

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

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* [On Capital and Labour], 1891. No. 10)

There is a "twofold character of ownership" which is "individual or social according as it regards either separate persons or the common good." (See Pope Pius XI, Encyclical *On Reconstruction of the Social Order* [Quadragesimo Anno], 1931. No. 45)

All persons have a right to own what is necessary to support their livelihood (work), family and the common good. Without the right to own private property, we are slaves. The right to private property is always tied to: stewardship, justice, the common good, the universal destination of goods

Universal Destination of Goods (Distribution)

The goods of the earth were made by God for all to share.

“Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” (Mt 25: 40)

“God gave the earth to the whole human race for the sustenance of all its members, without excluding or favoring anyone.” This is referred to as the ‘universal destination of created goods’” (Pope John Paul II, Encyclical *On the Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum* [Centesimus Annus], 30-31; citing Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*. No. 22)

God gave us the goods of the earth to be shared among all peoples. Creation’s bounty was fashioned and entrusted by God to the human family to provide for all its members, in keeping with their human dignity and the common good.

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 all the earth’s present and future generations of peoples.

Catholic Social Teaching - Key Principles



Justice

Living in right relationship with God and neighbour.

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.

The Common Good

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

Solidarity

Commitment to the good of my neighbour.

Subsidiarity

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

Preferential Option for the Poor

Putting the needs of the poor first.

Dignity of the Worker

Sharers in God’s creative plan for the world.

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“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. No. 58).

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.

Dignity of the Human Person

The supreme and sacred dignity of all human persons – from conception until natural death – made in the 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, No. 1929)

The sacred dignity of every human person – sinner, saint, sick, healthy, weak or strong – can never be taken away. We are duty-bound as individuals and societies to defend this dignity at all times.

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, and requires...

- social well-being of the group
- peace, justice and moral order (See CCC 1907-1909)

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

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

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 the Social Doctrine of the Church*, No. 193)

Some examples...

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| - commitment to safe schools, ending bullying | - speaking up for unborn persons (e.g., March for Life) |
| - reaching out to a sick or suffering friend | - working for better treatment of persons who are poor, sick, homeless, unemployed, poorly paid, refugees |
| - collections for food banks, snowsuit funds | |

Subsidiarity

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

“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...” (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]).

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).

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)

“Yet, as the unequivocal words of the Gospel remind us, 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, Apostolic Letter, *Novo Millennio Ineunte [At the Close of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000]*, 2000. No. 49)

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

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)

“Christians should rather rejoice that they can follow the example of Christ, who worked as an artisan. In the exercise of all their earthly activities, they can thereby gather their humane, domestic, professional, social, and technical enterprises into one vital synthesis with religious values, under whose supreme direction all things are harmonized unto God's glory.” (Second Vatican Council, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World [Gaudium et Spes]*, No. 34)

Work is a call to holiness by sharing in God’s creative plan for the world. 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.

Some important points about work:

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| - meaningful work is a God-given human right | - workers must have a say in their working conditions |
| - the person who works has a right to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">+ a just wage+ a just return for goods they produce or sell. | - workers must be free to assemble and form unions |
| | - the value of a person who works is always greater than the value of goods they produce (<i>priority of labour over capital</i>) |