

Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (<https://www.ncronline.org>)

May 4, 2011 at 12:12pm

Weigel on Catholic Social Teaching

by Michael Sean Winters

Distinctly Catholic

Inside Catholic has a column up today by George Weigel on Catholic Social Thought and the 2012 election. The factual premise for his article is the widespread canard that this great and rich country is essentially bankrupt.

This great and rich country needs to take in more revenue to afford the government programs that express the solidarity called for by Catholic Social Teaching, and, as I have suggested previously, I would be content to return to the tax rates that existed on the day Ronald Reagan left office.

Weigel's analysis is just as shaky as premise. But, what really caught my eye was his assertion at the end of the article that the health care reform law violated the principle of subsidiarity. It did no such thing.

Subsidiarity is a two way street, something conservatives forget.

Yes, it seeks solutions for social problems at the smallest and most personal level of society. But, it also demands that when these lower levels fail to protect society, the government must step in.

Mr. Weigel may have good health insurance where he works and I am glad for it. But, millions of Americans don't and their inability to access adequate, affordable care is sinful. The government is stepping in only because lower levels of society - the family, local communities, the private sector - have been unable to ensure the health of all society's members.

The health care law does not violate subsidiarity. It confirms it.

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