

Week 6: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

iVoteCatholic: During this sixth week, we focus on Rights and Responsibilities. Human beings, created in the image and likeness of God, have basic rights which protect our dignity and ensure all can live a full human life. Because these rights are universal, we have the responsibility to help maintain and protect these rights, not just for ourselves, but for all. Under this principle fall issues such as access to quality education, healthy food, healthcare, safe and affordable housing, and nonviolent neighborhoods. With rights come responsibilities to others, to our families and to the common good of all.



iVoteCatholic
Rights & Responsibilities

The Catholic tradition teaches that human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities met. Therefore every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities – to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.

Find out more about this focus of **SOLIDARITY** by checking these sections.



Forming Consciences for
Faithful Citizenship

FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP quotes on RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES



CHURCH TEACHING QUOTES:



SCRIPTURAL FOUNDATIONS:



CONVERSATION STARTERS:



FAMILY ACTIVITY:



RELATED SOCIAL ISSUES:



CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH



RESOURCES FROM CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES AND USCCB

The right to life is the first and most fundamental principle of human rights and leads Catholics to actively work for a world of greater respect for human life and greater commitment to justice and peace.



To read the full text of Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, go to <https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/upload/forming-consciences-for-faithful-citizenship.pdf>

excerpts on **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

84. Promoting moral responsibility and effective responses to violent crime, curbing violence in media, supporting reasonable restrictions on access to assault weapons and handguns, and opposing the use of the death penalty are particularly important in light of a growing “culture of violence.” An ethic of responsibility, rehabilitation, and restoration should be a foundation for the reform of our broken criminal justice system. A humane and remedial rather than a strictly punitive approach to offenders should be developed. Such an approach includes supporting efforts that justly reduce the prison population, help people leaving prison to reintegrate into their communities, combat recidivism, promote just sentencing reform, and strengthen relationships between the police and the communities they serve. Combatting Unjust Discrimination

85. It is important for our society to continue to combat any unjust discrimination, whether based on race, religion, sex, ethnicity, disabling condition, or age, as these are grave injustices and affronts to human dignity. Where the effects of past discrimination persist, society has the obligation to take positive steps to overcome the legacy of injustice, including vigorous action to remove barriers to education, protect voting rights, support good policing in our communities, and ensure equal employment for women and minorities.



CHURCH TEACHING QUOTES:

Every basic human right draws its authoritative force from the natural law, which confers it and attaches to it its respective duty. Hence, to claim one’s right and ignore one’s duties, or only half fulfill them, is like building a house with one hand and tearing it down with another. *St. John XXIII, Pacem in Terris, no. 30*

“In human society one man’s natural right gives rise to a corresponding duty in other men; the duty, that is, of recognizing and respecting that right. Every basic human right draws its authoritative force from the natural law, which confers it and attaches to it its respective duty. Hence, to claim one’s right and ignore one’s duties, or only half fulfill them, is like building a house with one hand and tearing it down with another.” Pope St. John XXIII, **Peace on Earth (Pacem in Terris)**, 30.

“The link consists in this: individual rights, when detached from a framework of duties which grants them their full meaning, can run wild, leading to an escalation of demands which is effectively unlimited and indiscriminate.” -Pope Benedict XVI, **Charity in Truth (Caritas in Veritate)**, 43

Rights must be religiously respected wherever they exist, and it is the duty of the public authority to prevent and to punish injury, and to protect every one in the possession of his own. Still, when there is question of defending the rights of individuals, the poor and badly off have a claim to especial consideration. The richer class have many ways of shielding themselves, and stand less in need of help from the State; whereas the mass of the poor have no resources of their own to fall back upon, and must chiefly depend upon the assistance of the State. **Rerum Novarum (“On the Condition of Labor and the Working Classes”), Pope Leo XIII, 1891 #37.**

Of these duties, the following bind the proletarian and the worker: fully and faithfully to perform the work which has been freely and equitably agreed upon; never to injure the property, nor to outrage the person, of an employer; never to resort to violence in defending their own cause, nor to engage in riot or disorder; and to have nothing to do with men of evil principles...The following duties bind the wealthy owner and the employer: not to look upon their work people as their bondsmen, but to respect in every man his dignity as a person ennobled by Christian character. **Rerum Novarum (“On the Condition of Labor and the Working Classes”), Pope Leo XIII, 1891 #20.**

But, if Christian precepts prevail, the respective classes will not only be united in the bonds of friendship, but also in those of brotherly love. For they will understand and feel that all men are children of the same common Father, who is God...that the blessings of nature and the gifts of grace belong to the whole human race in common...Such is the scheme of duties and of rights which is shown forth to the world by the Gospel. Would it not seem that, were society penetrated with ideas like these, strife must quickly cease? **Rerum Novarum (“On the Condition of Labor and the Working Classes”), Pope Leo XIII, 1891 #25**

Rights must be religiously respected wherever they exist, and it is the duty of the public authority to prevent and to punish injury, and to protect every one in the possession of his own. Still, when there is question of defending the rights of individuals, the poor and badly off have a claim to especial consideration. The richer class have many ways of shielding themselves, and stand less in need of help from the State; whereas the mass of the poor have no resources of their own to fall back upon, and must chiefly depend upon the assistance of the State. **Rerum Novarum (“On the Condition of Labor and the Working Classes”), Pope Leo XIII, 1891 #37.**

But however extensive and far-reaching the influence of the State on the economy may be, it must never be exerted to the extent of depriving the individual citizen of his freedom of action. It must rather augment his freedom while effectively guaranteeing the protection of his essential personal rights. Among these is a man’s right and duty to be primarily responsible for his own upkeep and that of his family. Hence every economic system must permit and facilitate the free development of productive activity. **Mater et Magistra (“Mother and Teacher”), Pope John XXIII, 1961 #55.**

If [the economic and social growth of less developed nations] can be achieved, then a precious contribution will have been made to the formation of a world community, in which each individual nation, conscious of its rights and duties, can work on terms of equality with the rest for the attainment of universal prosperity. **Mater et Magistra (“Mother and Teacher”), Pope John XXIII, 1961 #174.**

Any human society, if it is to be well-ordered and productive, must lay down as a foundation this principle, namely, that every human being is a person, that is, human nature is endowed with intelligence and free will. Indeed, precisely because one is a person one has rights and obligations flowing directly and simultaneously from one’s very nature. And as these rights and obligations are universal and inviolable, so they cannot in any way be surrendered. **Pacem in Terris (“Peace on Earth”), Pope John XXIII, 1963 #9.**

Beginning our discussion of the rights of the human person, we see that everyone 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. Therefore a human being also has the right to security in cases of sickness, inability to work, widowhood, old age, unemployment, or in any other case in which one is deprived of the means of subsistence through no fault of one’s own. **Pacem in Terris (“Peace on Earth”), Pope John XXIII, 1963 #11.**

A well-ordered human society requires that men recognize and observe their mutual rights and duties. It also demands that each contribute generously to the establishment of a civic order in which rights and duties are more sincerely and effectively acknowledged and fulfilled. It is not enough, for example, to acknowledge and respect every man’s right to the means of subsistence if we do not strive to the best of our ability for a sufficient supply of what is necessary for his sustenance. **Pacem in Terris (“Peace on Earth”), Pope John XXIII, 1963 #28-32.**

It is agreed that in our time the common good is chiefly guaranteed when personal rights and duties are maintained. The chief concern of civil authorities must therefore be to ensure that these rights are acknowledged, respected, coordinated with other rights, defended and promoted, so that in this way everyone may more easily carry out their duties. **Pacem in Terris (“Peace on Earth”), Pope John XXIII, 1963 #60.**

There is a growing awareness of the sublime dignity of human persons, who stand above all things and whose rights and duties are universal and inviolable. They ought, therefore, to have ready access to all that is necessary for living a genuinely human life: for example, food, clothing, housing, the right freely to choose their state of life and set up a family, the right to education, work, to their good name, to respect, to proper knowledge, the right to act according to the dictates of conscience and to safeguard their privacy, and rightful freedom, including freedom of religion. **Gaudium et Spes (“The Church in the Modern World”), Vatican II, 1965 #26.**

Freedom from misery, the greater assurance of finding subsistence, health and fixed employment; an increased share of responsibility without oppression of any kind and in security from situations that do violence to their dignity as men; better education—in brief, to seek to do more, know more and have more in order to be more: that is what men aspire to now when a greater number of them are condemned to live in conditions that make this lawful desire illusory. **Populorum Progressio (“On the Development of Peoples”), Pope Paul VI, 1967 #6.**

[T]he Bible, from the first page on, teaches us that the whole of creation is for man, that it is his responsibility to develop it by intelligent effort and by means of his labor to perfect it, so to speak, for his use. If the world is made to furnish each individual with the means of livelihood and the instruments for his growth and progress, each man has therefore the right to find in the world what is necessary for himself...All other rights whatsoever, including those of property and of free commerce, are to be subordinated to [the principle of the common good]. They should not hinder but on the contrary favor its application. It is a grave and urgent social duty to redirect them to their primary finality. **Populorum Progressio (“On the Development of Peoples”), Pope Paul VI, 1967 #22.**

World unity, ever more effective, should allow all peoples to become the artisans of their destiny. The past has too often been characterized by relationships of violence between nations; may the day dawn when international relations will be marked with the stamp of mutual respect and friendship, of interdependence in collaboration, the betterment of all seen as the responsibility of each individual. The younger or weaker nations ask to assume their active part in the construction of a better world, one which shows deeper respect for the rights and the vocation of the individual. **Populorum Progressio (“On the Development of Peoples”), Pope Paul VI, 1967 #65**

In teaching us charity, the Gospel instructs us in the preferential respect due the poor and the special situation they have in society: the more fortunate should renounce some of their rights so as to place their goods more generously at the service of others. **Octogesima Adveniens (“A Call to Action”), Pope Paul VI, 1971, #23.**

Unless combated and overcome by social and political action, the influence of the new industrial and technological order favors the concentration of wealth, power and decision-making in the hands of a small public or private controlling group. Economic injustice and lack of social participation keep people from attaining their basic human and civil rights. **Justitia in Mundo (“Justice in the World”), World Synod of Catholic Bishops, 1971 #9**

The Church has received from Christ the mission of preaching the Gospel message, which contains a call to people to turn away from sin to the love of the Father, universal kinship and a consequent demand for justice in the world. This is the reason why the Church has the right, indeed the duty, to proclaim justice on the social, national and international level, and to denounce instances of injustice, when the fundamental rights of people and their very salvation demand it. The Church, indeed, is not alone responsible for justice in the world; however, she has a proper and specific responsibility which is identified with her mission of giving witness before the world of the need for love and justice contained in the Gospel message. **Justitia in Mundo (“Justice in the World”), World Synod of Catholic Bishops, 1971 #36.**

The members of the Church, as members of society, have the same right and duty to promote the common good as do other citizens. Christians ought to fulfil their temporal obligations with fidelity and competence. They should act as a leaven in the world, in their family, professional, social, cultural and political life. They must accept their responsibilities in this entire area under the influence of the Gospel and the teaching of the Church. **Justicia in Mundo (“Justice in the World”), World Synod of Catholic Bishops, 1971 #38.**

When man works, using all the means of production, he also wishes the fruit of this work to be used by himself and others, and he wishes to be able to take part in the very work process as a sharer in responsibility and creativity at the workbench to which he applies himself. From this spring certain specific rights of workers, corresponding to the obligation of work...the person who works desires not only due remuneration for his work; he also wishes that within the production process provision be made for him to be able to know that in his work, even on something that is owned in common, he is working “for himself.” **Laborem Exercens (“On Human Work,” Donders translation), Pope John Paul II, 1981 #15.**

While work, in all its many senses, is an obligation, that is to say a duty, it is also a source of rights on the part of the worker...Besides wages, various social benefits intended to ensure the life and health of workers and their families play a part here. The expenses involved in health care, especially in the case of accidents at work, demand that medical assistance should be easily available for workers and that as far as possible it should be cheap or even free of charge. Another sector regarding benefits is the sector associated with the right to rest...A third sector concerns the right to a pension and to insurance for old age and in case of accidents at work. **Laborem Exercens (“On Human Work,” Donders translation), Pope John Paul II, 1981 #16 & 19.**

It is particularly painful when [unemployment] especially affects young people, who after appropriate cultural, technical and professional preparation fail to find work and see their sincere wish to work and their readiness to take on their own responsibility for the economic and social development of the community sadly frustrated. The obligation to provide unemployment benefits, that is to say, the duty to make suitable grants indispensable for the subsistence of unemployed workers and their families, is a duty springing from the fundamental principle of the moral order in this sphere, namely the principle of the common use of goods or, to put it in another and still simpler way, the right to life and subsistence. **Laborem Exercens (“On Human Work,” Donders translation), Pope John Paul II, 1981 #18.**

The fundamental premise of world order in Catholic teaching is a theological truth: the unity of the human family-rooted in common creation, destined for the kingdom, and united by moral bonds of rights and duties. This basic truth about the unity of the human family pervades the entire teaching on war and peace: for the pacifist position it is one of the reasons why life cannot be taken, while for the just-war position, even in a justified conflict bonds of responsibility remain in spite of the conflict. **The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise and Our Response, U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1983 #236.**

We are living in a global age with problems and conflicts on a global scale. Either we shall learn to resolve these problems together, or we shall destroy one another. Mutual security and survival require a new vision of the world as one interdependent planet. We have rights and duties not only within our diverse national communities but within the larger world community. **The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise and Our Response, U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1983 #244.**

Human rights are the minimum conditions for life in community. In Catholic teaching, human rights include not only civil and political rights but also economic rights...This means that when people are without a chance to earn a living, and must go hungry and homeless, they are being denied basic rights. Society must ensure that these rights are protected. **Economic Justice for All, U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1986 #17.**

...internationally accepted human rights standards are strongly supported by Catholic teaching. These rights include the civil and political rights to freedom of speech, worship, and assembly. A number of human rights also concern human welfare and are of a specifically economic nature. First among these are the rights to life, food, clothing, shelter, rest, medical care, and basic education. These are indispensable to the protection of human dignity...All persons have a right to security in the event of sickness, unemployment, and old age...the right to healthful working conditions, to wages, and other benefits sufficient to provide individuals and their families with a standard of living in keeping with human dignity, and to the possibility of property ownership. **Economic Justice for All U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1986 #80.**

[Human rights] are all essential to human dignity and to the integral development of both individuals and society, and are thus moral issues. Any denial of these rights harms persons and wounds the human community. Their serious and sustained denial violates individuals and destroys solidarity among persons. **Economic Justice for All, U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1986 #80.**

We should add here that in today's world there are many other forms of poverty. For are there not certain privations or deprivations which deserve this name? The denial or the limitation of human rights as for example the right to religious freedom, the right to share in the building of society, the freedom to organize and to form unions, or to take initiatives in economic matters—do these not impoverish the human person as much as, if not more than, the deprivation of material goods? And is development which does not take into account the full affirmation of these rights really development on the human level? **Solicitudo Rei Socialis (“On Social Concern”, Donders translation), Pope John Paul II, 1987 #15.**

The exercise of solidarity within each society is valid when its members recognize one another as persons. Those who are more influential, because they have a greater share of goods and common services, should feel responsible for the weaker and be ready to share with them all they possess. Those who are weaker, for their part, in the same spirit of solidarity, should not adopt a purely passive attitude or one that is destructive of the social fabric, but, while claiming their legitimate rights, should do what they can for the good of all. **Solicitudo Rei Socialis (“On Social Concern”, Donders translation), Pope John Paul II, 1987 #39.**

Development which is merely economic is incapable of setting man free; on the contrary, it will end by enslaving him further. Development that does not include the cultural, transcendent and religious dimensions of man and society, to the extent that it does not recognize the existence of such dimensions and does not endeavor to direct its goals and priorities towards the same, is even less conducive to authentic liberation. Human beings are totally free only when they are completely themselves, in the fullness of their rights and duties. The same can be said about society as a whole. **Solicitudo Rei Socialis (“On Social Concern”, Donders translation), Pope John Paul II, 1987 #46.**

The obligation to earn one's bread presumes the right to do so. A society that denies this right cannot be justified, nor can it attain social peace. **Centesimus Annus ("The Hundredth Year," Donders translation), John Paul II, 1991 #43.**

Our tradition insists that every person has both rights and responsibilities...Crime and corrections are at the intersection of rights and responsibilities. Those who commit crimes violate the rights of others and disregard their responsibilities. But the test for the rest of us is whether we will exercise our responsibility to hold the offender accountable without violating his or her basic rights. Even offenders should be treated with respect for their rights. **Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), 2000 "Human Rights and Responsibilities."**

On the one hand, charity demands justice: recognition and respect for the legitimate rights of individuals and peoples. It strives to build the earthly city according to law and justice. On the other hand, charity transcends justice and completes it in the logic of giving and forgiving. The earthly city is promoted not merely by relationships of rights and duties, but to an even greater and more fundamental extent by relationships of gratuitousness, mercy and communion. Charity always manifests God's love in human relationships as well, it gives theological and salvific value to all commitment for justice in the world. **Caritas in Veritate ("In Charity and Truth"), Pope Benedict XVI, 2009 #6.**

Many people today would claim that they owe nothing to anyone, except to themselves. They are concerned only with their rights, and they often have great difficulty in taking responsibility for their own and other people's integral development. Hence it is important to call for a renewed reflection on how rights presuppose duties, if they are not to become mere licence. **Caritas in Veritate ("In Charity and Truth"), Pope Benedict XVI, 2009 #43.**

We have a responsibility to discern carefully which public policies are morally sound. Catholics may choose different ways to respond to compelling social problems, but we cannot differ on our moral obligation to help build a more just and peaceful world through morally acceptable means, so that the weak and vulnerable are protected and human rights and dignity are defended. **Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), 2007, 2012 #20.**

Respect for the family should be reflected in every policy and program. It is important to uphold parents' rights and responsibilities to care for their children, including the right to choose their children's education. **Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), 2007, 2012 #46.**

Human dignity is respected and the common good is fostered only if human rights are protected and basic responsibilities are met. Every human being has a right to life, the fundamental right that makes all other rights possible, and a right to access to those things required for human decency—food and shelter, education and employment, health care and housing, freedom of religion and family life...Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities—to one another, to our families, and to the larger society. Rights should be understood and exercised in a moral framework rooted in the dignity of the human person. **Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), 2007, 2012 #49.**

The link consists in this: individual rights, when detached from a framework of duties which grants them their full meaning, can run wild, leading to an escalation of demands which is effectively unlimited and indiscriminate. An overemphasis on rights leads to a disregard for duties. Duties set a limit on rights because they point to the anthropological and ethical framework of which rights are a part, in this way ensuring that they do not become license. Duties thereby reinforce rights and call for their defence and promotion as a task to be undertaken in the service of the common good. **Caritas in Veritate (“In Charity and Truth”), Pope Benedict XVI, 2009 #43.**

Sadly, even human rights can be used as a justification for an inordinate defense of individual rights or the rights of the richer peoples. With due respect for the autonomy and culture of every nation, we must never forget that the planet belongs to all mankind and is meant for all mankind; the mere fact that some people are born in places with fewer resources or less development does not justify the fact that they are living with less dignity. It must be reiterated that “the more fortunate should renounce some of their rights so as to place their goods more generously at the service of others”. To speak properly of our own rights, we need to broaden our perspective and to hear the plea of other peoples and other regions than those of our own country. **Evangelii Gaudium (“The Joy of the Gospel”), Pope Francis, 2013 #190.**

Never has humanity had such power over itself, yet nothing ensures that it will be used wisely, particularly when we consider how it is currently being used...In whose hands does all this power lie, or will it eventually end up? It is extremely risky for a small part of humanity to have it. There is a tendency to believe that every increase in power means “an increase of ‘progress’ itself”...as if reality, goodness and truth automatically flow from technological and economic power as such. The fact is that “contemporary man has not been trained to use power well” because our immense technological development has not been accompanied by a development in human responsibility, values and conscience. **Laudato Si’ (“Praise Be”), Pope Francis, 2015 #104-105.**

Imposing [burdensome commitments to reducing emissions] penalizes those countries most in need of development. A further injustice is perpetrated under the guise of protecting the environment. Here also, the poor end up paying the price. Furthermore, since the effects of climate change will be felt for a long time to come, even if stringent measures are taken now, some countries with scarce resources will require assistance in adapting to the effects already being produced, which affect their economies. In this context, there is a need for common and differentiated responsibilities. **Laudato Si’ (“Praise Be”), Pope Francis, 2015 #170.**



SCRIPTURAL FOUNDATIONS:

- Deuteronomy 5:17, 30:19 Right to life
- Psalm 146:5-8 Freedom from Oppression
- Isaiah 10:1-2 Against just laws
- Mark 12:17 Render God/ Render to Caesar



CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- Where do you see or hear about rights being violated in your community or around the world? Whose responsibility is it to ensure those rights are protected or fulfilled?
- How might God be inviting you to advocate to protect the rights you feel most passionate about, and to ensure that corresponding duties are fulfilled?



FAMILY ACTIVITY:

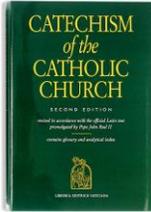
Activity 1: As a family, pretend you are doing an activity together that requires a group decision ie,; Moving, buying a pet, going on vacation, etc. • Scenario one: Give each member of the family an equally weighted opinion on said matter, through a type of voting process. When all “votes” are in, majority rules. Let the process be collaborative, letting each member of the family explain why they chose the choice they chose. • Scenario two: Only a certain number of people get a vote.... Limiting a vote could be because of a certain age; boys vs. girls; heights; etc. Only members in that particular group get a vote. They get to vote on said activity only. • After you do both sets of voting, come together as a family to discuss what that process was like. How does it feel when your voice is heard? How does it feel when your voice wasn’t heard? Why is it important to let each citizen have a say in the decision we make as a society? Do you see any issues with the current set up of our government in the United States? If so, why? If not, why? Whose voices are we hearing? Whose voices are being silenced, why?

Activity 2: As a family go use this discussion guide as a resource:
https://www.crs.org/sites/default/files/usopsresources/17us264_cst_101_rights_responsabilitie_final.pdf. Discern how you are going to take action in your civil community and faith community. Also talk about what your rights look like in your family structure. What are the responsibilities that come with family life as well



RELATED SOCIAL ISSUES:

- access to quality education
- safe and affordable housing
- healthcare
- nonviolent and thriving neighborhoods



CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH EXCERPTS:

These paragraphs are direct quotations from Part Three: "Life in Christ" of the Catechism of the Catholic Church which address humanity's vocation to form conscience in shaping our dignity of the human person. Footnote citations have been removed in this listing.

To read the entire Catechism... text, refer to

<http://archeparchy.ca/wcm-docs/docs/catechism-of-the-catholic-church.pdf>

1776 "Deep within his conscience man discovers a law which he has not laid upon himself but which he must obey. Its voice, ever calling him to love and to do what is good and to avoid evil, sounds in his heart at the right moment.... For man has in his heart a law inscribed by God.... His conscience is man's most secret core and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths."

1777 Moral conscience, present at the heart of the person, enjoins him at the appropriate moment to do good and to avoid evil. It also judges particular choices, approving those that are good and denouncing those that are evil. It bears witness to the authority of truth in reference to the supreme Good to which the human person is drawn, and it welcomes the commandments. When he listens to his conscience, the prudent man can hear God speaking.

1778 Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act that he is going to perform, is in the process of performing, or has already completed. In all he says and does, man is obliged to follow faithfully what he knows to be just and right. It is by the judgment of his conscience that man perceives and recognizes the prescriptions of the divine law: Conscience is a law of the mind; yet [Christians] would not grant that it is nothing more; I mean that it was not a dictate, nor conveyed the notion of responsibility, of duty, of a threat and a promise.... [Conscience] is a messenger of him, who, both in nature and in grace, speaks to us behind a veil, and teaches and rules us by his representatives. Conscience is the aboriginal Vicar of Christ.

1779 It is important for every person to be sufficiently present to himself in order to hear and follow the voice of his conscience. This requirement of interiority is all the more necessary as life often distracts us from any reflection, self-examination or introspection: Return to your conscience, question it.... Turn inward, brethren, and in everything you do, see God as your witness.

1780 The dignity of the human person implies and requires uprightness of moral conscience. Conscience includes the perception of the principles of morality (synderesis); their application in

the given circumstances by practical discernment of reasons and goods; and finally judgment about concrete acts yet to be performed or already performed. the truth about the moral good, stated in the law of reason, is recognized practically and concretely by the prudent judgment of conscience. We call that man prudent who chooses in conformity with this judgment.

1781 Conscience enables one to assume responsibility for the acts performed. If man commits evil, the just judgment of conscience can remain within him as the witness to the universal truth of the good, at the same time as the evil of his particular choice. the verdict of the judgment of conscience remains a pledge of hope and mercy. In attesting to the fault committed, it calls to mind the forgiveness that must be asked, the good that must still be practiced, and the virtue that must be constantly cultivated with the grace of God: We shall . . . reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

1782 Man has the right to act in conscience and in freedom so as personally to make moral decisions. "He must not be forced to act contrary to his conscience. Nor must he be prevented from acting according to his conscience, especially in religious matters."

1783 Conscience must be informed and moral judgment enlightened. A well-formed conscience is upright and truthful. It formulates its judgments according to reason, in conformity with the true good willed by the wisdom of the Creator. the education of conscience is indispensable for human beings who are subjected to negative influences and tempted by sin to prefer their own judgment and to reject authoritative teachings.

1784 The education of the conscience is a lifelong task. From the earliest years, it awakens the child to the knowledge and practice of the interior law recognized by conscience. Prudent education teaches virtue; it prevents or cures fear, selfishness and pride, resentment arising from guilt, and feelings of complacency, born of human weakness and faults. the education of the conscience guarantees freedom and engenders peace of heart.

1785 In the formation of conscience the Word of God is the light for our path, we must assimilate it in faith and prayer and put it into practice. We must also examine our conscience before the Lord's Cross. We are assisted by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, aided by the witness or advice of others and guided by the authoritative teaching of the Church.

1786 Faced with a moral choice, conscience can make either a right judgment in accordance with reason and the divine law or, on the contrary, an erroneous judgment that departs from them.

1787 Man is sometimes confronted by situations that make moral judgments less assured and decision difficult. But he must always seriously seek what is right and good and discern the will of God expressed in divine law.

1788 To this purpose, man strives to interpret the data of experience and the signs of the times assisted by the virtue of prudence, by the advice of competent people, and by the help of the Holy Spirit and his gifts.

1789 Some rules apply in every case: - One may never do evil so that good may result from it; - the Golden Rule: "Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them." - charity always proceeds by way of respect for one's neighbor and his conscience: "Thus sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience . . . you sin against Christ." Therefore "it is right not to . . . do anything that makes your brother stumble."

1790 A human being must always obey the certain judgment of his conscience. If he were deliberately to act against it, he would condemn himself. Yet it can happen that moral conscience remains in ignorance and makes erroneous judgments about acts to be performed or already committed.

1791 This ignorance can often be imputed to personal responsibility. This is the case when a man "takes little trouble to find out what is true and good, or when conscience is by degrees almost blinded through the habit of committing sin." In such cases, the person is culpable for the evil he commits.

1792 Ignorance of Christ and his Gospel, bad example given by others, enslavement to one's passions, assertion of a mistaken notion of autonomy of conscience, rejection of the Church's authority and her teaching, lack of conversion and of charity: these can be at the source of errors of judgment in moral conduct.

1793 If - on the contrary - the ignorance is invincible, or the moral subject is not responsible for his erroneous judgment, the evil committed by the person cannot be imputed to him. It remains no less an evil, a privation, a disorder. One must therefore work to correct the errors of moral conscience.

1794 A good and pure conscience is enlightened by true faith, for charity proceeds at the same time "from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith." The more a correct conscience prevails, the more do persons and groups turn aside from blind choice and try to be guided by objective standards of moral conduct.

1795 "Conscience is man's most secret core, and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths".

1796 Conscience is a judgment of reason by which the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act.

1797 For the man who has committed evil, the verdict of his conscience remains a pledge of conversion and of hope.

1798 A well-formed conscience is upright and truthful. It formulates its judgments according to reason, in conformity with the true good willed by the wisdom of the Creator. Everyone must avail himself of the means to form his conscience.

1799 Faced with a moral choice, conscience can make either a right judgment in accordance with reason and the divine law or, on the contrary, an erroneous judgment that departs from them.

1800 A human being must always obey the certain judgment of his conscience.

1801 Conscience can remain in ignorance or make erroneous judgments. Such ignorance and errors are not always free of guilt.

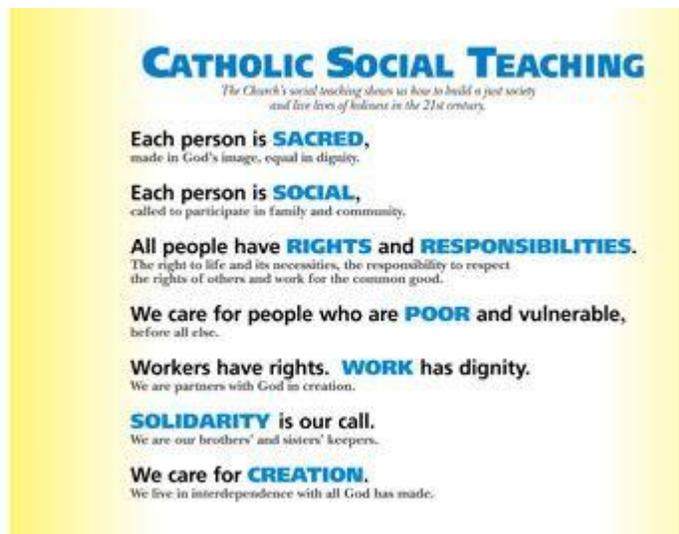
1802 The Word of God is a light for our path. We must assimilate it in faith and prayer and put it into practice. This is how moral conscience is formed.

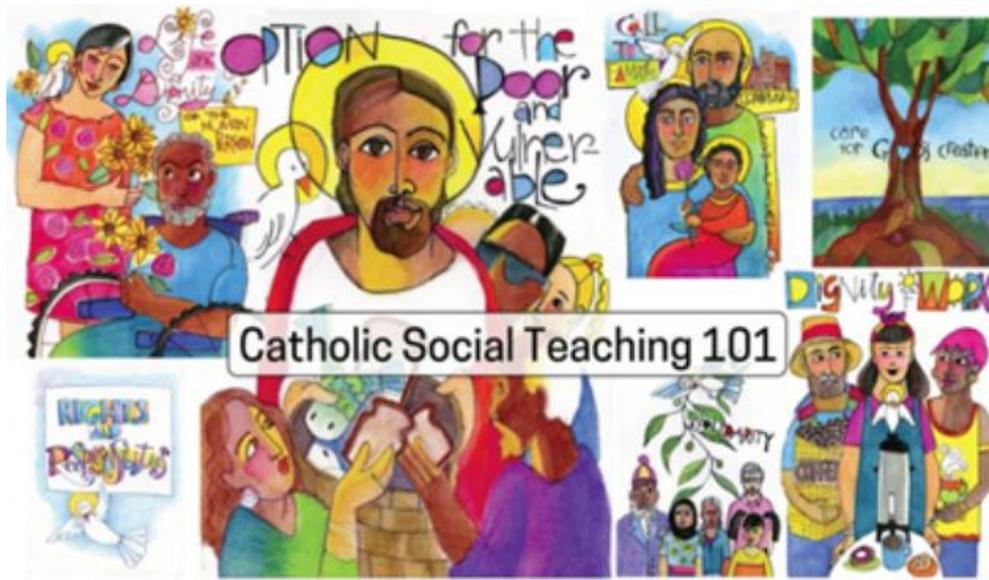


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RESOURCES FROM CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES AND USCCB:

- View 3:29 minute you tube on this week's theme RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES <https://youtu.be/OPB6sXj6Fwo>
- print one of these handouts to display in a prominent place in your home





the seven themes of
**CATHOLIC SOCIAL
 TEACHING** for children



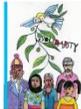
1 God made each person, so every life is important and should be protected.



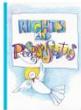
5 Work is important in God's plan for adults and their families, so jobs and pay should be fair.



2 God made us to be part of communities, families and countries, so all people can share and help each other.



6 God made everyone, so we are all brothers and sisters in God's family wherever we live.



3 God wants us to help make sure everyone is safe and healthy and can have a good life.



7 The world was made by God, so we take care of all creation.



4 God wants us to help people who are poor, who don't have enough food, a safe place to live, or a community.



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- View video resources

USCCB Catholic Social Teaching

<http://usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/index.cfm>

USCCB Catholic Social Teaching resources

<https://wearesaltandlight.org/>

USCCB Catholic Social Teaching prayers

<https://wearesaltandlight.org/pray-together/prayers-dignity-and-life>

Connecting Catholic Social Teaching & the Ten Commandments

<http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/catechesis/catechetical-sunday/human-dignity/teaching-aid-colecchi.cfm>

CRS on Catholic Social Teaching

<https://www.crs.org/resource-center/CST-101>