**Where are the Jobs?**

*Continuing*

BY FRED KAMMER, S.J.

The stock market is soaring to set new records. CEOs are taking home bundles of cash, stock options, and rich severance packages. Wall Street is handing out million dollar bonuses again. Congress and state legislators seem to find no tax cut unpalatable. And big tech firms like Apple acquire smaller ones like Tumblr for a billion dollars. What is the matter with this wacky picture? Unemployment. The “official” unemployment rate for April 2013 was 7.5 percent, representing 11.7 million persons, of whom 4.8 million have been unemployed for at least six months. This does not include people who simply have given up looking for work or those working part-time who want to work full-time. In fact, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) puts the total of “labor underutilization” at 14.5 percent, almost double the official unemployment rate.

We can understand the different kinds of “unemployment” by looking more closely at the data. The four categories are:

- **Officially unemployed:** All jobless persons available for work who actively sought work in the past four weeks because they believe no jobs are available.
- **Discouraged workers:** Persons not in the labor force who want and are available for work and have sought work in the past twelve months but not in the past four weeks because they believe no jobs are available for them (economic reason), as a percent of the civilian labor force plus discouraged workers.
- **Marginally attached workers:** Includes discouraged workers whose reason for not seeking work in the past four weeks is other than their belief about availability of jobs for them, as a percent of the civilian labor force plus all marginally attached workers.
- **Involuntary part-time workers:** Persons working less than 35 hours a week who want full-time employment but gave an economic reason for working part-time (hours cut back or unable to find a full-time job), as a percent of the civilian labor force plus all marginally attached workers.

The table below reflects the cumulative effect of these four categories of workers in each locale. BLS notes that these measures of labor underutilization move together over time and across business cycles so that states with high official unemployment rates tend to have high rates of underemployed and underutilized workers, as well. Workers of color, of course, have higher rates of labor underutilization than white workers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure of Labor Underutilization</th>
<th>Alabama</th>
<th>Florida</th>
<th>Louisiana</th>
<th>Mississippi</th>
<th>Texas</th>
<th>United States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Officially unemployed</strong></td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Officially unemployed plus discouraged workers</strong></td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Officially unemployed, discouraged, and marginally attached workers</strong></td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Officially unemployed, discouraged, marginally attached, and involuntary part-time workers</strong></td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Understanding CST**

**Catholic Social Thought and Solidarity**

“Solidarity therefore must play its part in the realization of this divine plan, both on the level of individuals and on the level of national and international society.”


The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church names solidarity as a core principle of Catholic social teaching.

Solidarity highlights in particular the intrinsic social nature of the human person, the equality of all in dignity and rights and the common path of individuals and peoples towards an ever more community. The acceleration of interdependence between persons and peoples needs to be accompanied by equally intense efforts on the ethical/social plane, in order to avoid the dangerous consequences of perpetrating injustice on a global scale.1

Many associate the term “solidarity” with the writing of Blessed John Paul II, who developed the concept extensively. The term, however, was used by Vatican II in Gaudium et Spes in discussing universal interdependence and international relations, as well as the communal character of the human person taught by Jesus Christ, the community of believers that he establishes, and the ultimate solidarity to be “brought to perfection” at the end of time. In writing Famae in Veritatis during the Council, Blessed John XXIII called for an “active solidarity” that “cannot be divorced from the common good of the entire human family.”

To develop the term “duty of solidarity,” Pope John Paul II underscores the urgency of connecting action to justice to faith. For him, solidarity is the structural response demanded by gospel love. Solidarity, as a social principle, involves fundamental economic and social changes. In addition, in a striking assertion, the Pope says, “Solidarity is undoubtedly a Christian virtue.”2

Solidarity therefore must play its part in the realization of this divine plan, both on the level of individuals and on the level of national and international society. The “evil mechanisms” and “structures of sin” of which we have spoken can be overcome only through the exercise of the human and Christian solidarity to which the church calls as and which the tirelessly promotes. Only in this way can such positive energies be fully released for the benefit of development and peace.3

What is this solidarity that the Pope speaks of? John Paul’s answer connects us to the basic theme of the preferential love of the poor, a theme we hear anew from Pope Francis, on as John Paul put it, “God’s beloved poor”:4

It is about all a question of interdependence, sensed as a system determining relationships in the contemporary world in its economic, cultural, political and religious elements, and accepted as a moral category. When interdependence becomes recognized in this way, the correlative response as a moral and social attitude, as a “virtue,” is solidarity. This then is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good, that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual because we are all really responsible for all.5

This solidarity takes concrete forms. Pope John Paul says, in personal decisions in decisions of government, in economic decisions, in public demonstrations by the poor themselves; in sacrifice of all forms of economic, military, or political imperialism; and in a variety of other concrete actions, both personal and structural. Solidarity, we are told by the Vatican, will require developing new forms of collaboration among the poor themselves, between the poor and the rich, among and between groups of workers, and between private and public institutions.6

ENDNOTES

1 Pontifical Council on Justice and Peace, Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church (CSDC), No. 192 (translated in original).
2 Vatican II, Gaudium et Spes, 1965, No. 32.
3 Pope John XXIII, Famae in Veritatis, 1964, No. 98.
4 “The principle of social solidarity rests on the idea that everyone will require fundamental changes in social and economic structures that permit a lasting improvement and cut off millions of citizens from full participation in the economic and social life of the nation. The process of change should be one that does not tear together all citizens, whatever their economic status, into one community.”
5 Vatican Council II, Gaudium et Spes, 1965, No. 32.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid., No. 38.