

Principles of Catholic Social Teaching

The Scriptures say, "Without a vision the people perish" (Prv 29:18). As Catholics, we have an inspiring vision in our social teaching. In a world that hungers for a sense of meaning and moral direction, this teaching offers ethical criteria for action. In a society of rapid change and often confused moral values, this teaching offers consistent moral guidance for the future. For Catholics, this social teaching is a central part of our identity. In the words of John Paul II, it is "genuine doctrine" (Centesimus Annus, no. 5).

From *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions*,
U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1998

- ***Life and Dignity of the Human Person***

The human person is the clearest reflection of God among us. Each person possesses a basic dignity that comes directly from our creation in the image of God. Through our actions we must express that each person is precious and the lives and welfare of all people are priorities. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching.

- ***Rights and Responsibilities***

People have a fundamental right to life and those things that make life truly human: food, clothing, housing, health care, education and security. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.

- ***Call to Family, Community, and Participation***

We realize our dignity and rights in relationship with others. The first community is the family, where we learn and act on our values. We believe people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all.

- ***Option for the Poor and Vulnerable***

A basic moral test of our society is how our most vulnerable members are treated. Those with the greatest needs require the greatest response.

- ***The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers***

Work is an expression of our human dignity. It is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. The economy must serve people, not the other way around.

- ***Solidarity***

We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. Learning to practice the virtue of solidarity means learning that loving our neighbor has global dimensions in an interdependent world.

- ***Care for God's Creation***

We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation.

SCRIPTURES FOR CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHINGS

- Genesis 17:7-9 (God's covenant with a people)
- Exodus 6:6-8 (God's covenant frees a people)
- Leviticus 19:9-15, 35-37 (covenant's social laws)
- Jeremiah 22:3
- Isaiah 5:8 (Latifundia)
- Isaiah 5:23, 10:1-2, Chapters 40,42, 49, 50 & 51)
- Jeremiah 32:39-40 (God's covenant with a people and their children)
- Mark 1:14-15 (the reign of God, a social image)
- Luke 22:14-20 (Christ's new covenant)
- Deuteronomy 5:17, 30:19 (right to life)
- Sirach 34:22 (rights of workers)
- Psalm 146: 5-8 (freedom from oppression)
- Isaiah 10:1-2 (against unjust laws)
- Exodus 22:20-22; Leviticus 19: 33-34 (laws protecting aliens, widows, and orphans)
- Exodus 22:24-26; Leviticus 25:23-28 (laws protecting debtors)
- Deuteronomy 14:28-29 (laws providing for the poor)
- Matthew 5:24 – (Beatitudes – Be reconciled)
- Matthew 5:44 – (Love enemies)
- Matthew 6:11, 12, 13 (Parts of the Our Father)
- Matthew 7:12 – (golden rule)
- Matthew 25:31-46 (judgment of the nations)
- Luke 4:16-21 (Jesus' mission to the poor/outcast)
- Luke 14:12-14 (reach out to the poor/vulnerable)
- Genesis 2:2-3 (God labors and rests)
- Genesis 2:15 (humans cultivate earth)
- Exodus 20:9-11 Leviticus 23:3 (Sabbath gave laborers rest)
- Leviticus 19:13; Deuteronomy 24:14-15 (wage justice)
- Matthew 20:1-16 (Jesus uses wage law in parable)
- Mark 2:27 (Sabbath is not for benefit of people)
- Matthew 10:9-10; Luke 10:7; 1 Timothy 5:17-18 (laborer deserves pay)
- Genesis 22:17-18; Psalm 22:28-29 (save all nations)
- Isaiah 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-3 (peace for all nations)
- Romans 10:12 (no national distinctions)
- Galatians 3:28 (all one in Christ)
- Genesis 1:31 (goodness of creation)
- Philippians 2
- II Corinthians 5
- Colossians 2
- Genesis 2:15 (stewardship of the earth)
- Daniel 3:74-81 (all the earth blesses God)
- Hosea 4:1-3 (humans wound the earth)
- Romans 8:18-25 (all creation awaits redemption)
- Hebrew 11, 12