



## Catechesis At Home – To Each According to Need

### 2nd Sunday of Easter | Sunday of Divine Mercy – Year B

#### DISCUSSION

Do we give all we can, so others can have all they need?

The passage from the Acts of the Apostles this week is often used by many to support the idea of socialism and its extreme, state-enforced form, Communism. It seems to pre-enforce the mantra of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in their *Communist Manifesto*, written in 1848, that solidified Communism as a state-enforced economic system, and was codified in the famous phrase “**From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs,**” that Marx wrote in 1875 in his *Critique of the Gotha Program*. But nearly 100 years before *Manifesto*, a French novelist and thinker, Étienne-Gabriel Morelly, wrote very similarly worded exhortations in his *Code of Nature*.<sup>1</sup>

Did St. Luke, too, write of this 1700 years prior to Morelly, in this passage we read in the *Acts of the Apostles*?

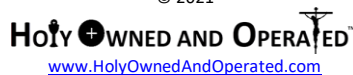
No. While many Catholics may be persuaded and lulled into thinking that Socialism and its more brutal overseer, Communism, is the command and lifestyle of the Apostles and therefore ordered with God through Jesus Christ, it is far from it. Note that in the passage the people “*who owned property or houses would sell them, bring the proceeds of the sale, and put them at the feet of the apostles, and they were distributed to each according to need.*”

The people were not forced to sell their property. The property was not taken from them and sold by the Apostles. And we are not told that *all* of those who owned houses or had property would sell. And we know that those who had houses probably kept one or more for themselves and their families. The first Catholics actually had a more [Distributist](#) way of life, a system that the Catholic Church continues to embrace, teach, and promulgate.

This is a passage about Stewardship: It is about sharing what we have in excess to our own needs and comfort. It is a story about giving to others what we do not need so that, once their need is taken care of, they can focus on The Lord and, by His disciples providing for their needs, we automatically give them reason to associate Goodness with Jesus, and give them an open door for them to ask questions and for us to share our faith. It gives us an opportunity, as the saying goes, to “Preach the Gospel always. Use words if necessary.”

Our actions will always speak louder than our word. And it is by our actions that we give Jesus to others. In the Socialist and Communist approach to life, Atheism is by necessity the only allowable “religion,” because, according to its philosophy, there can be no higher power than the State, the secular government.

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Doesn't sound like Jesus would come to save us if He was going to tell us to remove Him from our daily lives, does it?

## ACTIVITY

This week, as a family, decide what the family seems to always have an excess of – food, clothing, money, influence, garden vegetables, toys – and create a monthly or quarterly plan to give the excess to somebody, or some organization. Follow-through on that plan, setting aside the first Saturday or some regular day that the family will gather what extra it has, and share with others.<sup>ii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> For a more complete understanding of the Church's position concerning socialism and capitalism, we recommend reading [Rerum Novarum](#) ["On the New Things" - On Capital and Labor, Encyclical, May 15, 1891]. In it, Pope Leo XIII denounces socialism quite vehemently, outlines the challenges of capitalism, and begins the discussion about [Distributism](#). His seminal work has been reiterated and confirmed by nearly every pope since then, and gives Catholics a true understanding of how we are to behave in the marketplace to best emulate and honor Jesus and the teachings of the Apostles.

<sup>ii</sup> For a family discussion on Stewardship to help with an understanding of what opportunities are out there and what may be excess in your home, see our podcast episodes on [Stewardship](#).