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Conservatives in a Lather

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Distinctly Catholic

It didn't take long for certain conservative critics to denounce the document released yesterday by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace regarding the world financial crisis. This is the same crowd which, on other issues, points to similar Vatican documents and invests them with enormous authority. But not now.

Here is George Weigel in the *National Review*: "The document doesn't speak for the Pope, it doesn't speak for 'the Vatican,' and it doesn't speak for the Catholic Church."

The inimitable Father Zuhlsdorf has the decency to admit that the document has him ranting "like a loon."

And, at CatholicVote.org, Thomas Peters, aka the American Papist, does all he can to diminish the significance of this document, emphasizing that the Church admits it has no special expertise in economics, as indeed the authors of the document say.

What is curiously absent from all these interventions and analysis is any attempt to wrestle with the issues the document does raise. Okay, we can all stipulate that the Church has no specific charism in economics, but that she is, as Peters says, an "expert in humanity." Why do they not address the theology that is explicit in the document, which shows clearly why the Church has always rejected laissez-faire economics? Why? Because they can't.

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