

The Seven Principles of Catholic Social Teaching

Jesus openly embraced those whom others shunned. He looked into the eyes of the afflicted and poor with compassion and love. Jesus calls us to do the same. He calls us to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, and welcome the stranger. The Catholic Church identifies seven key principles of Catholic Social Teaching that stand today as a guide for furthering the education and understanding of what our response should be to the needs of those in our midst.

Life and Dignity of the Human Person

All people are sacred, made in the image and likeness of God. People do not lose dignity because of disability, poverty, age, lack of success, or race. This emphasizes people over things, being over having.

Call to Family, Community, and Participation

The human person is both sacred and social. We realize our dignity and rights in relationship with others, in community. “We are one body; when one suffers, we all suffer.” We are called to respect all of God’s gifts of creation, to be good stewards of the earth and each other.

Rights and Responsibilities

People have a fundamental right to life, food, shelter, health care, education, and employment. All people have a right to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities to respect the rights of others in the wider society and to work for the common good.

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

The moral test of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable members. The poor have the most urgent moral claim on the conscience of the nation. We are called to look at public policy decisions in terms of how they affect the poor.

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

People have a right to decent and productive work, fair wages, private property, and economic initiative. The economy exists to serve people, not the other way around.

Solidarity

We are one human family. Our responsibilities to each other cross national, racial, economic, and ideological differences. We are called to work globally for justice.

Care for God’s Creation

The goods of the earth are gifts from God. We have a responsibility to care for these goods as stewards and trustees, not as mere consumers and users.

*“Our faith teaches us that poor people are not issues or problems
but sisters and brothers in God’s one human family.”*

USCCB (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)

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