

Synopsis of Principles of Catholic Social Teaching

Dignity of the Human Person

All people are a reflection of the image of God and thus all human life, at all stages from conception through death, is sacred. The basic dignity that each person possesses comes from God, and therefore, all discrimination wrong. People take precedence over things and structures. Systems are meant to serve people, not vice versa.

Community and the Common Good

The Mystery of the Trinity involves the relationship of complete love among the three divine Persons in One God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Persons made in God's image, we must model God's self-giving love. Hence, the human person is both sacred and fundamentally social. In community, we realize the fulfillment of our dignity and rights in relationship with and to others.

Rights and Responsibilities

People have basic rights and responsibilities because of their human dignity which reflects that fact they have been created in God's image. Catholic teaching emphasizes that people have a right to life and to the basic necessities that provide quality of life: food, shelter, health care, education, and employment. We are called to respect the rights of others and to seek the common good.

Option for the Poor

The Gospel calls Christians to put the needs of the poor first. A common moral test of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable people. Wherever there is structural injustice, Christians are called to oppose it. Those with the greatest need, especially, require the greatest response.

Dignity of Work

Work is an expression of our dignity and an expression of our involvement in God's creation. People have a right to decent work, fair wages, and private property. The economy exists to serve people, not vice versa.

Solidarity

We are all one human family in the world. Because we realize our dignity, rights, and responsibilities, in relationship with others, we need to continue to build community that empowers people to attain their full human potential. By working for justice, we fulfill our mandate to build the Body of Christ.

Care for Creation

We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.