

An Economist's View of the Work of Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler and Its Influence on the Encyclical *Rerum novarum*

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1 Introduction

Sometimes the Catholic Church is accused of having been silent for too long about the social problems of the 19th century, only breaking its silence with Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum novarum* in 1891. An example often cited against this statement is Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler, Bishop of Mainz. Bishop Ketteler was a contemporary of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and Ferdinand Lassalle. His first essays on questions of property rights appeared in the same year as the Communist Manifesto.

...this direction that one should look for the true origins of the social movement which would gain momentum in the heart of the Catholic Church during the second half of the century, culminating in the solemn publication, in 1891, of the encyclical *Rerum novarum*. It is a German prelate, Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler, bishop of Mainz, who had the honor of being the first to present the social question very clearly as a problem of justice and not of charity, and even to face head on the necessity of basic reform (Aubert 2005, 23).

The influence of his writings on the encyclical *Rerum novarum* is certainly also significant. It is known that Leo XIII, before his election as Pope, studied the writings of Ketteler in French translation during his time as Archbishop of Perugia, and Pope Leo XIII called Bishop Ketteler his great predecessor in the field of social reform (Mueller 1971, 119, 125, 149).

The paper gives a brief overview of the work of Bishop Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler and tries to show some examples of commonalities to justify the conclusion that important elements of the work of von Ketteler have been included in the encyclical *Rerum novarum*.

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2 The Early Years

Wilhelm Emmanuel Baron von Ketteler was born on December 25, 1811 in Münster as the sixth of nine children of Baron Friedrich von Ketteler and his wife Clementine (for a biography see Pfülf [1899](#)). He came from an old Westphalian noble family. After completing his education at a Swiss Jesuit boarding school, he studied law and political science, starting in 1828 in Göttingen, then in Berlin, Heidelberg and Munich. In 1833, he completed his exam and, after his military service, began his career in 1835 as a Prussian civil servant. During the conflict between the church and the Prussian state, the Cologne archbishop Clemens August Droste von Vischering was arrested and, shortly thereafter in May 1838, Ketteler resigned state service. In the spring of 1839, Ketteler moved to Munich, where he quickly came into contact with the circle surrounding Joseph Görres. Here his decision to become a priest matured and, in 1841, Ketteler started studying theology in Eichstätt and Munich, finally being ordained as a priest in Münster in 1844. As early as the first station of his ecclesiastical career, Ketteler's concern for people in need became evident. As chaplain in Beckum in 1845 and 1846, he provided for the construction of a hospital. After assuming his position as pastor of the small and very poor community Hopsten in November, he campaigned massively for the poor members of his municipality during the last major famine in Germany in the winter of 1846/47. He also procured considerable funds from his noble relatives. Owing to the reputation he acquired for himself within a short time, he was urged to run for the Paul's Church assembly, for which he was elected by a clear majority in his constituency of Tecklenburg/Warendorf. Ketteler's public appearances were very limited, and he maintained his independence during the assembly. In the debates, he only once took to the floor with a contribution on the matter of schools. However, what he wrote one day before on September 17, 1848 in an open letter to his municipality is noteworthy:

My view is based on the simple principle that every individual should be allowed to exercise those rights which he is in power to exercise. For me the state is not a machine but a living organism with living limbs, in which each limb has its own rights and its own functions and shapes its own, free existence. In my opinion, the individual, the family, the community, etc. are such members. Each lower limb moves freely within its sphere and enjoys the right of self-determination and self-government. Only when the lower limb is no longer able to achieve his aims himself or independently to avert the danger threatening his development does the higher limb enter into force on its behalf (Ketteler [1848a](#), 403, see also Höffner [1962](#), 10–13).

Here, still at the beginning of his church career, Ketteler outlines the principle of subsidiarity that would later become well known by means of the encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* and still has a high level of relevance, e.g. in the context of European law. It seems that Ketteler was the first to use the term “subsidiarity” in his 1871 publication “The Catholics in the German Empire. Draft of a Political Program”. Here, also connected with questions of public education, he notes: “By contrast, it is hard absolutism ... if the state abuses what I would call subsidiary

rights” (Ketteler 1873, 210). The idea accompanied Ketteler throughout his life: Joseph Höffner speaks of “an almost passionate commitment to subsidiarity”, but also refers to the history of this idea in the Catholic tradition. Thomas Aquinas already pointed out the fact that excessive forcing into line and standardization would only threaten a community, “as symphony and harmony of the voices dwindle if everybody sings the same tone” (Höffner 1962, 10–11).

During the September riots of 1848, the representatives General Hans von Auerswald and Prince Felix von Lichnowsky were murdered, and the funeral speech at the burial was held by Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler. The impressive speech, in which he called demagogues and revolutionaries the real culprits behind the murders, was immediately printed and distributed throughout the country, and the Westphalian peasant Pastor became a national celebrity overnight (Marx 2011, 29). Only two weeks later, Ketteler urged the Church and its followers to dedicate themselves to the social question in an impromptu speech at the first German Catholics Day in Mainz (Ketteler 1848b).

3 The Advent Sermons (1848)

Subsequently, the Mainz cathedral priest invited him to deliver the Advent sermons of 1848 in the Mainz Cathedral. The following eight Advent sermons dealt in detail with the social question and were published shortly thereafter under the title “The Major Social Questions of the Present”. As early as his first sermon in November 1848, Ketteler calls the social question the most important problem of the time (Ketteler 1849, 5; Ederer 1981, 10). The first two sermons deal with property right, which is decisive for the social question because “today the haves and the have-nots confront each other with animosity, and the poverty of the masses grows daily ... On the one side we witness a stubborn, narrow interpretation of property rights, and on the other a determination to abolish those rights completely. We look desperately for moderation between these extremes” (Ketteler 1849, 5; Ederer 1981, 10). For Ketteler, the Catholic doctrine of property is the appropriate basis for such a position, and this is based on the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas. From the principle of faith that God created the earth, he derives the notion that God is the owner of all earthly goods. St. Thomas concludes that man can only have a right to use these earthly goods, that this right is limited to the divinely intended use of the goods, and that the goods may not be withdrawn from the purpose for which they are intended. This purpose is derived from the book of Genesis, in which God gives earthly goods to men and says, “you shall have them for food” (Gen. 1, 29, Ketteler 1849, 6–7).

Ketteler states that St. Thomas makes a distinction within property rights between the right to care, manage and maintain goods and usufruct. With regard to the administration of goods, the property rights of individuals should be recognized:

First, only by private ownership will goods be properly cared for. Everyone takes better care of things that belong to him than of those things that men hold in common. Over and above this, every man avoids work where possible, and where things are held in common a man would just as soon leave tasks to his fellow man ... Secondly St. Thomas wrote, only by the private ownership of property will that order be preserved which is necessary for the efficient exploitation of the goods of this earth. If everyone is in charge of everything, there will be general confusion ... Finally, St. Thomas argued that only by acknowledging the right of private property can peace be preserved among men. Experience teaches how easily common ownership leads to quarrels and disputes... St. Thomas, by virtue of these irrefutable arguments, defends the right of private ownership in the sense of administering and caring for property; and thus his position is in complete agreement with the law of God: 'Thou shalt not steal,' and with the teaching of the Catholic Church, all of which stand completely and inalterably opposed to the communism proposed in our time (Ketteler 1849, 9–10).

Likewise, the “false doctrine of stare rights of property” is also rejected, specifically when it comes to the right to consume the fruits of the administration of the property, because “God has ... determined some goods of the earth for the use of people, and it is his will that these earth goods are mainly used to allow all people to satisfy their necessary needs” (Ketteler 1849, 18). Hence, “everybody should regard his property as a common good and everybody should be willing to contribute to fulfill God’s will that each person receives from nature what is necessary” (Ketteler 1849, 18). Ketteler sees no legal obligation in this context “... which could be enforced by police regulations or state laws ...”, but he emphasizes the aspect of human freedom and the role of the Christian virtues (Ketteler 1849, 14). Here, at the beginning of his disputes regarding the social problems of his time, Ketteler recognizes only a return to Christian values as a solution (Große Kracht 2011, 66–67), and it is the turning away from faith which has led to these social problems:

Only since men who call themselves the friend of humanity while at the same time working to destroy humanity ... have shattered man’s faith in God has it been possible for such an unholy concept of private property to gain currency. We refer to a concept of ownership whereby man in effect arrogates to himself the right which only God possesses over property. Once divorced from God, man pictured himself as the exclusive lord and master of all that he possessed, considering it merely as a way of quenching his evergrowing hedonism ... Thus a gap between rich and poor appeared as the Christian world had never seen before ... While the wealthy indulge themselves in a lavish and wasteful satisfaction of every sensory whim, they are indifferent to the plight of their less fortunate confrères who must often do without even the bare necessities of life. Thus the rich man is in fact depriving his brother of the things which the Creator meant for him to have (Ketteler 1849, 7–8).

Yet Ketteler is already ahead of the view then predominant in Catholic mentality that only a return to medieval forms of government and estate-based society could succeed in solving social problems: “It even appears to be the task of the epoch of world history in which we live to prove to the world that all forms of government are not capable of establishing the welfare of humanity, and that this requires another, higher power” (Ketteler 1849, 17).

43 years later, Pope Leo XIII writes the following in his encyclical *Rerum novarum* concerning property rights:

Private ownership, as we have seen, is the natural right of man, and to exercise that right, especially as members of society, is not only lawful, but absolutely necessary. "It is lawful," says St. Thomas Aquinas, "for a man to hold private property; and it is also necessary for human existence." But if the question be asked: How must one's possessions be used? - the Church replies without hesitation in the words of the same holy Doctor: "Man should not consider his material possessions as his own, but as common to all, so as to share them without hesitation when others are in need. Whence the Apostle with, 'Command the rich of this world... to offer with no stint, to apportion largely.'" True, no one is commanded to distribute to others that which is required for his own needs and those of his household; nor even to give away what is reasonably required to keep up becomingly his condition in life, "for no one ought to live other than becomingly." But, when what necessity demands has been supplied, and one's standing fairly taken thought for, it becomes a duty to give to the indigent out of what remains over (Leo XIII 1891, 22).

The similarity to Bishop Ketteler's statements is very clear. The alignment of Catholic social teaching towards Thomas Aquinas's doctrines of natural right and property, as Ketteler already expressed it in his first sermon at the Mainz Cathedral, is pioneering (Höffner 1962, 9).

4 The Labor Question and Christianity (1864)

After the discussions in the St. Paul's Church assembly about topics important to Ketteler such as fundamental rights, the Church and educational issues, he resigned his delegated mandate in January 1849. However, he returns only for a short time to his parish in Hopsten because, as early as August 1849, he assumes the politically important position of provost of Berlin and prince-bishopal delegate for the Brandenburg March and Pomerania. After also drawing attention to himself here because of his political engagement, he took over, also at the explicit wish of Pope Pius IX, the episcopate in Mainz and was consecrated Bishop of Mainz on July 25, 1850 (Marx, 31–32). He devoted himself to the internal structure of his diocese with great zeal: the education of theologians at the Mainz seminary, the foundation of the Congregation of the Sisters of Divine Providence and promotion of the establishment of other sister organizations, the appointment of the Capuchins and Jesuits to Mainz. In Mainz, the new bishop increasingly developed into the "combative leader of German Ultramontanism", and his work during the 1850s was dominated by the cultural war between the church and the state. In 1854, Ketteler published his essay "The Right and the Legal Protection of the Catholic Church" in which he complains about state despotism against the Catholic Church, and eight years later, in 1862, he published his book "Freedom, Authority and the Church" (Große Kracht 2011, 80; Marx 2011, 34–36).

The stormy public discussion about social policy during the years 1863/64, which saw the emergence above all of liberal Hermann Schulze-Delitzsch and Ferdinand Lassalle, and the fact that the social question was once again on the

agenda of the Catholics Day in Frankfurt in 1863, shifted the Bishop of Mainz's focus once again to the social problems of the time. Ketteler's main contribution to the social question then appears in the year 1864: "The Worker Question and Christianity".

Immediately, Ketteler makes it clear that the situation of workers is the central point of the social problems of the time: "All in all, the condition of labor represents one aspect of the great social problem which is an inevitable consequence of the false religious, political, and economic principles stemming from the anti-Christian liberalism at large in our time" (Ketteler 1864, 371; Ederer 1981, 312). Bishop Ketteler also states: "The so-called labor problem is essentially a question of the worker's livelihood. Therefore, it is first of all a question of providing for the basic needs: food, clothing, and shelter. Secondly it is of critical importance because it pertains to the largest percentage of mankind" (Ketteler 1864, 372, Ederer 1981, 313).

Ketteler expressly affirms the correctness of Ferdinand Lassalle, who presents the iron wage law, known since Ricardo, saying that "... only an overt intention to deceive would lead one to deny it" (Ketteler 1864, 377–378). It must there be concluded that: "... the wage rate in our time is determined by subsistence in the strictest sense of that word, i.e., the minimum food, clothing, and shelter that a person needs to sustain a bare physical existence" (Ketteler 1864, 377).

Ketteler laments "...that, for us, work has completely become a commodity" and thus, like other wares, is subject to the laws of the market (Ketteler 1864, 378). As a result, "The very subsistence of almost the entire working class ... the very question of daily bread necessary to sustain the worker and his family is now at the complete mercy of caprice of the market place like the price of any other commodity" (Ketteler 1864, 380; Ederer 1981, 323). Especially when unable to work, the worker "...will immediately find himself lacking even the bare necessities for himself and for those who depend on him. Such unfortunate persons are simply no longer able to help themselves and must now depend upon support from their fellow human beings" (Ketteler 1864, 374; Ederer 1981, 317).

According to Ketteler, "modern economic principles" and humane, enlightened, anti-Christian liberalism are to blame (Ketteler 1864, 377, 380). The transition from mandatory guild membership to freedom of trade is also at fault, as free trade leads to a high degree of competition, and competition forces the price of commodities to the lowest level. Production costs and freedom of trade have transferred this to work, turning work into a commodity and driving down its price to its outer limit (Ketteler 1864, 380–381).

Ketteler describes guild coercion and freedom of trade as mirror images of authority and liberty. Both have the "divine thought as a foundation" but are also "unspeakably abused". The attempt to reconcile these two opposites reflects the divine purpose. The obligation to join a guild, which Ketteler expressly seeks not to defend, represents, as a limitation on freedom, authority and prevents the abuse of liberty. In his opinion, "guild rules were designed to offer protection to the workers—as a kind of contract between the working classes and the rest of society. According to this pact, the working class performed certain necessary services, and society, by

placing a restriction on competition, assured the workers a higher wage than would otherwise have been possible—so as to provide them with a decent standard of living and to protect them from day to day uncertainty and insecurity.” Although the guild system was subject to numerous abuses, it is justified in principle (Ketteler 1864, 382–384; Ederer 1981, 328–329). Yet freedom of trade also has its positive sides. It has led to a reduction in the prices of goods, an increase in supply and an improvement in product quality, thus providing poorer social strata the opportunity to satisfy needs, from which they were previously excluded (Ketteler 1864, 385).

Another reason for the workers' plight in Ketteler's opinion is the excessive power of capital. This leads to a situation in which more and more self-employed must close their businesses because they cannot compete with companies with a strong capital base, thus increasing the number of workers and day laborers. Furthermore, because of production with capital-intensive machinery, workers must not only compete with other workers, but ultimately also with machine production (Ketteler 1864, 385–386).

After identifying liberalism as an essential reason for the social problems of the time, Ketteler now confronted the solutions proposed by the “liberal party”, that is, the “German Progress Party” founded in 1861 (Münstermann 2013, 39). Ketteler perceives their call for workers to take the matter into their own hands, a “means for the multiplication of bread” according to the liberal approach, above all as an attack on charitable assistance, especially that of the churches. Ketteler maintains that they are trying to persuade the workers that charity would violate their dignity but have no solution to the problems of incapacity for work, disability and illness (Ketteler 1864, 390). Ketteler also does not accept the arguments that social welfare encourages abuse and “idleness”. “This contempt which people are now trying to attach to charity is frequently a hidden greed, which seeks to conceal its lack of brotherly love beneath such expressions”. The workers' education associations proposed by the liberal party are also “true humbug”, offering cultural and sporting events, but “on the whole do not alter the material situation of the working class in the slightest” (Ketteler 1864, 396). According to Ketteler, cooperatives such as those suggested by Schulze-Delitzsch are a good idea, but ultimately nothing new. They are also opposed to actual liberal principles. Ultimately, a cooperative is no longer “true aid for the proud, independent self”; they too introduce, inasmuch as they are meant to constitute a protection for its members, “...a kind of trade barrier or constraint...” and also “...modify...general competition” (Ketteler 1864, 399–400).

Ketteler views the program of the “radical party”, or the General German Workers' Association founded by Ferdinand Lassalle in 1863, in a much more positive light (Münstermann 2013, 39). Lassalle's statements concerning the inadequate effect of the suggestions proposed by the liberal party are “unrefuted and irrefutable” (Ketteler 1864, 402). His party also deserves credit for having exposed the worker's plight “with relentless acuity and truth” and of showing “with the same correctness” that assistance for workers is only possible if “...a richer source of income is opened up besides the meager wage” (Ketteler 1864, 405):

In every business, the total revenue is divisible into three parts. First, there is the daily wage of the worker, which equals subsistence. Then there is the interest on capital which is used up in the productive process. Finally, there is profit from the sale of the product after the wages, interest on capital, and whatever other costs of doing business have been deducted. This profit goes to capital without the worker getting even the slightest share of it. Such a distribution of profit does not seem to conform to natural justice or to any other reasonable criterion. The worker contributes his flesh and blood and uses up the most valuable of the earthly endowments he possesses - his health. Each day he uses up a part of his remaining lifetime. The capitalist, on the other hand, is contributing only a dead sum of money. It seems unfair, therefore, that surplus revenue should accrue entirely to dead capital and not to those who expend their flesh and blood in the productive process (Ederer 1981, 356–357; Ketteler 1864, 405–406).

While the intelligence and diligence of the entrepreneur also contribute to the success of a company, and these hardly quantifiable factors make it scarcely possible to divide profit from the standpoint of natural justice, this does not change the obvious injustice of the status quo: "...Therefore, if one could discover a more equitable kind of distribution whereby the worker might get a decent share of business profits, ... it would appreciably improve the worker's condition" (Ederer 1981, 356–357; Ketteler 1864, 405–406).

The question that now arises is how workers can get access to capital so as to acquire a share of the company. Ketteler refers to productive associations in France and England, which represent a possible solution, but only have a marginal effect if workers have to raise the required capital themselves (Ketteler 1864, 407–408). Yet Ketteler rejects Lassalle's proposal of advancing the development of productive associations with government aid. The state may and should only intervene if someone is in extreme distress, in which case it can call on proprietors to raise essential resources for such persons. Beyond such essential supplies, there is no obligation, from neither a legal nor a theological standpoint, for further aid, only the moral obligation of Christian brotherly love (Ketteler 1864, 415). "Lassalle would like to actuate this plan through capital subsidies provided by the state. We have explained that we regard this notion, if one is considering it for universal application by means of a direct legal enactment that would tax the wealthy to provide the necessary capital for the working class, as an incursion on the legitimate bounds of the state's right to tax. We also indicated that we would have grave doubts about the practical feasibility of the approach in a manner that would permit peaceful and orderly development of the body politic" (Ederer 1981, 411–412; Ketteler 1864, 449–450, see also Nothelle-Wildfeuer 2002, 638–640).

Ketteler puts much more trust in the return to Christian values: "... since the spirits and strength of Christendom no longer holds egotism with its accompanying passions in check, we now have to experience the development of such ominous conditions in the social order. The cure for this can and will come only from within. To the degree that eternal truths once again will enlighten men's spirits, we will once more discover the correct principles and their proper application in the economic scheme of things ..." (Ederer 1981, 386; Ketteler 1864, 431). With this in mind, Ketteler trusts that the development of workers' associations can be furthered by means of voluntary, private financial support. Ketteler also recommends the

formation of support facilities for people incapable of work (432), the strengthening of marriage and family (Ketteler 1864, 435), educational efforts in the Christian sense, and the consolidation of workers (Ketteler 1864, 444).

Like Ketteler, Leo XIII bemoans the fact that work has become a commodity (also see Johannes XXIII 1961, 18) and, like Ketteler, he sees the social changes and resulting isolation and defenselessness of workers as the starting point (Leo XIII 1891, 3, 38). Pope Leo XIII criticizes, like Ketteler, the increasing concentration of capital (Leo XIII 1891, 1) and demands a wage that goes beyond the level of the mere essential, whereby Leo's demands go further than Ketteler's (Leo XIII 1891, 13). Both agree that it should be made possible in some way for workers to provide for their own futures and those of their families (Leo XIII 1891, 5). Pope Leo XIII also shares Ketteler's skeptical view of tax-funded social programs (Leo XIII 1891, 47).

5 Sermon at the Liebfrauenheide (1869)

A practical episode may be partially to blame for Bishop Ketteler's subsequent loss of optimism regarding the private financing of workers' associations: in January 1864, Ketteler turns to Ferdinand Lassalle in an anonymous letter in which he presents his intention to raise 50,000 guildens for the establishment of 5 productive worker associations in the areas of cigar production, manual labor and factory production, by means of which workers will receive a share of the capital gain in addition to their wages. He also requests Lassalle's practical support, which the latter's written reply does not promise, however. Instead, Lassalle first demands the writer lift his anonymity, which Ketteler cannot bring himself to do despite Lassalle's promise of confidentiality (Müller 1947, 26–28).

Held in high esteem by Ketteler, Ferdinand Lassalle, who generally assumed neutral position vis-à-vis the Catholic Church, died as the result of a pistol duel in 1864. Their apparent mutual esteem was certainly viewed critically by the public. "When Ferdinand Lassalle, during a triumphant speaking tour in 1864, cited the support of Bishop Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler of Mainz, both Roman Catholics and socialists were startled, and many were shocked" (Walker 1967, 47). In any case, Ferdinand Lassalle's successors had no interest in becoming close to the Catholic Church or to Bishop Ketteler, with revolutionary socialism of the Marxist school becoming increasingly important.

In 1865, Ketteler argues, in an address to the Catholic Gessellenverein in Mainz, in favor of government assistance for workers for the first time (Große Kracht 2011 147–148; Ketteler 1865, 685–688). This stronger shift towards the state is also present in his paper "Germany after the War of 1866", which appeared in 1867. Ketteler associated the outcome of the war with the hope that there might be more leeway for the Church in a Prussian-dominated Germany (Brauer 1927, 99). While the social question tends to stand on the sidelines in his 1867 paper, he vehemently attacks the "liberal economics" of John Stuart Mill and Thomas Robert Malthus.

Ketteler is appalled by their doctrine: "Economics without religion and without Christ has taken us so far that it is already possible to utter horrifying principles. In the event of overpopulation, 'a portion of humanity must perish'" (Ketteler 1867, 122).

Bishop Ketteler's sermon at the Liebfrauenheide pilgrimage site near Offenbach on July 25, 1869 before thousands of workers has become famous and is still regarded today as the "Magna Carta of the Christian labor movement" (Grosse Kracht 156).

From the start of his sermon, it is apparent that Ketteler is increasingly relying on organized consolidations of workers to reach a solution to the social question: "The basic objective of the labor movement, that which provides its motive force, in fact, its very essence, is the effort to unite, to organize workers so that by solid united effort their interest may be promoted" (Ketteler 1869a, 4–5; Ederer 1981, 441). This could result in a development that counteracted the actual causes of the social problems. "Absolute freedom in all areas of economy" was accompanied on the one hand by the dissolution of old social structures, which led to the isolation of the individual worker. On the other hand, it also led to major tendencies of concentration in terms of capital, so that workers have wound up in a "desperate position" with respect to "monetary power". The problem is complicated to the same extent as the proprietor of capital power, which "...is without conscience, without religion, and uses it merely as a means to satisfy his egoism" (Ketteler 1869a, 5). Ketteler sees the development of essentially apolitical, religiously neutral trade unions in England as prototypical: "It is from the same England where the corruption began that the greatest pressure to organize labor originated. By such collective effort workers may protect their rights and interests and this is entirely legitimate and beneficial, if the working class is not completely vanquished by the power of centralized capital" (Ketteler 1869a, 5–6; Ederer 1981, 442).

Yet Ketteler warns unequivocally that the workers' efforts require a Christian orientation because labor organizations need leaders, and only an alignment towards Christian values offers workers a "...guarantee that these leaders and representatives will not turn out to be their deceivers and betrayers ..."—there is indeed even a risk that workers will be exploited just as badly by their leaders as they had been previously by the capitalists, if the labor leaders are such who "... not only have no respect for Christianity, but who in fact despise it ..." (Ketteler 1869a, 6; Ederer 1981, 442–443). In general terms, "... we all fall prey to egotism; it makes no difference whether we are rich or poor, capitalists or workers. We will take advantage of our fellow man as soon as we have the power to do so" (Ketteler 1869a, 6; Ederer 1981, 443).

Bishop Ketteler supports the demand for higher wages corresponding to "the true value of labor" because, ultimately, work should not simply be treated like a commodity, the price of which is determined merely by supply and demand. Yet it is exactly this situation, in which work is seen as a commodity, and the entire human being as a machine in the process of production, which Ketteler views as given. As a result, human workforces are treated like a machine, which is bought as cheaply as possible and exploited uninterruptedly until its destruction. On the other

hand, he saw some initial improvements being made in England, changes which he attributed to the trade unions and whose most important instrument, the strike, he explicitly endorses. Ketteler designates objections to strikes, such as that workers are harming themselves by causing losses to the company and loss of income, as “untrue on the whole” and refers to empirical evidence from the then recently published book “On Labour” by William Thomas Thornton. Above all, Ketteler stresses the effect described by Thornton that workers generally appear defeated after strikes, but that such activities subsequently frequently lead to extensive wage increases that go well beyond the actual enterprise affected by the strike. Consequently, Ketteler now also welcomes the formation of cooperatives in Germany according to the model of English trade unions (Ketteler 1869a, 7–8). However, he also warns workers against having excessive expectations, because wage increases must also have their limits if the employer's business is to remain profitable. Excessive wage demands can have catastrophic results. If profitability is not maintained, the capital will migrate, and the “horrible debt management of our modern states” has led to a situation, in which “in the end every speculator on the exchange and in government stocks retains an immense territory for his operations” (Ketteler 1869a, 10). In contrast, workers will not find a new source of income so easily, and so it is they themselves, along with small tradespersons, who ultimately suffer from excessive wage demands. Ketteler also cautions that the working class itself must “avoid the pitfalls of a disorderly selfishness, which it is fighting against among the capitalists”, and this requires a “good, Christian” working class because, without Christian virtues, both “monetary power” and “working class power” will lead to ruin (Ketteler 1869a, 10–11). And even the highest wage that can be reached by negotiations and labor disputes only guarantees workers and their families adequate income if this is based on “great temperance and frugality” (Ketteler 1869a, 8–9). Ketteler emphasizes the possibility of companies, in which the workers are co-owners. He again stresses his idea of implementing this in cigar manufacture, where it is possible to produce significant amounts with a relatively small amount of capital (he suggests 20,000 Thalers, Ketteler 1864, 21).

Even when Ketteler criticizes existing conditions in terms that could not be clearer—“The godlessness of capital, which exploits the worker as manpower and machine to the point of destruction, must be broken. It is a crime against the working class...”—his pursuit of balance is also distinctly recognizable: “The objective must not be the struggle between the employer and the worker, but a lawful peace between them” (Ketteler 1869a, 10). “We would see everywhere that the demands of the working class, insofar as they are justified, have their true basis in religion and morality” (Ketteler 1869a, 21). Concerning the person who stands against Christian beliefs, one can “assume without further ado that he understands nothing about the labor questions or is a fraud” (Ketteler 1869a, 22).

Shortly after his sermon at the Liebfrauenheide, Bishop Ketteler held three lectures at the 1869 Bishops Conference in Fulda. The lecture concerning the “Care of the Church for Factory Workers” was later published under the title “The Charitable Concern of the Church for the Working Class”. In it, Ketteler enumerates the reasons why the Catholic Church should intervene to help

... The social problem touches on the deposit of faith. Even if it is not immediately apparent, the leading principle of modern economics which has been aptly characterized as, 'The war of all against all' 'stands in direct opposition to our Faith ... Furthermore, it is within the competence of the Magisterium to rise in opposition to the materialistic conception of things, according to which man is treated no longer as a person, but as representing a certain amount of labour - a machine - and whereby he is regarded as a commodity which one exploits for egoistical purposes. ... The Church must get involved in this social problem in an especially urgent manner if it is to work for the salvation of mens' souls. At stake here are the souls of vast numbers of the working masses who find themselves placed in a proximate occasion of sin ... Out of consideration for simple Christian charity, the Church is obliged to come to workers' rescue ... Finally the Church must get involved in the workers' problems, because otherwise they will fall prey to other elements which either are indifferent to Christendom or are downright hostile to it (such as Schulze-Delitzsch or the Social Democrats) ... (Ederer 1981, 475–478; Ketteler 1869b, 435–438).

Ketteler warns that the Church could evade its responsibility by asserting that the issue was still too confused and that it should take a stand later with more peace and security. On the contrary, the topic is "a ripe one". It is also unrealistic to expect that the entire system might be overturned, so "... one must do what one can to soften its ill effects and to come up with appropriate remedies and see to it that the workers also share in whatever benefits the system is capable of generating" (Ederer 1981, 478; Ketteler 1869b, 438).

Ketteler thus presented a catalog of measures, most of which he had already touched upon in his sermon at the Liebfrauenheide. He attaches special importance to the demand for "state legislation for the protection of workers". This was to include the prohibition of child labor, the regulation of working time, Sunday rest, the closure of operations that are hazardous to health, and compensations for occupational incapacity that can be attributed to the work itself.

The measures described would also later be demanded by Pope Leo XIII in similar form (Leo XIII 1891, 41–42, 48). The formation of workers' associations, the self-help of workers and the founding of charitable institutions are also central concerns of the *Rerum novarum* encyclical (Leo XIII 1891, 29, 43–45, 48). However, the Pope insists on the argument that strikes are not well-suited instruments, above all damaging the workers themselves (Leo XIII 1891, 38).

6 Later Years

The Bishop of Mainz subsequently dedicated himself again to political questions concerning the relationship between church and state. Although he was a representative of Ultramontaniam in Germany, Ketteler opposed the dogmatization of the Pope's infallibility at the First Vatican Council in 1870. However, he accepted the decision of the majority at the council and announced the corresponding pronouncements in his diocese. In 1871, Ketteler was elected representative of the constituency of Tauberbischofsheim in Baden in the first German Reichstag and

founded the Center Party together with Ludwig Windthorst. From 1870 at the latest, it appears that Ketteler's skeptical sympathy for a brand of socialism such as was heralded by Ferdinand Lassalle had finally given way to a rejection of a potentially violent revolutionary communism of a Karl Marx. It also becomes clear how a third alternative for Catholic social doctrine emerged with the rejection of liberalism and socialism. In his 1871 paper "Liberalism, Socialism and Christianity", Ketteler strictly opposes liberalism and socialism, between which he sees a close connection:

... we find another kind of liberalism in the recalcitrant offspring of mature liberalism; and in this latter form it causes much grief to its parents to the extent that the latter would gladly disown it and blame the whole thing on us Catholics. Their efforts come to naught, however, because the offspring clings to its parents, demands its rightful inheritance, and can prove that it is its legitimate progeny. I refer, of course, to socialism. (Ederer 1981, 501; Ketteler 1871, 23) ... If the principles of liberalism are valid, then socialism, which is in fact one of the most perverse aberrations of the human spirit, is fully justified (Ketteler 1871, 27–28; Ederer 1981, 506).

In a pastoral letter from February 1876, published later with the title "Religion and the National Welfare", Bishop Ketteler describes how Christian living enhances the national economic welfare. While other measures, e.g. wise legislation, are important, these "... other means are by themselves insufficient and religion and morality are the first and most important prerequisites for the general welfare of a nation" (Ederer 1981, 543; Ketteler 1876).

His final rejection of both liberalism and socialism is an ultimate commonality with the encyclical *Rerum novarum* (for the position of *Rerum novarum* see Messner 1981, 12–14, Pius XI 1931, 10).

7 Closing Remarks

Bishop Ketteler died, following a trip to Rome, on July 13, 1877 in the Capuchin monastery Burghausen am Inn and is laid to rest in Mainz Cathedral. Bishop Ketteler is no longer able to experience the practical effect of his sociopolitical ideas. This is left to successors such as Frank Hitze. His nephew, Ferdinand Heribert von Galen, introduces the "Galen motion" at the Reichstag in 1877, in which demands such as Sunday rest and occupational safety represent the birth of the social policy of the Center Party. Yet it is above all in subsequent social encyclicals, particularly *Rerum novarum*, that Bishop Ketteler's ideas are again to be encountered. Especially succinct is the common insight that it is not a complete elimination of current economic systems, but rather gradual reform that can solve contemporary social problems. His orientation towards ideas of natural law and Thomas Aquinas is pioneering for Catholic social doctrine. One element of the Catholic doctrine of natural law is that decisions, be they individual or social, depend on the free will of man. This is hardly compatible with either liberalism or socialism: "In both systems, there was a lack of free choice. For the classical

economist, it was folly of human laws that encumbered what ought to be a natural ordering of relations among persons. There was no choice as to the end, the end was an ordered system. ... For the communist, the end was given, an historical inevitability” (Meador 2007, 59). Already at the inception of Catholic social doctrine, with Bishop Ketteler, we see the development of a third path between capitalism and socialism (see also Frambach and Eissrich 2016). Another noteworthy point about Bishop Ketteler is that, despite being a member of the church, he advances not only arguments based on faith; on the contrary, many of his arguments are based on economic necessities. This type of argumentation is later followed by the encyclical *Rerum novarum* and other social encyclicals.

Pope Benedict provided another reminder of his enduring importance by naming Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler a pioneer of Catholic social teaching in his encyclical *Deus caritas est* in 2005 (Benedict XVI 2005, 27).

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