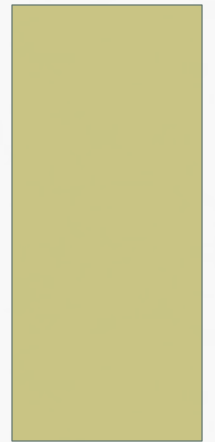


CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING
A KEY TO CATHOLIC IDENTITY



WELCOME



A lit candle with a bright flame against a dark background. The candle is positioned on the right side of the frame, and its flame is tall and bright, casting a warm glow. The background is dark, making the candle stand out prominently.

PRAYER.

Conversations with God

A PRAYER FOR LIVING THE GOSPEL

*God of yesterday, today, and tomorrow,
we call to mind your presence
within us and around us.*

*Open our ears that we may hear your Word.
Open our hearts that we may understand
your Word.*

*Open our mouths that we may speak your Word.
Inspire us with the Gospel message,
that we may celebrate all that is life-giving,
restore hope where it has been lost,
and work to bring about change where it is
needed.*

A PRAYER FOR LIVING THE GOSPEL

May we live the Gospel with courage, constancy, and love. May we be open to the challenge of your call to true freedom. May we be faithful to you in our daily choices and decisions. May we make your love known through our words and actions. May the triune God – Father, Son, and Spirit – reign in our hearts, now and forever. Amen.

(Taken from: *Living God's Justice: Reflections and Prayers*, The Roundtable Association of Diocesan Social Action Directors, 2006).

LIVE
The Gospel

INTRODUCTION

Social action and outreach to the poor and vulnerable is at the heart of who we are as a people of faith.

- Sacred Scripture tells us so ...
- The example of Jesus tells us so ...
- The teachings of our Church tell us so ...



WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

“Far too many Catholics are unfamiliar with the basic content of Catholic social teaching. More fundamentally, many Catholics do not adequately understand that the social mission of the Church is an essential part of Catholic faith. This poses a serious challenge for all Catholics, since it weakens our capacity to be a Church that is true to the demands of the Gospel.”

(Sharing Catholic Social Teaching, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1998)



FAITH INTEGRATED WITH LIFE

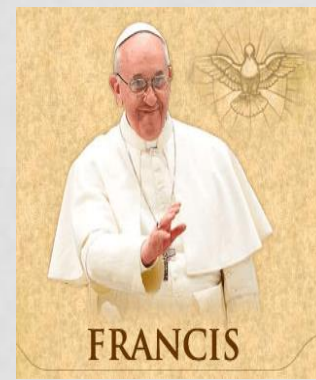
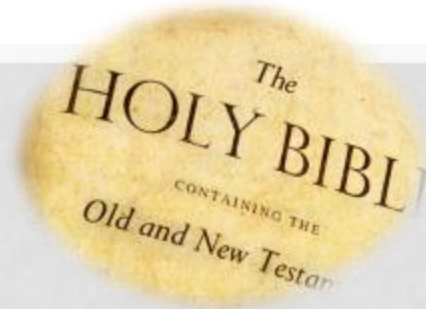
If we don't know what our Church has to say about contemporary social issues, how can we effectively put our faith into action? How can we fulfill our calling to be builders of the Kingdom of God?

“The split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age.”
(Second Vatican Council)



WHAT IS CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING?

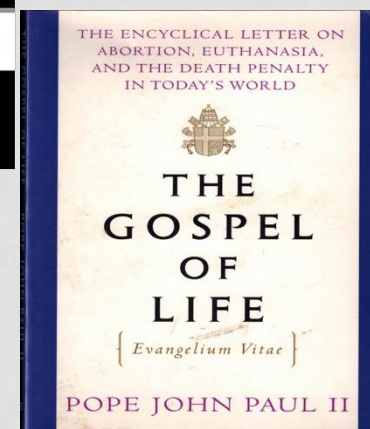
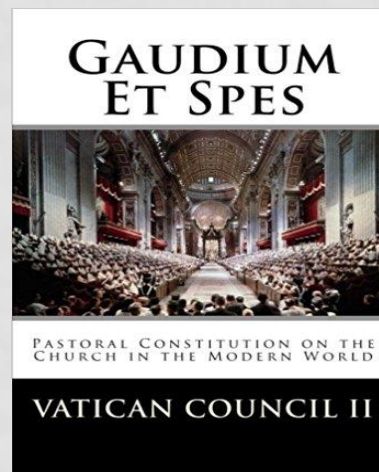
- Authentic teaching which has come down to us through Sacred Scripture, Tradition, and the writings of popes, bishops, and Church councils.
- Church teaching that seeks to apply gospel values to social, economic, political and cultural issues.



HOW IS CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING EXPRESSED?

In written form through a variety of official church documents:

1. Papal encyclicals
2. Conciliar documents
3. Apostolic letters and exhortations
4. Pastoral letters from conferences of bishops.



FAITH INTO ACTION

Expressed through the lived witness of men and women who “enflesh” God’s call to charity and justice through the “**2 Feet of Love in Action.**”

1. **Works of Charity**: direct hands-on work to help those in need.
2. **Works of Justice**: long-term work to create policies, structures, systems that are just.



BOTH FEET ARE NECESSARY!

- We need to address the immediate needs of suffering people **AND** work to change unjust laws, policies, attitudes and structures.



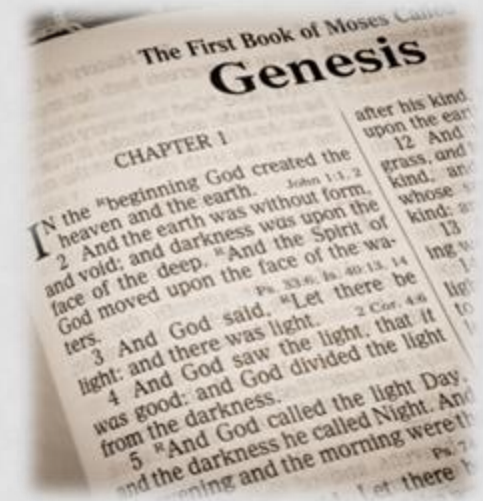
“If we love others with charity, then first of all we are just towards them. Not only is justice not extraneous to charity, not only is it not an alternative or parallel path to charity; justice is inseparable from charity, and intrinsic to it. Justice is the primary way of charity.” (Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, #6).



BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

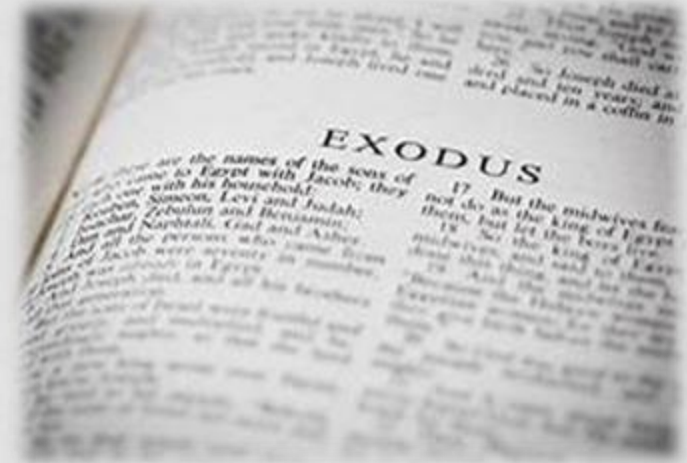
How has Scripture shaped our social tradition? The **Book of Genesis** tells us:

- God is alive and active in all ages and places ...
- God is constantly revealing the Divine Self through human life and experience ...
- All of creation is good and sacred ...
- All human beings share a special dignity ...



THE BOOK OF EXODUS

- Living a life of justice is a fundamental demand of our covenant relationship with God.
- Living in covenant, we are responsible to ensure the wellbeing of the entire community.
- Just as God is attentive to the poor; so must we be attentive to the poor and vulnerable.



DEUTERONOMY

- Our God is a **personal** God who demands **personal** loyalty. Each day I can choose to follow the way of God or not.

“What does the Lord require of you, but to fear the Lord, to walk in his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments.” (10:12-13)



THE PROPHETS

- There can be no division between believing and doing. Proper faith (**ORTHODOXY**) is meaningless without proper practice (**ORTHOPRAXY**). We cannot love and live in right relationship with God unless we love and live in right relationship with others.

“I hate and despise your festivals; I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your offerings, I will not accept them ... But let justice roll down like water and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”

(Amos 5:21-24)



THE PROPHETS

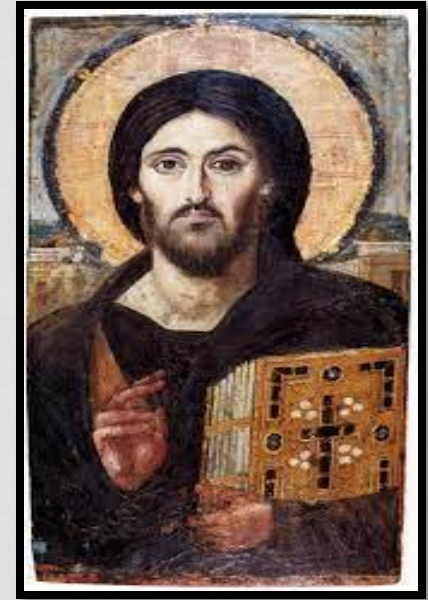


The prophets remind us of the importance of being “social advocates” for God:

- People who identify and denounce violent and fraudulent practices that harm the weakest of society;
- People who challenge leaders/governments to dismantle oppressive social structures and build just societies that enhance the life/dignity of all;
- People who lift their voices on behalf of the poor and vulnerable in their midst.

WORDS AND DEEDS OF JESUS

- Jesus' mission was ***“to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.”*** (Luke 4:18-19).
- Jesus expressed his love and concern for the poor by healing the sick, caring for the vulnerable and outcast of society, confronting those who were oppressing others, and always inviting others into the great social mission of God.



OUR PASSPORT TO ETERNAL LIFE

“Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me ... Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.” (Mt. 25:31-46)

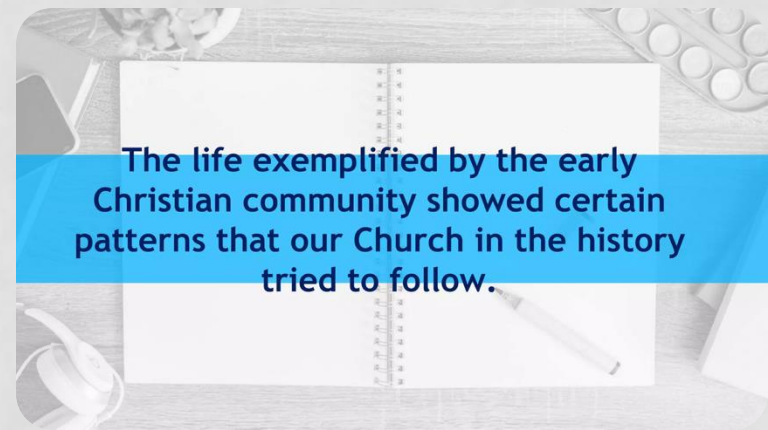
- Love is the great driver of all human activity: love for God, love for friend and foe, and love for justice.



EARLY CHURCH

- Disciples began to gather around Jesus who committed themselves to continuing his social mission and message.
- The early Christians knew they had to be **hearers** and **doers** of the word - manifesting its working in their lives, especially in their loving concern and action toward the poor.

***“Be doers of the word
and not hearers only.”***
(James 1:22)



The life exemplified by the early Christian community showed certain patterns that our Church in the history tried to follow.

ANY
QUESTIONS?





TIME FOR
A BREAK!

ONGOING HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

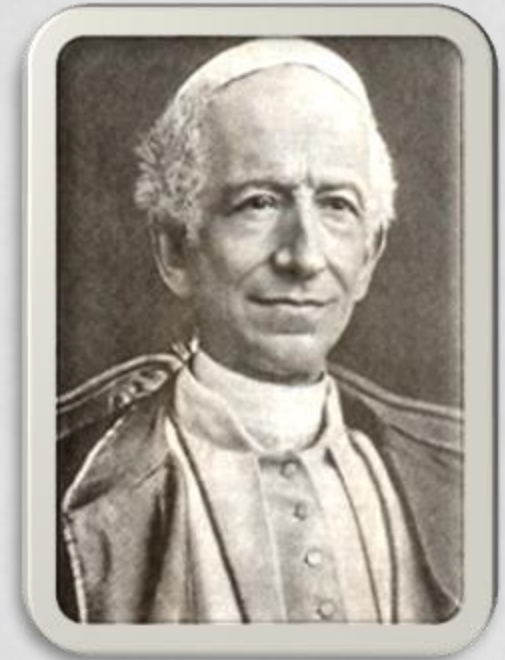
- The “**Fathers of the Church**” sought to provide moral guidance for Christians trying to live lives of faith amidst the challenges of their unique world experience.

“The Church since the beginning has worked to give relief, defense and liberation through works of charity, even when works of charity address the social and political dimensions of poverty. There is a clear relationship between charity and justice. When we attend to the needs of those in want, we give them what is theirs, not ours. More than performing works of mercy, we are paying a debt of justice.”

(St. Pope Gregory the Great, *Regula Pastoralis*)

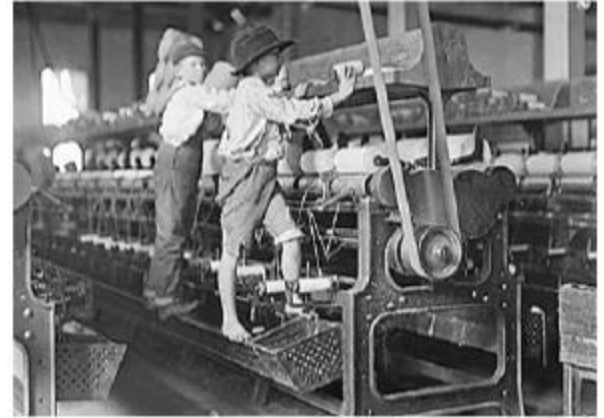
MODERN CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

- As new topics of political, social, or economic importance presented themselves, the Church responded by providing moral teachings that were faithful to Scripture and Tradition
- With Pope Leo XIII, a sophisticated body of teaching has emerged which is officially expressed through:
 - Papal Encyclicals
 - Church Councils
 - Bishops' Statements
 - Lived witness of disciples



RERUM NOVARUM - 1891

- Pope Leo XIII protests the plight of workers; argues for the protection of basic human, economic, and political rights.
- Pope Leo XII asserts the moral responsibility of the Church to address pressing social issues impacting human life and dignity.



QUADRAGESIMO ANNO - 1931)

- Pius XI expresses moral outrage at the suffering of the poor and calls for a reconstruction of the social order along the lines set forth by Leo XIII. He introduces the term “*social justice*” and gives general guidelines on how such justice should be realized in society.
- A reconstruction of the social order is needed – based not on the principles of capitalism or communism – but on the Christian principles of love and justice.



PACEM IN TERRIS - 1963

- St. Pope John XXIII urges disarmament and asserts the importance of international cooperation and world peace.
- Peace rests on a clear and firm recognition of human rights that are **“universal, inviolable, and inalienable”** including food, health care, housing, education, etc.



GAUDIUM ET SPES - 1965

- The role of the Church in an ever-changing world is to scrutinize the **“signs of the times”** – to **observe** what is happening in the world, to **judge** these events in the light of gospel values and to engage in social **action** to improve the world.
- The Church has a responsibility to address the moral implications of political, social, or economic policy.



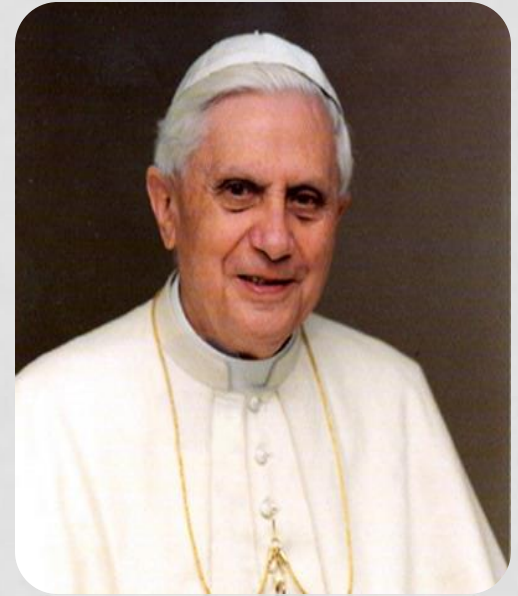
EVANGELIUM VITAE - 1995

- St. John Paul II decries the “**culture of death**” perpetuated by war, abortion, genocide, human trafficking, poverty, etc.
- Addresses embryonic stem cell research, euthanasia, cloning, etc. and affirms that the direct and intentional ending of human life, no matter the motive, is intrinsically evil.



DEUS CARITAS EST - 2006

- Pope Benedict XVI places charity at the center of the Church's social teaching.
- Affirms that the Church's social mission is as essential as proclaiming God's Word and celebrating the sacraments.



“The Church can not and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice.”

LAUDATO SI - 2015

- In the face of growing industrialization, pollution, waste, consumerism, depletion of natural resources, environmental degradation, and climate change, Pope Francis reminds us that all of creation is a **“kind of universal family.”**
- We need **“to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care for the earth.”**



DILEXI TE - 2025

- Pope Leo XIV sees a growing indifference to the needs of the poor and realizes that although **“the commitment to the poor and to removing the social and structural causes of poverty has gained importance in recent decades... it remains insufficient.”**
- Every Christian has a duty to **“make their voices heard ... Unjust structures need to be recognized and eradicated by the force of good, by changing mindsets ... and developing effective policies for societal change.”**



SUMMARY

- Creation is inherently sacred.
- We are part of one human family and need to work to build a more just society ... giving special attention to the poor.
- Acts of charity and justice must be grounded in love.
- Faith must be put into action every day.
- Work of justice is the responsibility of governments, nations, and individuals.



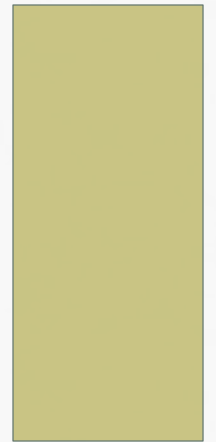
ANY
QUESTIONS?



A serene sunset scene over a body of water. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright orange and yellow glow that reflects on the water's surface. The sky transitions from a deep orange near the horizon to a dark blue at the top. The text "Evening Prayer" is written in a black, elegant cursive font in the upper left quadrant of the image.

Evening Prayer

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING
A KEY TO CATHOLIC IDENTITY





A lit candle with a bright flame against a dark background. The candle is positioned on the right side of the frame, and its flame is tall and bright, casting a warm glow. The background is dark, making the candle and its flame stand out prominently. The candle itself is a light color, and the wax is melting slightly at the base.

PRAYER.

Conversations with God

A PRAYER FOR LIVING THE GOSPEL

*God of yesterday, today, and tomorrow,
we call to mind your presence within us
and around us.*

*Open our ears that we may hear your Word.
Open our hearts that we may understand your
Word.*

*Open our mouths that we may speak your Word.
Inspire us with the Gospel message,
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A PRAYER FOR LIVING THE GOSPEL

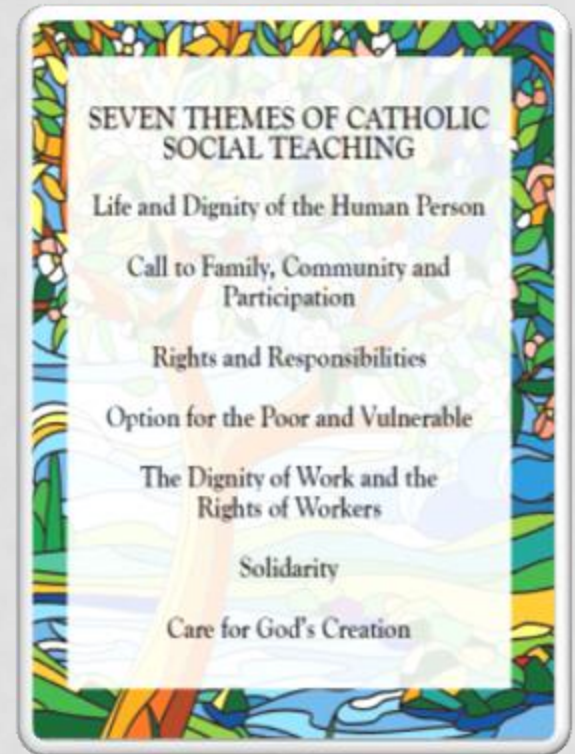
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(Taken from: *Living God's Justice: Reflections and Prayers*, The Roundtable Association of Diocesan Social Action Directors, 2006).

LIVE
The Gospel

PRINCIPLES OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

- 7 key “principles” or “themes” flow through all Catholic Social Teaching.
- Provide a “lens” through which Catholics can put their faith into action in an ever-changing world which often challenges Gospel values.



LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

- The person is sacred, made in the image of God. Our value is rooted in **who we are** not what we do or what we own.
- Every stage of human life is precious and worthy of our respect and protection.



ALL LIFE MATTERS!

“Whatever is opposed to life itself, such as any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia or wilful self-destruction, whatever violates the integrity of the human person, such as mutilation, torments inflicted on body or mind, attempts to coerce the will itself; whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where men and women are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society ... and are supreme dishonor to the Creator.” (The Pastoral Constitution on the Church. #27)

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Do we recognize the dignity of every person and treat one another with respect?
- Do we promote the quality of **all** human life? What prevents us from recognizing the dignity and worth of others?
- Do we advocate for those things that improve the quality of human life?

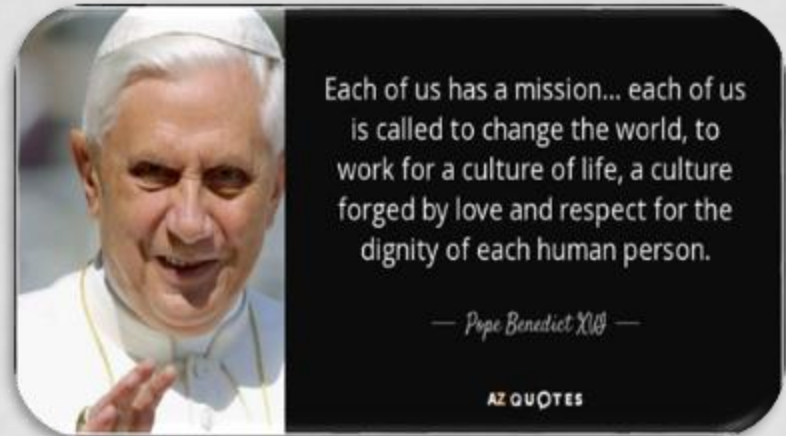


TABLE SHARING

- Identify one way this principle is being upheld in our society.
- Identify one way this principle is being broken in our society.



CALL TO FAMILY, COMMUNITY, AND PARTICIPATION

- We are interdependent with an obligation to contribute to the common good.
- Family is the basic cell of society.
- Every person is entitled to participate in the life of the society.



CALL TO FAMILY, COMMUNITY, AND PARTICIPATION

“Basic justice demands the establishment of minimum levels of participation in the life of the human community for all persons. The ultimate injustice is for a person or group to be treated actively or abandoned passively as if they were nonmembers of the human race. To treat people this way is effectively to say they simply do not count as human beings.” (U.S.

Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Economic Justice for All*, 1986)



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- What are the most serious challenges parents face today? How well do we support families?
- What inhibits people from participating in all levels of society equally?
- As individuals and as parish, how well do we encourage full participation for all, regardless of differences of race, gender, age, or creed?

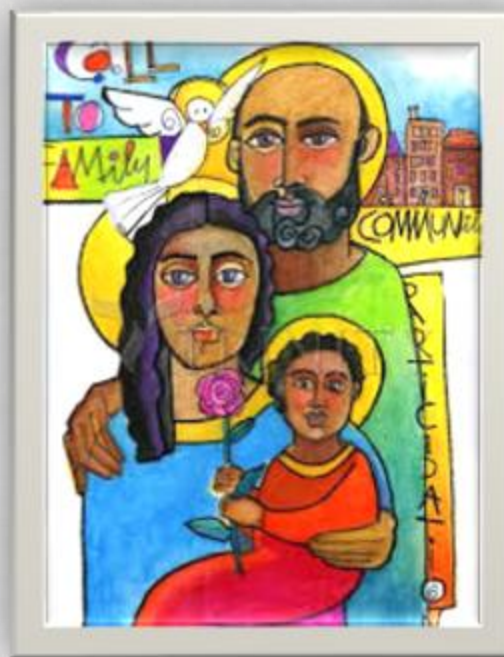


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RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Every person has basic rights that belong to them as human beings.
- With rights come basic responsibilities: to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.



“Every person has the right to life, to bodily integrity, and to the means which are suitable for the proper development of life; these are primarily food, clothing, shelter, rest, medical care, and finally the necessary social services (Pacem in Terris, #11)

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- What human rights injustices exist in my own community ... in my country ... in the world?
- Do any of my words and actions or anything in my life undermine the human rights and dignity of others?
- How can individuals and communities actively ensure that others' rights are protected, especially for the poor and vulnerable?

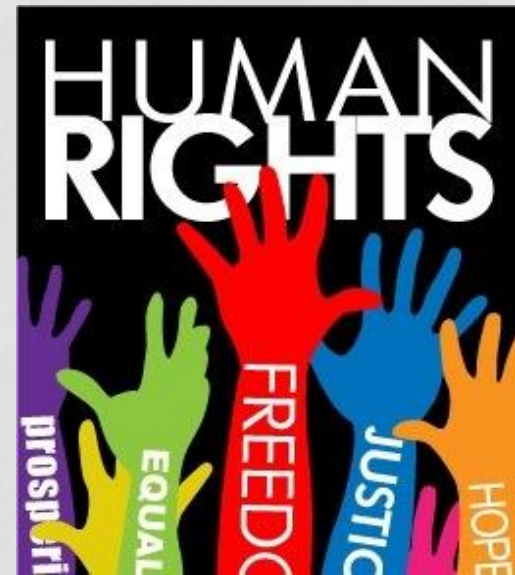


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OPTION FOR AND WITH THE POOR

- All of society (individuals/governments) is called to have a “preferential option” for the poor.

The primary purpose of this special commitment to the poor is to enable all persons to become active participants in the life of society, to share in and contribute to the common good. The option for the poor is not an adversarial slogan that pits one group or class against another. Rather it states that the deprivation and powerlessness of the poor wounds the whole community. (USCCB, *Economic Justice for All*, 1986, #88.)



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- What are we doing to alleviate suffering in our community?
- Do we advocate for legislation that protects the poor and powerless?
- Do we look at our lifestyles, public policies, and social institutions in terms of their impact on the poor?

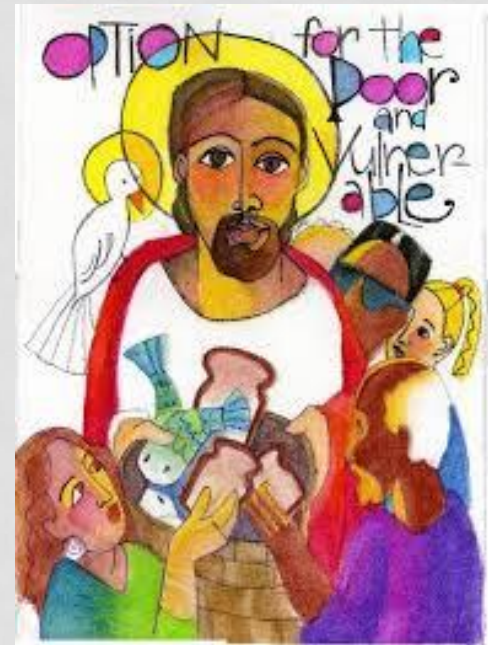


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- Identify one way this principle is being broken in our society.



ANY
QUESTIONS?





DIGNITY OF WORK AND RIGHTS OF WORKERS

- Work is a way in which we utilize our gifts to participate in God's work of creation. If the dignity of work is to be protected, the basic rights of workers must be protected.



"In many cases, poverty results from a violation of the dignity of human work, either because work opportunities are limited (through unemployment or underemployment), or 'because a low value is put on work and the rights that flow from it, especially the right to a just wage and to the personal security of the worker and his or her family.'" (Pope Benedict XVI, Charity in Truth/Caritas in Veritate, #63)

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Are we attentive to questions of justice at our workplace?
- As employers and employees, do we treat one another with respect?
- Do we support laws which protect the rights of workers and promote a just wage?

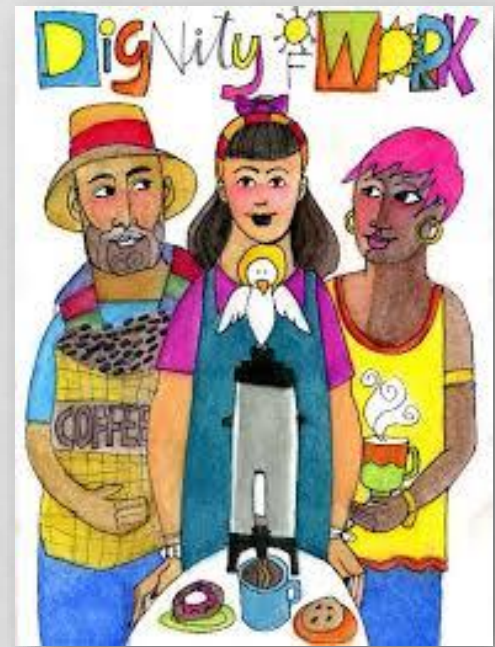


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SOLIDARITY

- We are part of a human family that transcends national, racial, ethnic, economic, or ideological boundaries. Because we are interdependent, we must have a commitment to one another.



“Scripture speaks to us of an active commitment to our neighbor and demands of us a shared responsibility for all humanity. This duty is not limited to one’s own family, nation or state, but extends to all so no one can consider himself or herself extraneous or indifferent to the lot of another member of the human family.” (St. John Paul II, *Centessimus Annus: The Hundredth Year*, #51)

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Are we informed on national and global issues impacting human life and dignity?
- Are we willing to live more simply so that others can simply live?
- Do we support national and international aid groups that address human suffering?

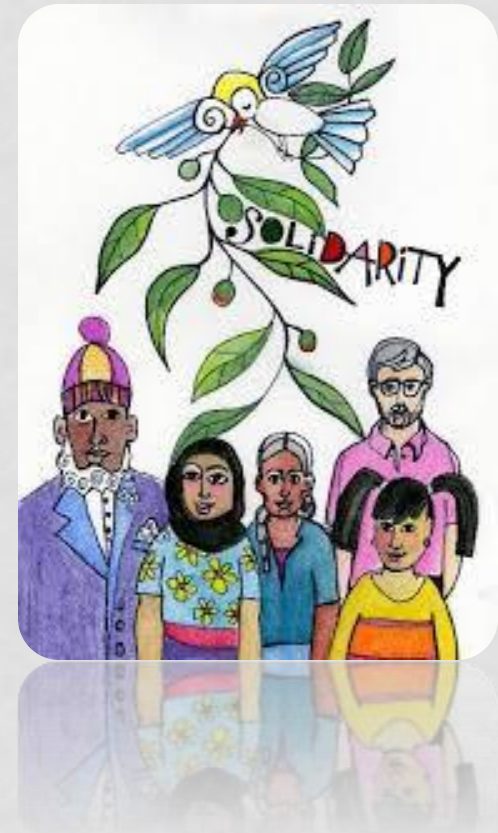


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CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION

- We humans are not the owners of these goods and resources, but only temporary stewards God entrusts with the responsibility of caring for the gifts of the earth and preserving them for future generations.

“It is imperative that people restore a harmonious relationship with the earth and with the rest of humanity. It requires a new way of looking at the earth, not as a “storehouse of resources for us to exploit,” but as a sacred gift for sustaining all of humanity. (Pope Francis, 2020)



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Do I believe that the earth is a gift from God meant to be shared with all God's creatures?
- Do we support recycling, organic farming, pollution reduction, alternative energy sources ?
- Do we promote environmental responsibility in our homes, work places, church, and community?



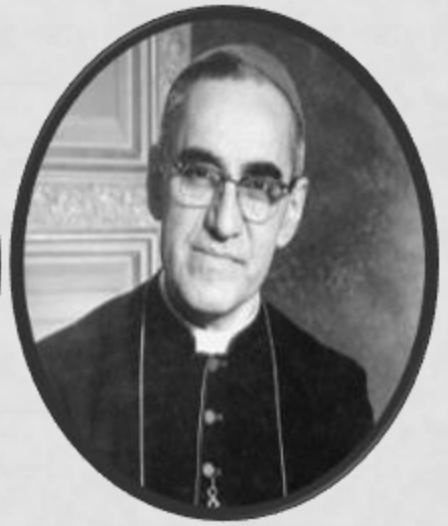
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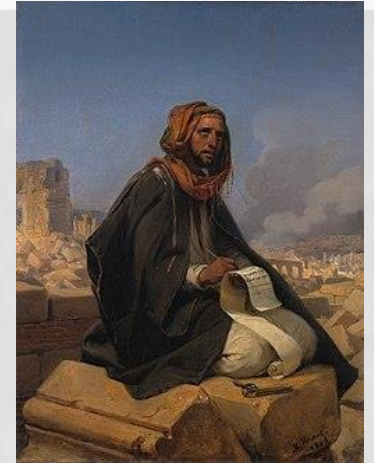
ENFLESHED IN ACTION

- The principles of Catholic Social Teaching can become abstract principles if they are not internalized. Countless men and women have put these principles into lived action – people whose lives “enfleshed” God’s call to charity and justice.



ENFLESHED IN ACTION

- Our history is filled with the lived witness of men and women who said “**YES**” to God’s call and put their faith into action in the hopes of bringing to birth the Kingdom of God.
- We need the continued example of ordinary men and women to influence our world in positive, gospel-inspired ways.



WHAT IS MY RESPONSE?

- God gives us daily opportunities to say “YES” or “NO” to the divine invitation – internal nudges that draw us to try something new, to give of ourselves more, to serve others even when it’s tough.
- Mother Teresa called her followers to **“find your own Calcutta.”** It’s important to take advantage of whatever opportunities arise for the works of charity justice.



AUTHENTIC FAITH

- When we respond in faith to the pressing social needs and injustices around us, we join our labors to the long list of Christian witnesses who “enfleshed” the Church’s social teaching in order to bring about a more compassionate and just world.

“Authentic faith is never comfortable or completely personal – it always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, and to leave this earth somehow better than we found it.” (Pope Francis)

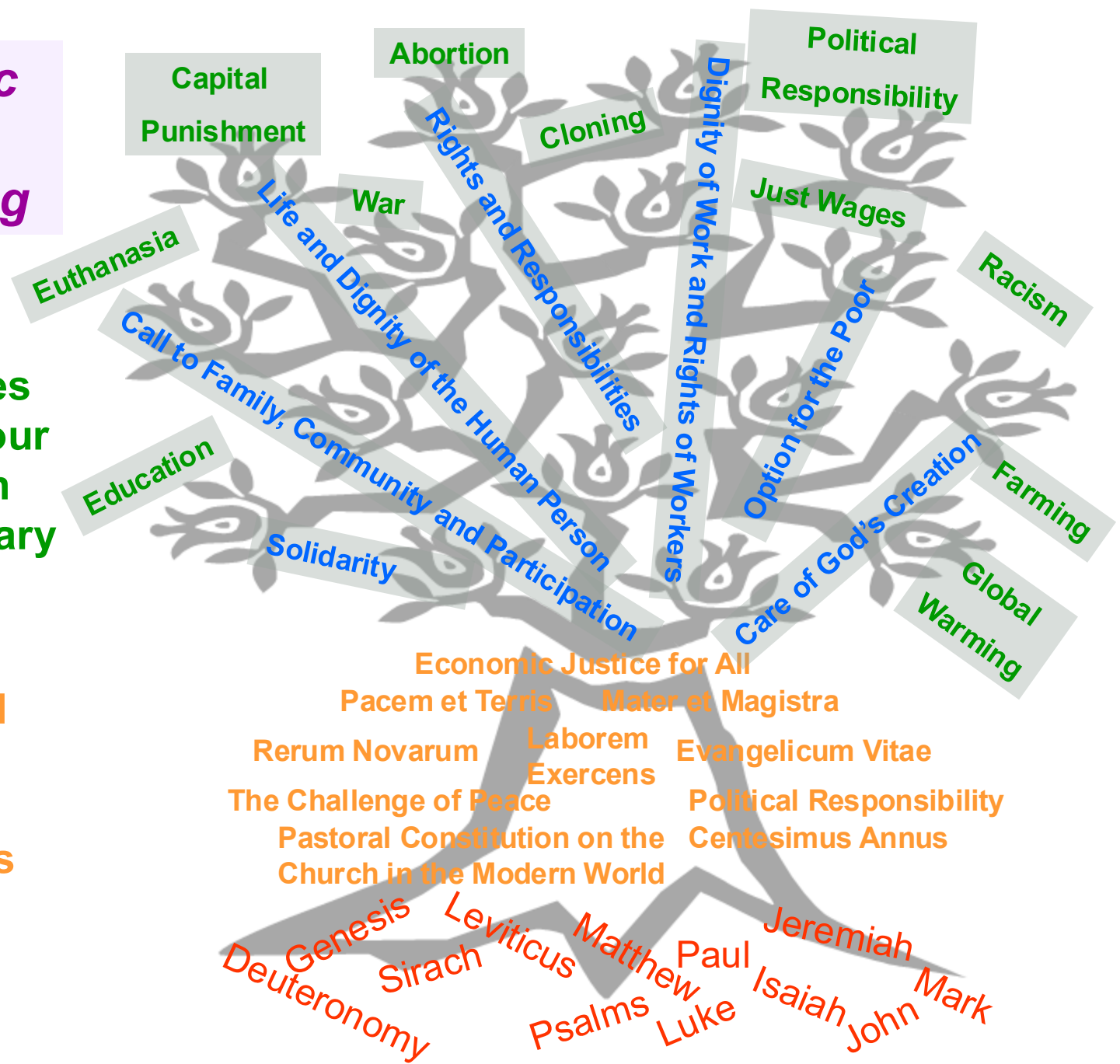


Catholic Social Teaching

7 Principles that Form our Action on Contemporary Issues

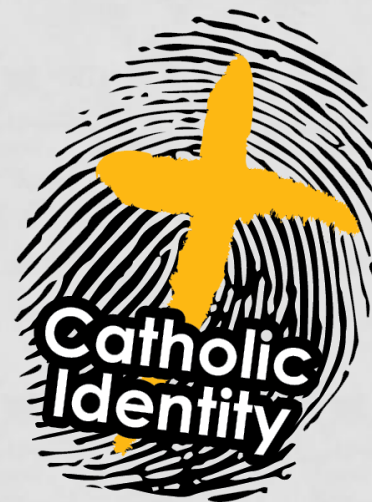
Expressed through Church Documents

Rooted in Scripture



A KEY TO CATHOLIC IDENTITY

- The social mission of the Church is “constitutive” to our identity as Catholic Christians. **“None of us can think we are exempt from concern for the poor and for social justice.”** (Pope Francis)
- One of the wonderful lessons of Catholic social teaching is the power of a few to be the leaven for many. **“Never underestimate the power of a few committed people to change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”** (Margaret Mead)





Be the change
you want
to see
in the world

-Mahatma Gandhi

ANY
QUESTIONS?



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Evening Prayer

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A KEY TO CATHOLIC IDENTITY

