

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING



Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, you sent your Son to teach us to love one another through acts of service and charity. Help us with the grace of the Holy Spirit to be people of service who see the face of your Son in all whom we meet. We ask this through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Scripture Reading *Matthew 25:31-40*

Perhaps one of the clearest teachings of Jesus on how we will be judged at the end of our life is the parable of the Judgement of the Nations in which Jesus will separate those who have lived out the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy in their lives from those who have been self-centered. Those who have chosen to love God and neighbor will be saved.

What is the basic foundation of Catholic Social Teaching?

- CST is the Church reflecting on its mission in the world today, helping us to think about how we relate to the world around us and the problems that we face.
- "The Church's social teaching comprises a body of doctrine, which is articulated as the Church interprets events in the course of history, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, in the light of the whole of what has been revealed by Jesus Christ" (CCC 2422).
- "Christian revelation promotes deeper understanding of the laws of social living. The Church receives from the Gospel the full revelation of the truth about humankind. When she fulfills her mission of proclaiming the Gospel, she bears witness to humanity, in the name of Christ, to one's dignity and one's vocation to the communion of persons. She teaches the demands of justice and peace in conformity with divine wisdom" (CCC 2419).

What is the Scriptural basis for Catholic Social Teaching?

- There are many, many Scriptural references to support our Catholic Social Teaching, but two passages tie CST to our Eucharistic identity.
 - John 13:1-20 – The Last Supper narrative of the Eucharist is replaced by the Washing of Feet – Eucharist and Service are synonymous.
 - 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 – The Eucharist is a call to feed the hungry and assist those who are poor and marginalized, whoever eats the Eucharist without assisting the poor brings condemnation upon him or herself.



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What is the History of Catholic Social Teaching?

- Taking its root in Scripture, Catholic Social Teaching has developed over the history of Church. Its earliest forms involved the Church's relationship with other religions and the state. In the Middle Ages, Catholic theologians were key players in the attempt to restrict the violence unleashed by warring princes, developing what became "The Just War" theory, with its various checks and balances.
- St. Francis is now remembered for rethinking our relationship to the natural world. During the colonization of the Americas Spanish, Dominican and Jesuit theologians upheld the dignity of the indigenous peoples whose lands were being invaded, and laid the foundation for much of the modern concern for human rights. Whatever the limitations of their approaches, they made a serious attempt to think systematically about the moral value of human actions.
- "The social doctrine of the Church developed in the nineteenth century when the Gospel encountered modern industrial society with its new structures for the production of consumer goods, its new concept of society, the state and authority, and its new forms of labor and ownership. The development of the doctrine of the Church on economic and social matters attests the permanent value of Church's teaching at the same time as it attests the true meaning of her Tradition, always living and active" (CCC, 2421).

What does Vatican II say about Catholic Social Teaching?

- The key document concerning Catholic Social Teaching is *Gaudium et Spes*.
 - The Church sees itself as one with the human race and human history. (#1)
 - Because of this, the Church is called to minister not only to its members, but to the whole world. (#2)
 - The Church's mission is to carry on the work of Christ under the guidance of the Holy Spirit without judging or looking to be served. The Church must be selfless. (#3)
 - At this time, we must look at the world and realize current trends and address these trends appropriately in light of the Gospel.
 - Globalization: cultural transformation whose repercussions are felt on the religious level.
 - Centralization of Power: increase in power is not always accompanied by benefit for all.
 - Technology: advances in sciences allow us to effect human development.
 - Industrialization & Urbanization: transfigures ideas and social practices hallowed for centuries, also quick spread of knowledge and immediate socialization.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING



- Human dignity is paramount because we are in the image and likeness of God with the gift of free will. (#12-17)
- Globalization must include care to develop interpersonal relationships in order to preserve love of neighbor. (#23-32)
- The essential equality of all people is the key of social justice. (#29)
- Our human existence finds its fulfillment in the Paschal Mystery in which we participate. (#38)
- Urgent Problems:
 - Marriage and the Family (#47-52)
 - The Development of a Secular Culture (#53-62)
 - Unequal Economic Possibilities (#63-72)
 - Church must work with Government (#73-76)
 - The Avoidance of War (#77-82)
 - International Community Must Be United (#83-90)
 - Christians can yearn for nothing more ardently than to love and serve one another. (#93)
- The papacies of Paul VI, John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis have been rooted in the Catholic Social Teaching of the Church. Many of their documents focused on CST in light of Vatican II and modern developments.

What are the principles of Catholic Social Teaching?

- **Human dignity:** each person is sacred, made in God's image.
- **Common good:** humans are social by nature and they depend on one another.
- **Rights and Duties:** each person has rights to the basic material necessities to live a decent life.
- **Option for the Poor:** The wealth of a society is judged by the standard of life for the poor.
- **Participation:** All people have a right to some participation in the economic, political, and cultural life of a society.
- **Economic Justice:** The economy must serve people and all people have a right to productive work and private property.
- **Stewardship of Creation:** We are entrusted to care for the earth.
- **Solidarity:** we are responsible for the care of all people.
- **Role of Government:** government has positive moral function to protect human dignity and build the common good.
- **Promotion of Peace:** we are called to bring peace to the world by working for justice.



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What are the Corporal Works of Mercy?

- Feed the hungry.
- Give drink to the thirsty.
- Shelter the homeless.
- Visit the sick.
- Visit the prisoners.
- Bury the dead.
- Give alms to the poor. (Clothe the naked.)

What are the Spiritual Works of Mercy?

- Admonishing the sinner.
- Instructing the ignorant.
- Counseling the doubtful.
- Comforting the sorrowful.
- Bearing wrongs patiently.
- Forgiving injuries.
- Praying for the living and the dead.

