestyle, which is not only in accordance with the principles of the Bible, but also brings harmony and the perpetuation of life in a happy and healthy way. Francis calls believers to cultivate a communion not just with God and human beings, but with the earth and its creatures, for we are called together into “a sublime communion.”²⁸ Pope Francis advocates for a transformative lifestyle aligned not only with biblical principles but also dedicated to fostering harmony and the continuation of life in a joyful and healthy manner. His call extends beyond the spiritual realm, urging believers to cultivate a profound communion not just with God and fellow human beings but also with the Earth and its creatures while emphasis on the environmental issues and family functions.²⁹

In the first chapters of the encyclical, the Pope offers a short review of the various aspects of the current ecological crisis. He discusses issues such as pollution

²⁶ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, ..., 58.

²⁷ P. Maturkanić, V. Judak (eds), *Catholic spirituality of north bohemia mission area and its future direction*, “Acta Missiologica” (2023) Vol. 17, 2, pp. 20–23.

²⁸ Pope Francis, *Laudato si*, 89.

²⁹ A. Mátejová, P. Tománek, *Family and Current Sociolegal Measures for its Members in the Slovak Republic*, in: *Strong Families – Strong Societies*, ed. E. Osewska, Krakow 2019: Uniwersytet Papieski Jana Pawła II, pp. 69–89.

and global warming, depletion of natural resources, including clean drinking water, and the loss of biological diversity. He also draws readers' attention to global injustice with respect to the poorest and excessive consumerism. "This same "use and throw away" logic generates so much waste, because of the disordered desire to consume more than what is really necessary."³⁰ The Pope also focuses on wastage of food and reminds us that food which is thrown out is food that is stolen from the tables of the poor.

In the consecutive chapters of the encyclical, the Pope analyzes the human factor of the ecological crisis. He criticizes the idea of unlimited growth, which presupposes a false belief that the resources of our planet are infinite, as it leads to "squeezing" them out to the maximum. He also points to a "false notion that "an infinite quantity of energy and resources is available, that it is possible to renew them quickly, and that the negative effects of the exploitation of the natural order can be easily absorbed."³¹

According to the Pope, ethical behavior occurs only when economic and social costs, resulting from the use of common environmental resources, have been recognized openly and when all those who incur them benefit from them as opposed to others or future generations. "As long as the clearing of a forest increases production, no one calculates the losses entailed in the desertification of the land, the harm done to biodiversity or the increased pollution. In a word, businesses profit by calculating and paying only a fraction of the costs involved."³²

At the end of this encyclical, the Pope proposes a change to our own habits with regards to the protection of the natural environment, to increase and deepen daily ecological sensitivity, to educate towards the ecology, and even ecological conversion. Changing our lifestyle can cause exerting healthy pressure on those who hold political, economic, and social power. The Pope reminds us about consumer social responsibility and that purchasing is always being a moral, not just economic act. By means of our habits, we can avoid certain products being purchased, which decreases corporate profits and compels them to reconsider their environmental footprint and rethink their production models.

³⁰ Pope Francis, *Laudato si*, 123.

³¹ Pope Francis, *Laudato si*, 106.

³² Pope Francis, *Laudato si*, 195.

Fratelli tutti (2020)

Fratelli tutti (On Fraternity and Social Friendship) is Pope Francis' third encyclical. Among other topics, he refers to the current economic and financial situation associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Pope, fragility of the world's systems in the face of the pandemic revealed that not everything can be solved with the use of market freedom, and that aside from bringing back real politics that is not subject to financial dictatorship, "we must put human dignity back at the centre and on that pillar build the alternative social structures we need."³³ The Pope acknowledges a pressing need to find a solution to everything that violates fundamental human rights. He reminds that politicians should not concern most about a drop in the polls, but about finding effective solutions to "the phenomenon of social and economic exclusion, with its baneful consequences: human trafficking, the marketing of human organs and tissues, the sexual exploitation of boys and girls, slave labour, including prostitution, the drug and weapons trade, terrorism and international organized crime."³⁴

2. Ethical Investing

When posing the question whether investing in accordance with our worldview and conscience pays back, and which investors select this type of capital investment, one must take a closer look at Socially Responsible Investing – SRI. This relatively young domain in the realm of Finance is close to behavioral finance, because, again, a human being with their psychological, cultural, and moral conditions appears in the centre of attention. Responsibility for the fate of an individual and the world is of key importance here. Individual worldviews as well as religious beliefs play an important role, as well. Aside from financial matters, investors also consider social, environmental, as well as ethical dimensions of their investment decisions. Since its inception, the concept of socially responsible investments has been strongly associated with religion. In Jewish or Christian faith, values (coded in the Old Testament) have been standing for a long time in opposition to gaining profits from usury (lending money at unreasonably high rates of interest). The lender, as well as transactional intermediaries and witnesses, were considered to be thieves. The history of socially-responsible

³³ Francis Pope, *Fratelli Tutti*, 168.

³⁴ Francis Pope, *Fratelli Tutti*, 198.

investing in Europe has been strongly tied to religious organizations. As early as in 17th century England, we encounter the Protestant movement of the Religious Society of Friends, which propagated the ideas of social responsibility. In 1965, the Swedish church established Europe's first SRI investment fund, and in Germany, the first ethical funds were established by local churches in the 1990s. In France, the first SRI fund, *Nouvelle Strategie Fund*, was established in 1983 in Paris by N. Reille, a Catholic nun.

Ethical investing (or faith-based investing) is one of the forms of socially responsible investing, in accordance with the criteria and norms of the given religion. A good example of ethical investing can be provided by ethical indexes or ethical funds that operate on the basis of the teachings of world's leading religious faiths: the Catholic Church, Judaism, or Islam. The present paper will provide examples of investing in the spirit of the Catholic Church.

Studies show that factors associated with religious beliefs are of importance when making financial decisions. M. Czerwonka in cooperation with the Association of Individual Investors in Poland, conducted a study on a sample of 361 individual investors, which revealed that there is a relation between religiosity and inclination of investors to invest in SRI funds.³⁵ Religious and practicing individuals were more open to the idea of SRI than unbelievers. D. Arli and F. Tjiptono explored the relationship between consumer ethics, religiosity and CSR in the context of an emerging market.³⁶ The study revealed that intrinsic religiosity influences consumer perception towards the importance of various social responsibility domains.

Currently, the largest market of ethical investments in accordance with the doctrine of the Catholic Church, can be found in the United States of America. According to the guidelines of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) – an institution that groups together all-American Catholic bishops – ethical investments with the spirit of Catholicism should: protect human life; promote human dignity; strive to limit the production of weapons; pursue economic justice; protect the natural environment; support CSR activities.

As a result of the above guidelines, a list of morally inadmissible activities has been constructed in relation to investing in the spirit of Catholicism. These refer

³⁵ M. Czerwonka, *The influence of Religion on socially responsible investing*, "Journal of Religion and Business Ethics" (2014), 3 (1), pp. 1–10.

³⁶ D. I. Arli, F. Tjiptono, *Consumer Ethics, Religiosity, and Consumer Social Responsibility: are They Related?*, "Social Responsibility Journal" (2018), Vol. 14 No. 2, pp. 302–320.

to: abortion, contraception, research on embryos, racial and sex discrimination, pornography, and the production of weapons.

Faith-based or ethical funds avoid investing in companies that offer products or services that stand in opposition to the teaching of the Catholic Church. According to the investment policy of the ethical funds, those who are excluded from the investment portfolio are select companies that produce drugs (e.g., pharmaceutical companies that produce abortion-inducing and contraceptive drugs), hospitals, insurance companies, and companies that support Planned Parenthood (an American organization of conscious parenthood and sexual education associated with access to legal contraceptives and abortion in the USA), as well as various producers and distributors associated with media (porn industry).

Ave Maria Mutual Funds is one of the oldest and best-known group of American ethical funds.³⁷ It is made up of five individual funds (*Rising Dividend Fund*, *Growth Fund*, *Value Fund*, *World Equity Fund* as well as *Bond Fund*), which make it possible for investors to allocate their resources in accordance with their convictions. The funds avoid investing in companies that offer products or services that stand in opposition to the teaching of the Catholic Church. The most important negative criteria are abortion, pornography, embryo research, as well as activities directed against the institution of marriage or family.

Avoiding investments in profitable but unethical businesses can cause religious investment funds to sacrifice returns for purity. A study by L. Ferruz, F. Munoz, and M. Vargas' confirms that managers of religious mutual funds do not perform as well as managers who do not limit their investments based on religious considerations and accept lower returns as the price of not investing in "sinful" industries.³⁸ However, A. M. Gómez-Bezares et al. states that the performance of the ESG indices is equal to, or better than, the performance of conventional ones and during the Covid-19 crisis, displays greater resilience against the market indices.³⁹

Ethical stock indexes form another example of implementing principles of the Catholic church faith in the "world of finance." The first stock market

³⁷ Ave Maria Mutual Funds (avemariafunds.com), (29.01.2024).

³⁸ L. Ferruz, F. Munoz, M. Vargas, *Managerial abilities: Evidence from Religious Mutual Fund Managers*, "Journal of Business Ethics" (2012) 105 (4), pp. 503–517.

³⁹ A. M. Gómez-Bezares, F. Gómez-Bezares, *Catholic Social Thought and Sustainability. Ethical and Economic Alignment*, "Journal of Risk and Financial Management" (2021), 14 (1) 11.

Domini 400 Social Index appeared already in 1990. In June 2009, the Domini 400 Social Index changed its name to FTSE KLD 400 Social Index, and in 2010, it was absorbed by the MSCI group. The MSCI USA Catholic Values Index gathers together 400 companies selected on the basis of the guidelines of the USCCB with regards to socially responsible investing.⁴⁰ Each company is assessed on the basis of the following criteria: protecting human life (zero tolerance for companies that directly or indirectly support abortion, human cloning or produce contraceptives); promoting human dignity (respect of the rights of women and minorities, access to healthcare); reducing arms production (companies whose profits come from the production of arms in percentage greater than 5% of overall revenues are excluded from the index); pursuing economic justice (the index avoids investing in companies associated with the so-called *sweatshops*); protecting the natural environment; encouraging corporate responsibility. The remaining criteria are associated with engagement in tobacco and alcohol industries.

3. Application of ethics into management

For today's managers, leadership is becoming more and more challenging. In 1981 John Paul II, in his Encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, underlined the need to constantly consider the nature and place of human work and also the huge responsibility of employers as to how they manage employees.⁴¹ At the end of the Encyclical, he cited the words of Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*⁴², on how important it is that through work, we not only increase "the fruits of our activity", but also that "human dignity, brotherhood and freedom" must increase on earth.⁴³

Therefore, it is important to deliver some concrete guidance for managers as a guide for them to realize the above-mentioned expectations. One such

⁴⁰ MSCI USA Catholic Values Index Methodology, (29.01.2024).

⁴¹ John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, Vatican City 1981, 27, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html, (21.10.2021).

⁴² Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, 39: AAS 58, 1966, p. 1057.

⁴³ John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*..., 27.

guide can be drawn from the ethics foundation for Christians which was set by Jesus in his teachings. The main message that Jesus left to the apostles and other disciples is that of **servant leadership**: “just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life for the ransom of many.”⁴⁴ The leader is not to be a kind of a king, who attracts attention and requires obedience from everyone. As P. Drucker says: “The goal is to make productive the specific strengths and knowledge of each individual.”⁴⁵ The leader is to be the one who works hard to seek out the talent of their employees and to strive to motivate the employees to develop their talents. This is so that everyone may fulfill their mission on the Earth that is God’s will regarding their lives. Apart from servant leadership, there are other abilities of inspiring and ethical managers. These are:

Focus on contribution⁴⁶ – Positive efforts are made to affect the performance of the institution in which one is employed. Jesus emphasizes the value of positive contribution among others in the parable of the Talents described in the Chapter 25 of Matthew’s gospel.⁴⁷ The parable is about a master and his three servants. Before going on a journey, the master entrusts his possessions to his servants. The first man was given five talents, the second two and the last servant one – all in accordance with the servants’ abilities. When the master returns, he asks his servants to show what they have done with the talents in order to settle the accounts. The first brings the five talents he was originally given, with another five that he has managed to multiply while trading. The second one also brings another two. The last one brings only the talent he was given and which buried in a hole out of fear for the master’s demands. Whereas the first two servants are praised by the master and are welcomed to his joy, the last one is criticized by the master and told to go into the darkness where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth, which signifies endless suffering. It is evident that God requires us to be fruitful, productive and to cooperate with his grace.

⁴⁴ Matthew 20,28; New American Bible, 2002, https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/___PVT.HTM, (21.10.2021); see also: E. Agosto, *Servant Leadership: Jesus and Paul*, Chalice Press, 2012.

⁴⁵ P.F. Drucker, *The Essential Drucker*, New York 2005, p. 81.

⁴⁶ P.F. Drucker, *The Essential Drucker...*, pp. 207–216.

⁴⁷ Matthew 25;14–30; New American Bible, https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/___PVY.HTM, (21.10.2021).

Charisma⁴⁸ – A person is admired and followed by the whole team because of his or her integrity, courage and confidence in decision-taking. The inspiration for how to become a charismatic leader is surely the Parable of the Good Shepherd.⁴⁹ The Good Shepherd knows his sheep well and vice versa. The sheep know their shepherd well, so he does not need to say much. They recognize him simply by the sound of his voice. This depicts a really strong relationship. People usually become familiar with other people's voices when they really care about that other person. They need to be really committed to the relationship and eager to maintain it. If we do not care about someone, we do not want to remember that person's voice or anything else about the person. The Good Shepherd is in such a wholesome relationship with his sheep, that they follow him without hesitation. "I am the Good Shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me."⁵⁰ The shepherd is ready to fight for his sheep with strangers who may try to hurt or steal the sheep, and thus destroy the flock. What seems to be very important here is that the Good Shepherd strives to unify the flock, just as leaders should do with the teams they lead.

Passion (and determination)⁵¹ – This value should be present in all activities of a leader, that is in planning, organizing, motivating and controlling. In a nutshell, in all the main fields of management. Which of the Parables can become an inspiration thereof? Undoubtedly the Parable of the Lost Coin in Luke's Gospel.⁵² On every leader's path there are many obstacles and difficulties. There are many people who create hurdles, but strong leaders are not deterred by them. "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?"⁵³ Searching for a light, which is wisdom, rightfulness, truth; sweeping the house, which invokes putting things in a proper order, checking how all the

⁴⁸ P.G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and practice*, Sage publications 2021.

⁴⁹ John 10; 1–5, 11–18, New American Bible, https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/___PXI.HTM, (21.10.2021).

⁵⁰ John 10,14, New American Bible, https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/___PXI.HTM, (21.10.2021).

⁵¹ S.R. Covey, *The 8th habit: From effectiveness to greatness*, Simon and Schuster 2013, p. 5 and further.

⁵² Luke 15, 8, New American Bible, https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/___PWY.HTM (21.10.2021).

⁵³ Luke 15, 8.

business is performed, in order to reveal what is going wrong and proceeding with the job. That is how great leadership is undertaken. This leads to common rejoicing. The whole team is invited to rejoice when something is found, when the right direction is finally chosen.

The above few quotations of ethical, great managers are among many others and they are cited to provide inspiration from the New Testament. In spite of the fact that not all meaningful leaders consciously relate to the Catholic teaching, plenty of them publicly declare their deep faith and willingness to follow the example that Jesus set. One such example is certainly C. M. Christensen, a Harvard professor and business consultant as well as author of several books and dozens of articles. In the article “How will you measure your life?” he claims that at some point in his life, he realized that his lifetime aim was to improve the lives of everyone he meets.⁵⁴ P. Drucker also confirms, at the beginning of his main book on management that leaders can use the Bible as a checklist in order to become a great leader.⁵⁵

4. Conclusion

It is worth noting that responsibility, trust, social order, and other ethical values may positively influence economic, financial as well as managerial effectiveness, and positively affect social and business environment. Financial institutions are able to incorporate factors in their decisions, such as investor convictions and values, ecological conditions, as well as general environmental concerns. Moving beyond solutions associated with traditional investing, they can show that it is possible to exert long-term positive influence on the natural environment. Ethical funds existing on the market are a living proof of an effective combination of ethical and financial factors associated with investors' individual needs. They are also proof that Christian values and the social teaching of the Catholic Church are still fundamental to some participants in the financial markets. Ethical leaders, who are coherent and lead by their own example also seem to be

⁵⁴ C. M. Christensen, *How Will You Measure Your Life?* (Harvard Business Review Classics), Harvard Business Review Press 2017, <https://hbr.org/2010/07/how-will-you-measure-your-life> (21.10.2021).

⁵⁵ P.F. Drucker, *The Essential Drucker*, quoted doc.

the ones who can really impact positively their businesses and environments in the long term.

Pope Francis argues for a shift to a new economic model that is at the service of human life and is “more attentive to ethical principles.”⁵⁶ It seems that our role now is to realize and show the world that the new economic model recently described by the Pope, but in fact proposed by Jesus 2000 years ago, is worth implementing. Moreover, further studies, articles and interdisciplinary projects of both faculty and business should aim at making a real global shift.

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⁵⁶ Francis, Pope, *Laudato si*, Vatican City 2015.

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