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Looking at Conflict Diamonds Through the Lens of Catholic Social Teaching

by

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A Paper Submitted to the Faculty of the School of Theology of Saint John's University,
Collegeville, Minnesota, in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Systematic Theology.

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
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Looking at Conflict Diamonds Through the Lens of Catholic Social Teaching

Description of the Paper:

Since 1991, more than 50,000 people have been killed and over one million persons displaced in Sierra Leone due to civil war. In Angola the average cost of lives is at least 500,000, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) the estimated cost is over 3 million lives, and finally in Liberia the cost of lives is at least 200,000 all due to civil war (*The Truth About Diamonds*, p. 1). And what funded these wars? Diamonds. Conflict Diamonds to be exact. The United Nations defines conflict diamonds as “rough diamonds which are used by rebel movements to finance their military activities, including attempts to undermine or overthrow legitimate governments” (Grant, p. 389). Smuggling diamonds into other African countries and selling them for weapons has caused much hardship to the people of Africa and ultimately affects all diamond purchasing consumers to this day, despite the end of the decade long war. Catholic Social Teaching has never specifically addressed the issue of conflict diamonds. Therefore, I decided to take what I have learned about Catholic Social Teaching on war and peace, the role of government, capitalism/consumerism, and just wages to address the issues concerning conflict diamonds. After addressing these issues, the paper presents methods for applying Catholic Social Teaching to this modern conflict.

This paper may be duplicated.

Signature of Student Writer

Date

Looking at Conflict Diamonds Through the Lens of Catholic Social Teaching

Since 1991, more than 50,000 people have been killed and over one million persons displaced in Sierra Leone due to civil war.¹ In Angola the cost of lives is at least 500,000, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) the estimated cost is over 3 million lives, and finally in Liberia the cost of lives is at least 200,000 all due to civil war.² And what funded these wars? Diamonds. Conflict Diamonds to be exact. The United Nations defines conflict diamonds as “rough diamonds which are used by rebel movements to finance their military activities, including attempts to undermine or overthrow legitimate governments”.³ Smuggling diamonds into other African countries and selling them for weapons has caused much hardship to the people of Africa and ultimately affects all diamond purchasing consumers to this day, despite the end of the decade long war. Catholic Social Teaching has never specifically addressed the issue of conflict diamonds. Therefore, I decided to take what I have learned about Catholic Social Teachings on war and peace, the role of government, capitalism/consumerism, and just wages to address the issues concerning conflict diamonds.

First, it is essential to examine the issue of conflict diamonds in detail to better understand how Catholic Social Teaching can be applied to this situation. There are two different types of diamond mining: Kimberlite and Alluvial.⁴ The Kimberlite mining process takes place beneath ancient volcanoes and requires large investments in capital and expertise. Conflict diamonds are more commonly found in the Alluvial mining

¹Shah, Anup. “Sierra Leone”.

<http://64.233.167.104/search?q=cache:QGFR8nlv1vwJ:www.globalissues.org/Geopolitics/Africa/SierraLeone.asp+conflict+diamonds+%2B+child+soldiers&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=3&gl=us>

² “The Truth About Diamonds”. Global Witness Publishing Inc., November 2006, www.globalwitness.org, p. 1

³ Grant, J. Andrew, and Ian Taylor. "Global governance and conflict diamonds: the Kimberley Process and the quest for clean gems." *Round Table* 93, no. 375 (2004): 389. *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 18, 2007).

⁴ Warhurst, Alyson. “The Other Diamond Story.” *Business Week Online*, 11 Dec. 2006, 29, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost (accessed April 4, 2007)

system which comprises 15% of the entire world's diamonds. Diamonds are scattered in river beds and flood plains caused by erosion over millions of years. These diamonds are often unlicensed and mined through non-registered intermediaries in the poorest countries in the world. Rebel groups forced kidnapped men to work as diggers in river beds for alluvial diamonds. One of the most powerful rebel groups found in Sierra Leone, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), used this type of mining to fund all their revolutionary warfare.

Many accounts have been recorded regarding attacks lead by the RUF. The lives of innocent people have been taken and young boys and girls have been abducted and used as soldiers and prostitutes. Many other individuals have been abducted and forced to mine diamonds for the Rebel groups. Their attacks are typical: beginning with “speeding through the streets in pickup trucks whose cab roofs had been sawed off to convert them into roofless killing vehicles”.⁵ The group itself is mostly comprised of illiterate and drugged teenagers whose actions have resulted in “mass rape, torture, random executions, looting, and cannibalism ... but their signature war crime was amputation”.⁶ RUF rebel groups amputated the hands of innocent civilians to mock “Sierra Leone’s president Ahmad Tejan Kabbah’s 1996 plea for countrymen to ‘join hands’ for peace”. The dismembered hands of victims were then dumped on the steps of the presidential palace.⁷ The ultimate reason driving the RUF group was the desire to control millions of dollars worth of diamonds. The group never intended to overthrow the government or implement a stronger government that would promote the common good to a greater degree.

⁵ Campbell, Greg. Blood Diamonds. Boulder: Westview Press, 20024 p. xiv

⁶ Campbell, p. xv

⁷ Campbell, p. xv

According to Amnesty International Human Rights, the United States purchases about nine billion dollars worth of diamonds every year, more than two-thirds of the world's sales.⁸ The consumerism in the United States is at a global high. The greed for diamonds is fueling blood shed throughout Africa just so US citizens can be draped with glamour and “bling”. In 1996, Liberia's rough diamonds production was 150,000cts, yet the country shipped out 12.3 million carats to Belgium.⁹ According to this statistic, diamonds are being smuggled into Liberia because bans have been placed on neighboring countries, preventing exportation. Therefore, conflict diamonds are seeping into the common diamond market. Backing this statement is the fact that \$300 million to \$459 million in diamond revenue were taken out of Sierra Leone and over 90% bypassed government coffers into Liberia and Guinea.¹⁰

CST and War

Somehow, the Church has always taught that in most cases war is never a legitimate mean to solve a problem. The Pastoral Constitution, *Gadium et Spes*, addresses the issue of war and violence and begins by saying, “In our generation, when men continue to be afflicted by acute hardships and anxieties arising from ongoing wars or the threat of them, the whole human family has reached an hour of supreme crisis in its advance toward maturity”.¹¹ War and violence hinders all human beings from achieving a sense of maturity.

⁸ Zwick, Edward. “Introduction: From the Director”. Leavitt, Charles. Companion Curriculum to Blood Diamond. http://www.amnestyusa.org/education/pdf/bd_curriculumguide.pdf, p. 1

⁹ Grant, p. 388

¹⁰ Grant, p. 387

¹¹ *Gadium et Spes*, David O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, eds., *Catholic Social Thought* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992), no. 77

In order to understand human maturity, we will examine the Catholic teachings on human dignity and integral development. Humanity cannot achieve maturity until it respects the dignity of each human person. In Pope John XXIII's encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*, the language of human dignity is first developed. He writes,

“Any human society, if it is to be well-ordered and productive, must lay down as a foundation this principle, namely, that every human being is a person, that is, his nature is endowed with intelligence and free will ... he has rights and obligations flowing directly and simultaneously from his very nature ... these rights and obligations are universal and inviolable”.¹²

The two characteristics listed above, ‘intelligence and free will’, mean humans have been given rational power to make judgments and decisions that are in accord with God’s will. Moral theology will demand that one’s intellect and rationale are properly formed and informed (a topic unable to be addressed in this paper). This idea is also found in *Pacem in Terris*, which declares that “it is contrary to reason to hold that war is now a suitable way to restore rights which have been violated”.¹³ Man’s reason alone should tell him that war violates the dignity of humanity.

The encyclical later states that each person’s rights include life, food, clothing, shelter, rest, medical care, and social services, as well as bodily integrity and “means which are suitable for the proper development of life”.¹⁴ War and violence always violate this principle, especially in the civil wars that took place in Africa by Rebel Groups. In every manner the groups violated the human person and its nature that

¹² *Pacem in Terris*, David O’Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, eds., *Catholic Social Thought* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992), no. 9

¹³ *PT*, no. 127

¹⁴ *PT*, no. 11

demands respect. By cutting off the hands of hundreds of thousands of people, the Rebel groups took away one's ability to farm and work so as to support themselves and acquire basic needs.

This teaching on human dignity is later developed into a teaching that does not rely as strongly on arguments of nature. *Gadium et Spes* defines human dignity based on being made in God's image and likeness and since we all image God, the human body and person should be treasured and dignified. The encyclical states, "this sacred synod proclaims the highest destiny of man and champions the godlike seed which has been sown in him".¹⁵

Finally, *Populorum Progressio* talks about integral development as not being limited to economic growth, rather it must be "complete: integral, that is, it has to promote the good of every man and of the whole man".¹⁶ The rebel groups driven by greed for more diamonds, weapons, and money, neglected the principle of the common good. The common good is defined early in Catholic Social Teaching, in the document *Mater et Magistra*, as "the sum total of those conditions of social living, whereby men are enabled more fully and more readily to achieve their own perfection".¹⁷ The common good must always be promoted in order for an action to be considered moral and ethical.

According to Charles Curran, "The earlier documents of Catholic social teaching focused primarily on economic issues and did not discuss peace and war".¹⁸ It was not until the 1960's that the Church finally decided to develop its thoughts on war. However,

¹⁵ *GS* no. 3

¹⁶ *Populorum Progressio*, David O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, eds., *Catholic Social Thought* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992), no. 14

¹⁷ *Mater et Magistra*, David O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, eds., *Catholic Social Thought* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992), no. 65

¹⁸ Curran, Charles. *Catholic Social Teaching 1891-Present*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002. p. 159

before that the Church has been known to adopt the just war tradition which declares justification for war “as a last resort in certain circumstances”.¹⁹ To launch war the following criteria must be met: “legitimate authority, just cause, last resort, declaration of war, reasonable hope of success, proportionality, and right intention” and it must not “attack on noncombatants and the principle of proportionality maintains that the good to be attained outweighs the evil involved in the tactics employed”.²⁰ Clearly, rebel groups like the RUF were not a legitimate authority with a just cause. No discussions took place to try and refrain from war; therefore it was not justified because it was not a last resort. Most importantly, war must never attack innocent civilians. Mutating, raping, and stealing from the noncombatants thus violated all hope for a justified war.

Not only do war and violence violate human dignity and the integral development of people, but they also create problems that take a great deal of effort and time for rebuilding. *Pacem in Terris* summarizes the issues addressed above in stating,

“Violence has always achieved only destruction, not construction; the kindling of passions, not their pacification; the accumulation of hate and ruin, not the reconciliation of the contending parties. And it has reduced men and parties to the difficult task of rebuilding, after sad experience, on the ruins of discord”.²¹

In the introduction of this paper, statistics are given concerning the number of lives taken at the cost of civil wars in Africa. The loss of life is infinite. However, the violence it spread still affects the people today. Now, people must live with fear of being attacked and harmed once again. The governments are left with the mighty tasks of rebuilding

¹⁹ Curran, p. 159

²⁰ Curran, p. 159

²¹ *PT*, no. 162

their countries. War and violence never lead to good, as seen in the countryside of Africa.

Role of the Government

The problem of conflict diamonds was perpetuated by government mismanagement and corruption. The war itself did not begin over diamonds *per se*, but the manner in which the government handled the rebellion groups provided “fertile conditions or at least initial support in some quarters for rebellion”.²² This may be because the government forces also benefited from smuggling conflict diamonds, according to reports.²³ If the government is corrupt, then it becomes much more difficult to alleviate warfare in any given part of the world.

Catholic social teaching addresses the role of government very directly and would adamantly oppose the activities of the African governments. *Rerum Novarum* is the first catholic social document to speak about the role of the state saying, “Among the many and grave duties of rulers who would do their best for their people, the first and chief is to act with strict justice – with justice which is called in the schools *distributive* – toward each and every class”.²⁴ According to this document justice is the primary role of the government officials and justice entails equality for all those under the protection of the government. The document further stresses the need for justice and says, “Justice, therefore, demands that the interests of the poorer population be carefully watched over by the administration”.²⁵ In Africa the number of people comprising the poorer population is astounding and therefore the government has a mighty task. Finally, the

²² Taylor and Grant, p. 387

²³ Taylor and Grant, p. 387

²⁴ *Rerum Novarum*, David O’Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, eds., *Catholic Social Thought* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992), no. 27

²⁵ *RN* no. 27

government must “anxiously safeguard the community and all its parts ... the safety of the commonwealth is not only the first law, but is a government’s whole reason of existence”.²⁶ The government’s primary purpose should always be centered on its people because without the people, there is no government. Countries like Sierra Leone suffering from corrupt governments and poor conflict diamond policy must learn to evaluate their priorities. Although money is needed for governments to survive, they must develop ethical ways to channel in money without propagating violence among their people.

Almost every subsequent Catholic social teaching document addresses governmental issues because so many human beings depend on the government to institute peace, justice, and protection. *Quadragesimo anno*’s insists on the common good as the end of the state, along with *Gadium et Spes* which states “the political community exists for that common good”.²⁷ Any corruption within the state always infringes upon the common good for all persons. The early social teachings primarily insisted on the government being able to provide the basic necessities to all persons of the community. Although still an important demand, more modern social teachings push the role of the state even further by insisting the political community’s structure should “always serve to mold men who are civilized, peace-loving, and well disposed toward all – to the advantage of the whole human family”.²⁸ Now, the government is responsible for molding men into good people oriented toward the common good.

²⁶ *RN* no. 28

²⁷ Curran, p. 144

²⁸ *GS*, no. 74

In a time of immense struggle, the African governments neglected their responsibility toward the common good. Greed interfered with the state's ability to see how its actions harmed their own people.

Driven by Consumerism and Capitalism

In 2006 a movie titled, *Blood Diamond*, caught the attention of many consumers in the United States. The movie shared the conflict diamond story of Sierra Leone with the world and aimed to spread awareness about the true costs for the diamonds found on the hand of most women. The editor of the movie shares his opinions saying, "I find it unconscionable that the resources of the third world be exploited for the sake of our vanity, and above all that billions of dollars of corporate profit are built on the backs of workers paid a dollar a day. The story of Sierra Leone is not unique".²⁹ How true his words are. Consumerism and capitalism proliferated the deaths and injustices found in Africa due to conflict diamonds.

In 1987, Pope John Paul II issued an encyclical titled, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of *Populorum Progressio*. This document specifically addresses the problems associated with consumerism. The pope writes, "the experience of recent years shows that unless all the considerable body of resources and potential at man's disposal is guided by a moral understanding and by an orientation toward the true good of the human race, it easily turns against man to oppress him".³⁰ Diamond consumers have not understood the moral implications their purchase have on the whole of humanity. They do not realize how many lives have been lost just for a small, clear, rock. Because of their moral ignorance to the issue, oppression has afflicted

²⁹ Zwick, p. 1

³⁰ *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, David O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, eds., *Catholic Social Thought* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1992), no. 28.

many people in Africa. Much more can be said about consumerism, but it does not completely correlate with the issue of conflict diamonds, therefore, it is up to the reader to seek a better understanding of Catholic social teaching by looking at documents such as *Populorum Progressio*, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, and *Centesimus Annus*.

The diamonds being mined by slaves of the Rebel groups were sold to companies such as DeBeer's which filtered them into the entire diamond industry. Capitalism and greed for diamonds have ultimately funded these civil wars. *Populorum Progressio* states, "it is unfortunate that on these new conditions of society a system has been constructed which considers profit as the key motive for economic progress, competition as the supreme law of economics, and private ownership of the means of production as an absolute right that has no limits and carries no corresponding social obligation".³¹ The system upon which our economy relies is overrun by greed and selfishness. Everyone wants to make money and it does not matter who is stepped on in the process. This topic is developed even further by Pope John Paul II's document, *Laborum Exercens*. He states that "the error of early capitalism can be repeated wherever man is in a way treated on the same level as the whole complex of the material means of production, as an instrument and not in accordance with the true dignity of his work". The pope is criticizing capitalism because it has been known to use people as a means to an end and not as a human person contributing to the system as a whole. Pope John Paul II refers to these people as subjects and not makers. Capitalism in and of itself is not evil and wrong, but the manner in which its structures operates is corrupt and unethical. Clearly, the capitalistic system which is used to export diamonds out of Africa used persons as an

³¹ *PP*, no. 26

object and not as a maker. The people mining the diamonds were slaves and worked in unethical situations.

Consumerism and Capitalism are two economic relatives that have negatively affected the situations found in Africa concerning illegal mining of diamonds. Consumerism caused North American and European people to desire diamonds to such an extent that the moral implications of these diamonds was never considered. Capitalism in this sense has focused primarily on economic progress and neglected the means by which money was being acquired. Both have severe implications to the entire conflict diamond issue.

Unjust Wages in the Diamond Conflict

Even though many actions have been taken to reduce conflict diamonds, African diamond diggers find themselves in the midst of poverty due to indecent wages (usually \$1 a day). *Laborem Exercens* clearly states that “in every case a just wage is the concrete means of verifying the justice of the whole socioeconomic system and, in any case, of checking that it is functioning justly ... remuneration which will suffice for establishing and properly maintaining a family and for providing security for its future”.³² Men and women deserve wages descent enough to provide security for their family’s future.

This teaching has developed quite extensively. Unfortunately, not all aspects concerning poverty and just wages can be addressed here. However, the main concerns will be covered. In the first social document, *Rerum Novarum*, by Pope Leo XIII, stressed that wages should be descent enough for a man to own property and support a family. *Mater et Magistra* also emphasizes wages descent enough to support a family life, but also mentions that wages should be sufficient enough to provide for the entire

³² *LE*, no. 19

community. Later documents are going to insist that along with descent wages, workers need to become sharers in the ownership or management of their workforce.

Currently there are over one million diamond diggers in African countries living in poverty.³³ The diamonds found by diggers in Sierra Leone sell for about 1/5th of the diamond's worth once it leaves the country.³⁴ The greatest amount of profit from diamonds goes straight into the pockets of capitalists. Men are gaining wealth off the hard work of diggers who are trapped in a system of severe poverty. In every way, shape and form, a large sector of the diamond mining industry is violating Catholic social teaching on descent wages and poverty.

Application of Catholic Social Teaching to Resolve Conflict Diamonds

What is the leading factor preventing Catholic social ethics from being applied? Why are the principles of social ethics not being practiced in Africa? These principles do not have to be understood by all persons in Africa, but the real need is having the ability to apply these principles generally.

A leading factor making it difficult to apply Catholic social teaching to the diamond conflict is corrupt governments. War is happening in many African countries because the governments are not strong enough to set a standard for all to abide by to prevent corruption. Mass chaos occurs when some government officials are strictly enforcing laws to stop the progression of conflict diamonds while other officials are allowing for diamonds to be smuggled in and out of their country. Catholic social teaching on warfare cannot be applied when the government is perpetuating warfare. The government is supposed to protect all its people, but the state will never understand social

³³ "Truth About Diamonds", p. 3

³⁴ "Truth About Diamonds", p. 3

teaching on human dignity if the government is feeding war among all people of the land. Teachings on poverty cannot be learned when the governments are mismanaged and propagating civil war.

Monsignor George Panikulam is an observer to the United Nation and spoke about diamonds saying,

“Africa, which suffers from deteriorating poverty, abounds in weapons ... Leaders in areas rich in diamonds sell them to acquire more sophisticated weapons ... A culture of war and consequent misery should be replaced by a culture of peace and development ... concerted action and political will both from the African leadership and from the international community are urgently called for to accelerate a sustainable development”.³⁵

Monsignor Panikulam sums up the difficulties for applying Catholic social teaching very well. The countries of Africa are stuck in a culture that accepts war, violence, crime, and hate. In order to apply Catholic social teaching, those presuppositions will have to be altered. Persons will have to experience the beauty of peace before they take strong action against war.

Many actions have been taken to defeat the conflict diamonds issue. In May of 2000, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and representatives from the diamond industry “joined 38 states to devise a system of regulations and safeguards that would prevent the trade in conflict diamonds”.³⁶ The presence of other nations and organizations regarding this issue has helped the African governments control export of diamonds into international trade. These organizations have set standards that

³⁵ “Justice Issues in the Movie ‘Blood Diamond’”. Education for Justice. www.educationforjustice.org, p. 8

³⁶ Grant and Taylor, p. 387

governments must comply with. The United Nations has a heavy hand in promoting peace within these nations and rebuilding communities and countries that have been destroyed. The newly developed Kimberly Process is an “international governmental certification scheme” which “requires governments to pass legislation enforcing a certification process guaranteeing that diamonds are conflict free”.³⁷ Regrettably, the Kimberley Process sounds better than it is actually doing. Problems still occur with ineffective monitoring of various governments..

Although these programs are not excelling in the manner everyone would like them to, their intentions are good and much needed. Clearly the African governments struggled greatly in trying to strategize a plan to defeat war among their people and needed help from outside sources. In order to resolve this tension, nations need to keep working together to help their African brothers achieve a fraternity of peace. As the Ivorian bishops stated, “We do not deny that there are difficulties ... but there is a means to overcome them: dialogue. We recommend this method to our brothers in conflict”.³⁸ War is hardly a last option when dialogue is taking place. Other nations can help keep countries accountable for their duty to promote the common good.

The continent of Africa is rich in all sorts of natural resources. The diamond industry in many countries has the ability to be a “force for good”. It has the potential to help a country become more focused on bettering the workplace and developing community health projects through its diamond revenue, like Botswana, South Africa, Namibia, and Tanzania have done. In order to do this, over 200,000 child soldiers must

³⁷ “Justice Issues in the Movie ‘Blood Diamond’”, p. 4

³⁸ “Justice Issues in the Movie ‘Blood Diamond’”, p. 8

be disarmed and demobilized, according to Warhurst.³⁹ These child soldiers have been taken from their families and need to be reunited with them so they may have a chance to be a child again.

The next action that needs to take place to obtain fair wages for diggers and to reduce the role of the middleman in diamond trade.⁴⁰ When the intermediaries are taken out of the picture, greater funds can be distributed to the actual diamond diggers. This process will put diamonds directly into government hands, who will then have to meet the criteria outlines by the Kimberly process to ensure conflict free certification.

Another action to better apply Catholic social teaching is the development of new technology. With new technology, certification of conflict free diamonds will be legitimized. Diamond experts are capable of identifying the region of origin of each diamond as long as it has not been polished with their naked eye. However, new technology makes it possible to identify exact locations of origin with a laser.⁴¹ Lasers can also be used to etch a serial number “along the girdle edge of the diamond”.⁴² Technology is going to be essential in providing the diamond industry with conflict-free diamonds. This in turn applies Catholic social teaching.

Finally, the best way to implement Catholic social teaching is for consumers to demand proof that their purchased diamond is conflict-free. Moral awareness among consumers will be spread by word of mouth, which in turn demands justice among big companies. Consumers should never give business to a diamond company that cannot

³⁹ Warhurst, p. 29

⁴⁰ Warhurst, p. 29

⁴¹ Grant and Taylor, p. 397

⁴² Grant and Taylor, p. 398

prove that their diamonds are conflict free. Technology is too advanced for this to happen.

Catholic social teaching always sounds good when it is being read. However, it is a beautiful thing when moments arise to actually implement social teaching. People and nations have worked hard to rid Africa of conflict diamonds. The greater the push, the more likely it is for peace to abound. Pope Benedict XVI told visiting Ivorian bishops that “The way of peace is long and difficult, but it is never impossible”.⁴³ It will be hard to implement these practices that reflect Catholic social teaching, but it is a task that is not impossible.

Conclusion

As seen throughout this paper, the issue of conflict diamonds completely and utterly violates Catholic social teaching on war and violence, the role of the state, consumerism and capitalism, and just wages. Few African economies have “actually benefited from diamonds, while Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Liberia, and Sierra Leone are still recovering from widespread devastation resulting from wars fueled by diamonds.” Diamonds “continue to be used for money laundering, tax evasion and organized crime”.⁴⁴ Catholic social teaching demands much more from humanity than to let greed overrun our moral behaviors. Catholic social teaching calls us to respect and identify the dignity found in each and every human being. The teachings of the Church declare that much more evil comes about when war takes place.

Pope Benedict XVI addressed the clergy in Rome and drew upon the similarities between Europe and Africa. He began by saying, “Africa is a continent that has

⁴³ “Justice Issues in the Movie ‘Blood Diamond’”, p. 9

⁴⁴ “Global Witness and Amnesty International launch new survey”.
http://www.globalwitness.org/pages/en/conflict_diamonds.html

enormous potential and the enormous generosity of the people, with an impressive, living faith”. This beauty has been corrupted by European vices and “we must acknowledge our responsibility so that the exportation of the faith, an answer to the intimate hope of every human being, is stronger than the exportation of the vices of Europe”.⁴⁵ Africa is known for the beauty its culture of its traditions, and the way people share with the world. The faith the continent of Africa shows is captivating. We as brothers and sisters to the people of Africa must ensure that their striking and colorful culture and people are never thrown to the wayside. Greed should never overrun a nation’s glorious reputation.

Steps will be taken to save the world from the atrocities of conflict diamonds. These steps will in turn implement the principles outlined in Catholic social teaching. The teachings of the Church call us to a higher ground and help to promote the reign of God here on earth. May we all continue to pray for Africa and peace and justice throughout the world because the story and heartache of Sierra Leone is not unique. Many nations continue to suffer from warfare, violence, crime, hate, and poverty. We must unite as individuals to uphold the principles of peace and justice.

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