

Happy Monday to all....and Happy 2026,

On this date in history, January 5, 1949, President Harry S. Truman announced a plan he called the Fair Deal. Truman promoted domestic policy reforms including national health insurance, public housing, civil rights legislation and federal aid to education. He advocated an increase in the minimum wage, federal assistance to farmers and an extension of Social Security, as well as urging the immediate implementation of anti-discrimination policies in employment.

After his landslide re-election in 1948, Truman managed to convince Congress to pass several of his reforms. It almost doubled the minimum wage—from 40 cents to 75 cents an hour—and established the Housing Act, which provided 800,000 new houses for the poor. Though Congress approved Truman's extension of Social Security benefits, it rejected the idea of national health care, avoided passing any new civil rights legislation and failed to aggressively tackle concerns over fair labor practices.

Despite legislative setbacks, the Fair Deal influenced future political reform movements and legislation. Over the years, similar legislative actions have been labeled “progressive” or “liberal”. Recently, the term “socialist agenda” has been used to describe political actions similar to those that President Truman promoted 77 years ago. These terms have also been inaccurately used to reference some positions and actions of the Catholic Church--Catholic Charities in particular.

However, while the Catholic Church and some moderate forms of socialism share parallels in terms of end goals -that is where the similarities end.

Pure Socialism has always been condemned by Catholic Social Teaching (CST). CST seeks social justice through human dignity, the common good, subsidiarity, and solidarity, methods that are often in opposition to socialist ideology.

CST favors subsidiarity (decisions made locally), limiting state power, whereas socialism often centralizes control for economic redistribution.

CST puts the individual's dignity first, seeing society as cooperative (solidarity), while traditional socialism focuses on class struggle and potentially subordinates the person in respect to economic goals.

CST supports unions and charity, while socialism often relies on government force for wealth redistribution, which CST critiques as unsustainable and coercive.

Popes have condemned atheistic, totalitarian socialism/communism. CST also speaks out against unregulated capitalism, arguing it can also fail the human person and common good.

Partnerships with government funded programs providing social safety nets have often been misinterpreted as conveying Catholic Charities' support of socialist agendas. However, despite misleading claims on social media sites, Catholic Charities is most certainly not a socialist organization. Catholic Charities' roots are grounded solely in Catholic Social Teaching, adopting

a scriptural framework for helping the poor that follows the model provided to us by Jesus Christ.

Now, more than ever, Catholic Charities of Stockton is seeking the support of parishioners, outside organizations, philanthropic entities, in addition to developing collaborative partnerships with other social service providers, in order to diminish our reliance on the unpredictable nature of government funding.

As the new year begins, Catholic Charities offers our deep and profound appreciation to our selfless and hard-working staff and volunteers, as well as our partners who assist us in providing essential services to those in need. Most of all, we offer our heartfelt thanks to all who have so generously provided financial support. Your dollars have allowed Catholic Charities to ease the fear and uncertainty of over 30,000 people. Your sacrifice has given hope and healing to those who come to Catholic Charities without hope, hurting, hungry, ill, and scared.

President Truman would be pleased!

We look forward to an even better 2026!!

Blessings,

Deacon Mike