

The importance of division of labor for poverty reduction

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KAP – Christian and labor movement

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Division of labor – what it is?

- Breaking down of work into smaller, specialized tasks between:
 - Genders
 - Male vs. female work, hunting x cooking
 - Trades
 - Cities in ancient Sumer – earliest known civilization
 - Companies and organizational units
 - German Mittelstand – specialized small and medium enterprises
 - Units of the same company
 - Regions
 - Natural resources, but also history
 - Switzerland and banking

Division of labor – history

- First noted by **Plato** in *Republic*, 375 BC
- **Xenophon**, *Cyropaedia* (a.k.a. Education of Cyrus), 4th century BC
 - It is impossible for a man of many trades to do all of them well.
 - He who pursues a very specialized task will do it best.
- **Augustine of Hippo**, *The City of God*, 426AD
 - It is better that each part of an art should be learned by a special workman, which can be done speedily and easily, than that they should all be compelled to be perfect in one art throughout all its parts, which they could only attain slowly and with difficulty.
- **al-Tusi** and **al-Ghazali**, medieval Persian scholars

Division of labor – history

- **William Petty (1623-1687)** and shipbuilding
 - People with a particular job may discover new methods
 - Much can be done by people with no extensive training
- **Adam Smith**
 - *The Wealth of Nations* (1776)
 - Division of labor brings a substantial increase in productivity
 - However, can make humans too specialized, stupid and ignorant

Division of labor – benefits

- Increased efficiency
 - Each person can specialize in what they do best
- Skill development
 - Workers become skilled at certain tasks
 - Can deliver more quality work
- Innovation
 - Workers are more likely to find innovation in their area of expertise

Division of labor – benefits

- Lower costs
 - Higher efficiency and better allocation of resources can reduce cost
- Job creation
 - Growing businesses need more workers
- Economic growth and poverty reduction

Division of labor – drawbacks

- Humans can become too specialized
- Alienation
 - Workers have little control over the production process
- Repetitive specialized jobs

If division of labor is so important, where do we find it in the Social doctrine of the Catholic church?

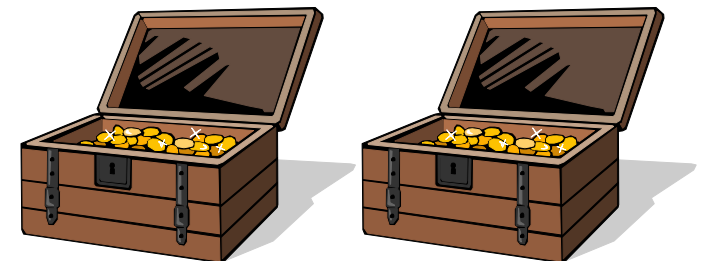
Two treasuries in Laborem exercens 13

Working at any workbench, whether a relatively primitive or an ultramodern one, a man can easily see that

through his work he enters into two inheritances: the inheritance of what is given to the whole of humanity in the resources of nature, and the inheritance of what others have already developed on the basis of those resources, primarily by developing technology,

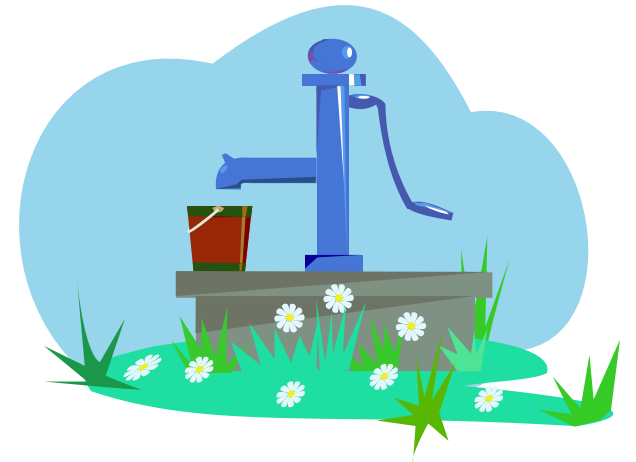
that is to say, by producing a whole collection of increasingly perfect instruments for work. In working, man also "enters into the labour of others,,

Latin text uses „two treasures“ or „two treasuries“ instead of inheritances.



Natural resources – first treasury

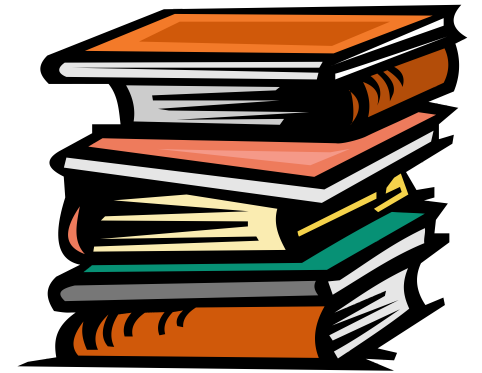
- Includes even the microscopic world and the space (LE4)
- Not just mining or harvesting
- Observation of celestial bodies
 - Calendar → agriculture
 - Discovery of the Newton laws of motion
 - Confirmation of general relativity → GPS etc.
- Observation of small things
 - Quantum mechanics, electronics, computing
 - Microbiology, vaccination, genetics
 - Biotechnology



Things already developed by others

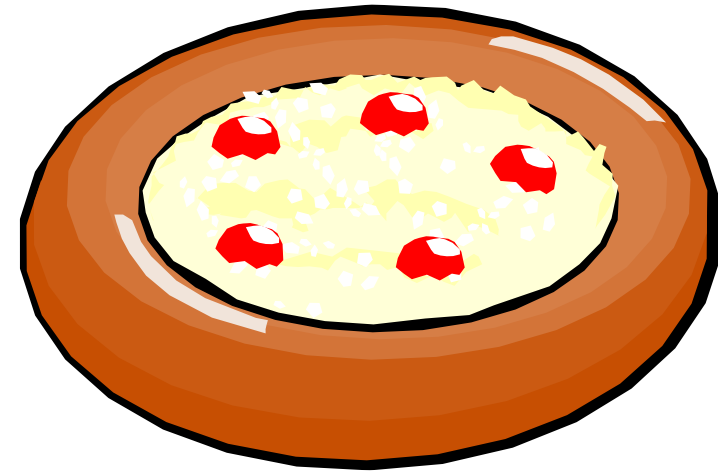
– second treasury

- All of us can contribute to this treasury
- Scientific knowledge, technology, techniques, machinery
- Inspiration by the work of others
- Laws
- Financial capital
- Need not be in distant past
- Colleague can be already using the program I finished an hour ago



Example – mother making pancakes for her children

- Natural resources
 - Wheat, yeast, sugar cane, eggs, milk, strawberries
- What others developed
 - Which berries are edible?
 - The recipe
 - Wheat → flour, sugar cane → sugar, cow → milk
 - Nearby shop, gas stove
- She contributes to the second treasury by what she's doing for her children



Example – helping the poor

- Millions of hours of work of various people across globe and history
- Pilots, mechanics, air traffic control
- Farmers
- Engineers, workers
- Scientist back to Pythagoras and Archimedes
- Managers, lawyers
- Teachers – passing the knowledge to new generations
- Taxpayers
- God’s creation is good with wise and recognizable laws



Unloading help after an earthquake in Indonesia

Photo U.S. Navy, Byron C. Linder

Example – opportunities for being grateful

- Marian columns built when city saved from plague
- Hygiene, epidemiology, vaccination, modern pharmaceuticals saved hundreds of millions lives
- Improved agricultural productivity
- Thanks to those who prepared food
- Thanks to benefactors of our church
- Read an item from encyclopedia a day and thank for it



Photo Wikipedia, Michal Mañas



Importance for spiritual life

- Allows us to better use our gifts
- One of the wonders for which to be thankful
- Seemingly unrelated professions contribute to feeding the hungry, visiting the sick etc.
- Keep in mind the wide spectrum of professions, don't praise just one or two
- Thank God for His creation being good, with recognizable laws which we can use.

Distribution of spiritual gifts in the Body of Christ

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit a message of **wisdom**, to another a message of **knowledge** by means of the same Spirit, to another **faith** by the same Spirit, to another gifts of **healing** by that one Spirit, to another **miraculous powers**, to another **prophecy**, to another **distinguishing between spirits**, to another **speaking in different kinds of tongues**, and to still another the **interpretation of tongues**. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

(1 Corinthians 12,7-11)

Thank you!

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