

The above image recalls the story of Jesus feeding five thousand people with five loaves and two fish (Mk 6:45-52; Mt 14:13-21; Jn 6:15-21). It reminds us that when we place our lives and talents at the service of the Gospel, great things begin to happen!



## Catholic Social Teaching Key Principles

Solidarity  
Distribution

Peace  
Dignity of the Human Person  
Right to Private Property  
Dignity of the Worker

Universal Destination of Goods  
Common Good

Fundamental Option for the Poor  
Subsidiarity

Justice

Environmental Stewardship



## Contents

Introduction

Justice

Dignity of the Human Person

The Common Good

Solidarity

Subsidiarity

Fundamental Option for the Poor

The Dignity of the Worker

Peace

The Right to Private Property

The Universal Destination of Goods (Distribution)

Environmental Stewardship

References

## Introduction

### *The Deposit of the Faith*

Catholic Social Teaching belongs to the *deposit of the Catholic faith*. The *deposit* of the faith is contained in **Scripture** and **Tradition**.



**Scripture** is the word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit, set down in writing in the Bible.

**Tradition** is the preaching of the Gospel by the Apostles that continues in the preaching and teaching of their successors, the bishops. Tradition is a *living* body of doctrine guided by the Holy Spirit.

What's your favourite saying from Scripture (the Bible)?  
Can you name something Tradition (Church teaching) tells us?  
(e.g., about God in the Creed)?



### ***Catholic Social Teaching***

Jesus revealed to us the complete truth on how we are to live as God's children. Nothing can be added to his Gospel. But the Church, through its bishops (the successors to the Apostles) continues to preach and teach the Gospel in new situations, guided by the Holy Spirit. Again, this is what Catholics refer to as *Tradition*.



Within Tradition, there is a body of preaching and teaching by bishops on social issues. These writings are collectively known as the ***Social Doctrine of the***

***Catholic Church***, or ***Catholic Social Teaching***. Some of the issues addressed are *poverty, peace, environmental stewardship* and *resource distribution*.

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) contains the teaching and preaching of our bishops on social issues of our times. Through CST, the Church continues to instruct the faithful on how to respond to social issues in the way of the Gospel.

**What did Jesus say about how we must treat the sick and hungry?  
What does the Church say about how we should treat the poor?**

### ***History of CST***

Catholic Social Teaching began taking shape over the last 150 years. As new social issues arose, popes and bishops wrote letters instructing Christians on how to deal with these issues as followers of Jesus. Below is a quick list of recent Popes and their contributions to Catholic Social Teaching:

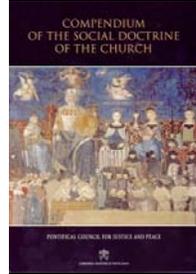
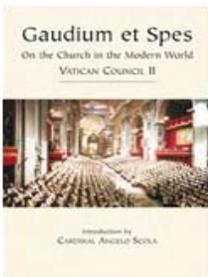
- Pope Pius IX (1846-1878): his circular (encyclical) letter, *Quanta Cura* condemned socialism, communism and Godless secular liberalism.
- Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903): he is considered the father of CST. His 1891 encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* addressed the rights and duties of employers and workers.
- Popes Pius XI, John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul II and Benedict XVI also wrote encyclical letters spelling out the Church's teaching on social issues.



### ***CST: Recent Examples***

The Church's social doctrine (CST) is a response to the needs of the times. Over the years, popes, bishops, synods and councils (gatherings of bishops) have produced documents of great importance to CST. Some examples are:

- Second Vatican Council's *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (***Gaudium et Spes***, 1965);
- Latin American Bishops' Conference's ***Medellin, Puebla*** and ***Santo Domingo*** documents (1968, 1978 and 1992);
- World Synod of Bishops' ***Justice in the World*** (1971).



The ***Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*** is perhaps the most important CST resource today. It was published by the Holy See in 2004, and contains an overview of the Catholic Church's teaching on social issues. The ***Compendium*** can be found on the Vatican's website at: [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va). Pope Benedict XVI's 2009 encyclical, ***Caritas in Veritate*** is the most recent major CST document to date.

### ***CST: Answering the Question, "Who is Jesus?"***

**What do you think was the most important social issue of the last century?  
What do you think the popes might have said about it?**

Here is an excerpt from the reflections of Latin America's Catholic Bishops, gathered with Pope John Paul II at Puebla, Mexico in 1979:

***The widespread situation of extreme poverty takes on very real faces in which we should recognize the features of the suffering Christ, the Lord...***  
(Puebla, 31):

***-faces of children, beaten by poverty from before birth, by the blockage of possibilities for self realization due to irreparable mental and bodily deficiencies; homeless and often exploited children of our cities: the fruit of poverty and family moral disintegration.*** (Puebla, 32)

***-the faces of youth, disoriented because they can't find their place in society; frustrated, above all in rural and marginal urban zones, by a lack of opportunities for training and work.*** (Puebla, 33)

## References

### **Councils (Vatican II)**

***Gaudium et Spes*** (*Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*)

### **Holy See Documents**

***Catechism of the Catholic Church***

***Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*** (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace)

### **Papal Encyclicals**

***Rerum Novarum*** (*On Capital and Labour*)

(Pope Leo XII, 1891)

***Quadragesimo Anno*** (*On Reconstruction of the Social Order*)

(Pope Pius XI, 1931)

***Mater et Magistra*** (*On Christianity and Social Progress*)

(Pope John XXIII, 1961)

***Pacem in Terris*** (*On Establishing Universal Peace in Truth, Justice, Charity and Liberty*)

(Pope John XXIII, 1963)

***Populorum Progressio*** (*On the Development of Peoples*)

(Pope Paul VI, 1967)

***Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*** (*On Concern for the Social Order*)

(Pope John Paul II, 1987)

***Centesimus Annus*** (*On the Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum*)

(Pope John Paul II, 1991)

***Caritas in Veritate*** (*Charity in Truth*)

(Pope Benedict XVI, 2009)

***Caritas in Veritate*** GUIDE for DISCUSSION and ACTION

(Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario, 2010)

### **Apostolic Letters**

***Octogesima Adveniens*** (*Apostolic Letter Call to Action/On the Eightieth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum*) (Pope Paul VI, 1971)

***Novo Millennio Ineunte*** (Pope John Paul II, 2001)

### **Apostolic Exhortations**

***Evangelii Nuntiandi*** (*On Evangelization in the Modern World*)

(Pope Paul VI, 1975)

### **Other Important Documents**

***Justitia in Mundo*** (*Justice in the World*)

World Synod of Bishops, 1971.

***Medellin Document*** (Second Gen. Conference of Latin American Bishops, 1968)

***Puebla Document*** (Third Gen. Conference of Latin American Bishops, 1979)

***Instruction on Certain Aspects of the "Theology of Liberation"***

(Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, 1984)

### **Links to Further Resources**

**Renfrew County CDSB Social Justice Page**

(Religious Education & Family Life Website)

<http://rccdsb.edu.on.ca/religiouseducation/about/social-justice/>

## Environmental Stewardship

*Responsible care for God's creation to sustain present and future generations everywhere.*

“The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.” (Gen 2: 15)

“The environment is God's gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole. ...In nature, the believer recognizes the wonderful result of God's creative activity, which we may use responsibly to satisfy our legitimate needs, material or otherwise, while respecting the intrinsic balance of creation. If this vision is lost, we end up either considering nature an untouchable taboo or, on the contrary, abusing it. Neither attitude is consonant with the Christian vision of nature as the fruit of God's creation.” (Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical *Charity in Truth (Caritas in Veritate)*, 2009. No. 48)

Man and woman were given “dominion” over creation (see Gen 1, 28) as an act of entrustment that it might provide for everyone. We are to use wisely the gifts of God's creation for the good of the earth's present and future generations of peoples.

### People Who Promote Environmental Stewardship YOU!

**A few words about how you are working to be a good steward of God's creation...**

**How can we make sure God's creation will provide food, air and shelter for people now and in the future?  
What's one small way you can help make this happen?**

*-faces of indigenous peoples and frequently African Americans, who living marginalized and in inhuman situations can be considered the poorest of the poor. (Puebla, 34)*

*-faces of farmers, who as a social group throughout our continent live at times deprived of land, in situations of domestic and foreign dependency, subjected to systems of commercialization which exploit them. (Puebla, 35)*

*-the faces of workers, frequently poorly compensated and faced with difficulties in organizing themselves and defending their rights. (Puebla, 36) †*



**Who represents the face of the poor and suffering Jesus for you?  
How do you think Catholic Social Teaching would tell us to answer their needs?**

### *CST: Speaking to our Times*

The principles of Catholic Social Teaching can help us respond to the justice and peace issues of our day. These principles guide us to make wise choices as followers of Jesus. They are a kind of remedy to the split between what we believe and the way we live.\* Like Jesus and the prophets who came before him, they remind us that we cannot practice piety without practicing justice toward our neighbour. As we reflect on these principles in the following pages, may all of us become better followers of Jesus and *doers* of his Gospel message.

**What do you think is the major justice issue in the world today?  
Which Gospel story do you think the Pope could use to preach about this issue?**



† Translated from Spanish, Anthony Cosentino.

\* The Second Vatican Council called this separation between what we believe and what we live “one of the grave errors of our times.” (*Church in the Modern World [Gaudium et Spes]* No. 43).

## Justice

### Living in *right relationship* with God and neighbour.

“What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6: 8)

“Love for others, and especially for the poor, is made concrete by promoting justice.” (Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus* [On the Hundredth Anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*] Encyclical, 1991).

Each of us is made in the image and likeness of God. Justice requires that we give:

- Worship to God, who made us
- Mercy and fairness to our neighbour, who is made in God’s image

### People Who Promote Justice

Linda Gibbons



Linda Gibbons is a grandmother who has been fighting for protection of unborn persons in Canada for over eighteen years. She has been arrested many times and has spent a total of more than 8 years in jail for peacefully demonstrating and counseling in front of abortion clinics. She fasts and prays before her court appearances and remains silent before the judge, in solidarity with the unborn, who cannot speak for themselves. In October 2012, Mrs. Gibbons received the Governor General of Canada’s Diamond Jubilee Medal from MP

Maurice Vellacott in recognition of her “contribution to Canada.”

How do we promote *right relationship* with God and neighbour in our Catholic schools?

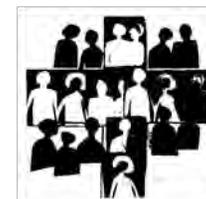
## Universal Destination of Goods (Distribution)

### *The goods of the earth were made by God to be shared by everyone.*

“Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.” (Gen 1:28)

“God gave the earth to the whole human race for the sustenance of all its members, without excluding or favouring anyone. This is the foundation of the universal destination of the earth's goods.”

Pope John Paul II, Encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, (*On the Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum*), 1991. No.30.



### People Who Promote the Universal Destination of Goods

Carl Hétu, Canadian National Director, Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA)



Mr. Carl Hétu has dedicated his life and work to education and action around justice and peace issues. He is National Director of the CNEWA Canada, which provides humanitarian assistance and supports pastoral missions throughout the Middle East, Northeast Africa, India and Eastern Europe on behalf of the Holy See. Mr. Hétu travels widely, encouraging people in Catholic

communities to help the CNEWA reach out to our suffering Christian brothers and sisters in these countries. Over the years, he has been a tireless advocate of Catholic Social Teaching, especially in the areas of fair labour practices, refugee rights and just resource distribution.  
<http://www.cnewa.ca/>

What would the world be like if everyone shared their food and resources as God asks? How can we make this happen?

## The Right to Private Property

*Freedom to invest wages in land and possessions.*

“You shall not steal.” (Exodus 20: 15)

“The results of labour should belong to those who bestowed their labour.”

(Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. 1891. No. 10)

All persons have a right to own what they need, to support:

- their work
- their family
- the common good (everyone’s right to a truly human life)

**Without the right to own private property, we are slaves.**

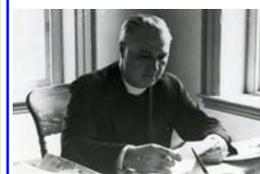
The right to private property is always tied to:

- stewardship (responsible care for God’s gifts)
- justice (living in *right relationship* with God and neighbour)
- the common good (everyone’s right to a truly human life)
- the universal destination of goods (God made the earth’s goods for all)

“Nature... has given [humankind] the right of private ownership not only that individuals may be able to provide for themselves and their families but also that the goods which the Creator destined for the entire family of mankind may through this institution truly serve this purpose. ...to eliminate or restrict private ownership in favour of a welfare state limits human initiative, and is contrary to the right to own private property.” Pope Pius XI, Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno (On Reconstruction of the Social Order)*, 1931. No. 45.

### People Who Promote the Right to Private Property

Fr. Moses Coady (1882 – 1959)



Fr. Moses Coady worked with Fr. Jimmy Tomkins, Fr. Hugh MacPherson and Mr. A.B. MacDonald to establish the Antigonish Movement in rural Nova Scotia in the 1930s. The Antigonish Movement blended adult education, co-operatives, microfinance and rural community development to help small, resource-based communities

around Canada’s Maritimes improve their economic and social circumstances. In this way, the Antigonish Movement promoted the right to private property in its proper context: to support individual and family livelihood, and to support the common good. See— <http://coadyextension.stfx.ca/>

**How do we promote stewardship of private property that is just, and serves the common good?**

## Dignity of the Human Person

*The supreme and sacred dignity of all human persons – from conception until natural death – as image and likeness of God.*

“You have made [us] little less than the angels.” (Psalm 8, 5)

The good of the human person is the ultimate purpose of society. (CCC 1929)

- **Man and Woman: Created in God’s Image and Likeness (Gen 1: 26-27)**
  - the human person is the clearest reflection of what God is like.
  - we have the power to know and choose what is true, good/right, beautiful. (intellect, conscience, will)
- **Man and Woman: Masterpieces of God’s Creation (Gen 1: 31)**
  - God calls creation “very good,” after creating man and woman.
- **Man and Woman: Sacred Bearers of God’s Life (Gen 2:7)**
  - God breathed divine life into Adam, who symbolizes all people.
- **Man and Woman: Glorified by God Becoming Human (John 1, 14)**
  - Jesus, God the Son, glorified our humanity by becoming human.
- **Man and Woman: Sharers in Jesus’ Resurrection**
  - Jesus rose from the dead; we look to share in his resurrected glory!

The dignity of the human person – from conception until natural death – must be defended at all times.

### People Who Promote the Dignity of the Human Person

Jean Vanier



Jean Vanier founded a worldwide network of L’Arche communities, where people with and without disabilities share a common life. Vanier maintains that disabled persons are a gift to help others discover their need for healing in their own brokenness. There are over 130 L’Arche communities in more than 30 countries.

**How do we uphold the dignity of persons who are poor, sick, outcast, strangers, disabled or unborn in our Catholic schools?**

## The Common Good

*Everyone's right to what is necessary for a truly human life.*

“Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly ...” (Is 58: 6-8a)

The Common Good is based on respect for all human persons. It requires...

- social well-being for all members of a group of people
- peace, justice and moral order (See CCC 1907-1909)

The common good is about *rights and freedoms for everyone*. It includes...

- food
- shelter
- education
- work
- respect
- clothing
- protection of privacy
- a good reputation
- appropriate information
- to make good decisions
- the right to act in good conscience
- freedom to choose a way of life
- freedom to start a family
- freedom to practice religion

### People Who Promote the Common Good

Dr. Christine Gervais



Dr. Christine Gervais saw that people in Latin America and the Caribbean did not have the same educational opportunities she did in Canada. In 1996, she founded Acceso International to provide educational opportunities for socio-economically disadvantaged children, youth and women in Latin America, the Caribbean and in Canada.

[www.accesointernational.ca/](http://www.accesointernational.ca/)

Can you name some *rights and freedoms* that you enjoy as part of the common good?

How do we help others have these same rights and freedoms?

## Peace

*The tranquility of order, the work of justice the effect of charity.*

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God. (Mt 5: 12)

Peace is not merely the absence of war, and it is not limited to maintaining a balance of powers between adversaries. Peace cannot be attained on earth without safeguarding the goods of persons, free communication among [persons], respect for the dignity of persons and peoples, and the assiduous practice of fraternity. Peace is “the tranquility of order.” Peace is the work of justice and the effect of charity.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 2304)

Peace is mainly about respectful, loving relationships. This is why it is closely related to justice (right relationship) and charity (love).

### People Who Promote Peace

Fr. Bob Holmes, csb



Fr. Bob Holmes is a Basilian Priest and teacher. As a Detroit high school teacher in the 1970s, he saw how his first world privileges worked against justice and peace in Detroit's African American community. He decided to do something about it, and began to promote justice and peace.

Fr. Holmes has since worked with Christian Peacemaker Teams to promote peace by nonviolently protesting unjust treatment of townspeople in Mexico, Central America and the Middle East, and of detainees in American-run prisons in Iraq. Fr. Holmes and his companions have risked their lives repeatedly by living with unjustly harassed families and protesting on their behalf. He has worked to build peace with nonviolence, one changed heart and community at a time.

Can you name someone who brings peace to your life?  
How can we be like them for others?

## Dignity of the Worker

### *Sharers in God's creative plan for the world.*

"Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest..."

(Exodus 23: 12a)

Work has **two closely connected purposes**:

- to serve the good of the working person—made in God's image and likeness
- to serve the common good.

**Work is a vocation** to holiness, a share in God's creative plan for the world.

In the Bible, God is portrayed working six days to bring creation into existence. Work is holy. Some important points about work:

- meaningful work is a **God-given human right**
- the person who works has a **right to a just wage**
- the **value of a person who works is always greater than the goods they make** (this is called the *priority of labour over capital*)
- **workers must have a say** in their working conditions
- workers are **free to form unions**

### People Who Promote the Dignity of the Worker

Alfred Charpentier



Alfred Charpentier was born in Montreal in 1888. He started bricklaying in 1905 at the age of seventeen. Back then, workers laboured long hours, often in dangerous conditions for low wages. In 1911 Charpentier became President of the International Union of Bricklayers. In 1916, he helped develop the Catholic union movement begun by Fathers Joseph-Papin Archambault and Maxime Fortin. They were organizing unions using the principles set out in Pope Leo XII's famous encyclical letter, *Rerum Novarum*. In 1921 Charpentier helped found the *Confédération des travailleurs catholiques du*

*Canada* (CTCC) [Canadian Confederation of Catholic Workers]. The CTCC grew to have 80 Catholic unions, and eventually became the Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN) (Confederation of National Trade Unions), now the second largest trade union federation in Quebec by membership. From 1935-46 Charpentier served as CTCC President. He published his memoirs *Cinquante ans d'action ouvrière* (Fifty Years of Worker Action) in 1971 and died at Montreal on Nov. 13, 1982. He is described as a "tireless advocate of Catholic social thought [who] fought for improvements to Québec's antiquated labour legislation and for the creation of a Conseil supérieur du travail (Provincial Labour Board) and a system of courts to resolve labour disputes." MD Behiels, Charpentier, Alfred. [www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/alfred-charpentier](http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/articles/alfred-charpentier)

Can you name someone whose work makes your life better?  
How should all workers (paid and unpaid at home) be treated? Why?

## Solidarity

### *Commitment to the good of my neighbour.*

"Just as you did it to the least of these, you did it to me. (Mt 25:40)

Solidarity is the virtue of *serving the common good through commitment to the good of one's neighbour*. (See *Compendium of Social Doctrine* 193)

Solidarity promotes

- the universal destination of goods
- the dignity of all persons
- just social structures
- peace and global justice

Some examples of Solidarity

- commitment to student safety in schools and an end to bullying
- reaching out to a friend who is sick or suffering
- speaking up for unborn persons (e.g., March for Life)
- working for better treatment of persons who are poor, sick, homeless, unemployed, poorly paid, refugees

### People Who Promote Solidarity

Ryan Hreljac



Ryan Hreljac was a grade one student who decided to do something for people in Uganda who had no clean water. He began to raise money to pay for wells in their villages. The Ryan's Well Foundation has now provided over 700 wells to people in Africa.

[www.ryanswell.ca/](http://www.ryanswell.ca/)

How do people in your Catholic school practice solidarity with poor and vulnerable people?

## Subsidiarity

*Freedom and duty to make responsible decisions at the lowest appropriate level.*

Subsidiarity is about individuals and groups making their own proper decisions. They must be free (and committed) to use their gifts and talents for the common good. This is especially true when there is unnecessary interference from higher governing bodies (e.g., centralized communist control, fascist or dictatorial government).

“From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded.” (Lk 12: 48)

“A community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in case of need and help to coordinate its activity with the activities of the rest of society, always with a view to the common good.” (John Paul II, *Centessimus Annus [On the One Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum]*, 1991. No. 48 [Cf. Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*, 1931. No. 25-28]).

"It is clearly the position of the Church that peoples have a right in public life to participate in decisions affecting their lives: "Participation constitutes a right which is to be applied both in the economic and in the social and political fields" (*Iustitia in Mundo*, 1; cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 75). This is true for everyone. It has particular applications for you as native peoples, in your strivings to take your rightful place among the peoples of the earth, with a just and equitable degree of self-governing. " (Pope John Paul II, *Meeting with Native Peoples. Fort Simpson, NWT*. September 18, 1984)

### People Who Promote Subsidiarity



Elijah Harper is a former Chief of the Red Sucker Lake First Nation in Manitoba. He was also an elected Member of Manitoba's Legislative Assembly. He voted against a change to Canada's constitution called the "Meech Lake Accord, because he felt it was written without adequate input from Canada's First Nations peoples. Mr. Harper has received many awards for his work on behalf of indigenous peoples in Canada and throughout the world.

**What kinds of decision-making responsibilities do you or your parents have? How would life be if someone unjustly took them away?**

## Preferential Option for the Poor

*Putting the needs of the poor first.*

“Give liberally and be ungrudging when you do so, for on this account the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, "Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbour in your land." (Deuteronomy 15: 10-11)

“... there is a special presence of Christ in the poor, and this requires the Church to make a preferential option for them.” (John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, No. 49)

God has a special (preferential) love for the poor. A just society looks after their poor.

### People Who Promote the Preferential Option for the Poor

Dr. Andrew Simone and Mrs. Joan Simone



In the early 1980s, the Dr. Andrew Simone and Mrs. Joan Simone gave away most of their money and possessions and put their lives at the service of the poor. With Mother Teresa's encouragement, they started the Canadian Food for Children charity in 1985. Each year, their organization ships millions of kilograms of food and clothing

to poor people in developing countries. In 2001, the Simones received the Order of Canada for their charitable work. They are assisted by thousands of volunteers and donors across Canada. See [www.overloadedstress.com/ccfc.html](http://www.overloadedstress.com/ccfc.html) and <http://betc.webplus.net/story1.html>



**What are some of the things we do to express our preferential option for the poor in our Catholic schools?**