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Pope Francis on "legitimate" wealth distribution

by Tom Gallagher

NCR Today

Pope Francis does it again. According to Nicole Winfield's reporting for the Associated Press:

Pope Francis called Friday for governments to redistribute wealth to the poor in a new spirit of generosity to help curb the "economy of exclusion" that is taking hold today.

Francis made the appeal during a speech to U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the heads of major U.N. agencies who are meeting in Rome this week."

In reality, this is not new for Pope Francis.

"Francis had a similar message to the World Economic Forum in January and in his apostolic exhortation "The Joy of the Gospel." That document, which denounced trickle-down economic theories as unproven and naive, provoked criticism in the U.S. that he was Marxist.

Francis has denied he's Marxist, and spent years in Argentina battling Marxist excesses of liberation theology. But he has said from the outset that he wants a church that "is poor and for the poor" and ministers to the most marginal of society.

On Friday, he urged the U.N. to promote development goals that attack the root causes of poverty and hunger, protect the environment and ensure "dignified" labor for all.

"Specifically, this involves challenging all forms of injustices and resisting the economy of exclusion, the throwaway culture and the culture of death which nowadays sadly risk becoming passively accepted," he said.

The Republican's self-styled budget "wonk" Congressman Paul Ryan, a Catholic, and his chief episcopal protector, Bishop Robert Morlino, should take heed of Pope Francis' instruction.

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