

Catholic Social Doctrine

OCTOBER 2020

OUR LADY OF THE PRESENTATION CHURCH

Prayer

God of all life,

Help us to recognize you in all whom you have created:
children not yet born, families affected by poverty and war,
people of different abilities, people from other lands, and
all who are victims of hatred and racism.

Prayer

Help us to bear witness to the dignity of all whom you have created,
regardless of stage of life, or wealth, or ability,
or color, or creed, for every person is fully equal in your loving eyes.

Share with us your holy knowledge that we are all your children,
each bestowed with inherent dignity.

May your justice reign forever!

Amen.

Seven Themes

- **Care for God's Creation**
- **Solidarity**
- **The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers.**
- **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable**
- **Rights and Responsibilities**
- **Call to Family, Community, and Participation**
- **Life and Dignity of the Human Person**

Life and Dignity of the Human Person.

The life and dignity of the human person, from conception to natural death, is the foundation of Catholic Social Doctrine

All human beings are created in the image and likeness of God, and therefore have dignity, regardless of the choices they make.

- Because we are made in God's image, we are:
 - Essentially good
 - Some faiths believe that humans are essentially evil and must earn goodness.
 - We believe all humans are good, even when they choose evil, because God is good.
 - Social beings, meant to be in relationship with one another as is the Trinity
 - We cannot ignore others in our world. They are our brother and sisters
 - Our fulfillment is rooted in relationships.
 - Creative: humans share in the creative action of God
 - We participate in God's creative action when we have children, when we create things that improve human life, when we use creativity to solve problems.

Life and Dignity of the Human Person.

The life and dignity of the human person, from conception to natural death, is the foundation of Catholic Social Doctrine

Some specific social issues related to this doctrine

- Euthanasia
- Racism
- Death Penalty*
- Abortion
- Discrimination
- Unequal distribution of resources
- Immigrants

* Revision in Catechism 2018, *Evangelium Vitae*, *Frattelli Tutti*

Life and Dignity of the Human Person.

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- Advocacy and activism for those who cannot advocate for themselves: mentally ill, disabled, immigrants, children, homeless, poor, those in prisons
 - Care for elderly and dying
- Looking for the face of God in all people
 - Sharing your gifts
 - Care for others: charity and justice
 - Am I my brother's keeper?
- What you did for the least of these...

Call to Family, Community, and Participation.

Society directly affects human dignity and the capacity of humans to grow in community.

How we organize our society – in economics and politics, in law and policy – directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community."

This organization of society moves from the basic unit, the family, to the larger community while ensuring that everyone participates. The emphasis on the larger social group counterbalances unregulated individual rights, that left unconstrained, can turn toward anarchy.

Call to Family, Community, and Participation.

Society directly affects human dignity and the capacity of humans to grow in community.

Some specific social issues

- Citizenship: voting, community-based organizations
 - Economy: just wages, job training
- Social policies that support (or don't) families
 - Anatomy of family

Rights and Responsibilities

Human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met.

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 are 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.

Rights and Responsibilities

Human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met.

Limitation of rights
Necessity of responsibility

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?

Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable.

Our tradition instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.

A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. In a society marred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, our tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgment ([Mt 25:31-46](#)) and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.

Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable.

Our tradition instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.

Any and all social decisions should always be considered in light of this question:

How will this affect the poor?

- Climate change
- Taxes
- Access to necessities of life

Both Charity and Justice

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers.

Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation.

The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation.

If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected--the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to the organization and joining of unions, to private property, and to economic initiative.

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers.

Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation.

All people have the right to work, to a chance to develop their qualities and their personalities in the exercise of their professions, to equitable remuneration which will enable them and their families "to lead a worthy life on the material, social, cultural and spiritual level" and to assistance in case of need arising from sickness or age. (Blessed Paul VI, *A Call to Action* [[Octogesima Adveniens](#)], no. 14)

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers.

Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation.

Work is a good thing for man—a good thing for his humanity—because through work man *not only transforms nature*, adapting it to his own needs, but he also *achieves fulfillment* as a human being and indeed, in a sense, becomes "more a human being." (St. John Paul II, *On Human Work* [[Laborem Exercens](#)], no. 9)

The obligation to earn one's bread by the sweat of one's brow also presumes the right to do so. A society in which this right is systematically denied, in which economic policies do not allow workers to reach satisfactory levels of employment, cannot be justified from an ethical point of view, nor can that society attain social peace. (St. John Paul II, *The Hundredth Year* [[Centesimus Annus](#)], no. 43)

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers.

Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation.

Work should be the setting for this rich personal growth, where many aspects of life enter into play: creativity, planning for the future, developing our talents, living out our values, relating to others, giving glory to God. It follows that, in the reality of today's global society, it is essential that "we continue to prioritize the goal of access to steady employment for everyone," no matter the limited interests of business and dubious economic reasoning.

We were created with a vocation to work. The goal should not be that technological progress increasingly replace human work, for this would be detrimental to humanity.

Work is a necessity, part of the meaning of life on this earth, a path to growth, human development and personal fulfillment. Helping the poor financially must always be a provisional solution in the face of pressing needs. The broader objective should always be to allow them a dignified life through work. (Pope Francis, *On Care for Our Common Home* [[Laudato Si'](#)], nos. 127-28)

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers.

Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation.

In *Economic Justice for All*, the Bishops write “Catholic social teaching does not require absolute equality in the distribution of income and wealth.

Some degree of inequality is not only acceptable, but may be considered desirable for economic and social reasons, such as the need for incentives and the provision of greater rewards for greater risks.

However, unequal distribution should be evaluated in terms of . . . the priority of meeting the basic needs of the poor and the importance of increasing the level of participation by all members of society. . . .” (No. 185)

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers.

In a **speech** to a 25,000-person crowd in Memphis on March 18, 1968, (Martin Luther) **King** affirmed the value of the **sanitation workers'** labor, saying, “whenever you are engaged in work that serves humanity and is for the building of humanity, it has dignity, and it has worth.”

- Where are the dignity of work or the rights of workers violated or protected— both in your own community and around the world?
- How can our purchasing choices impact whether others’ rights are violated or protected?

Solidarity The Common Good

We are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they may be.

Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world. At the core of the virtue of solidarity is the pursuit of justice and peace. Pope Paul VI taught that "if you want peace, work for justice."

The Gospel calls us to be peacemakers. Our love for all our sisters and brothers demands that we promote peace in a world surrounded by violence and conflict.

Solidarity The Common Good

Solidarity binds all people together as members of a common family.

The solidarity which binds all people together as members of a common family makes it impossible for wealthy nations to look with indifference upon the hunger, misery and poverty of other nations whose citizens are unable to enjoy even elementary human rights.

The nations of the world are becoming more and more dependent on one another and it will not be possible to preserve a lasting peace so long as glaring economic and social imbalances persist. (St. John XXIII, *On Christianity and Social Progress* [[Mater et Magistra](#)], no. 157)

Solidarity The Common Good

Solidarity binds all people together as members of a common family.

We need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family.

There are no frontiers or barriers, political or social, behind which we can hide, still less is there room for the globalization of indifference.

- (Pope Francis, *On Care for Our Common Home* [[Laudato Si'](#)], no. 52, quoting United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, [Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good](#))

Solidarity The Common Good

Solidarity binds all people together
as members of a common family.

- ❑ Individuality & the Common Good
 - ❑ Solidarity demands compassion
 - ❑ Do you believe that “we are all really responsible for all”? If so, how does this challenge you?
 - ❑ How can you join with others to take concrete steps—big or small—to help build a society of solidarity?
 - ❑ What can you “not live without?”

Care for God's Creation

We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation.

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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.

Care for Creation

We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation.

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. . .

Our duties towards the environment are linked to our duties towards the human person, considered in himself and in relation to others.

It would be wrong to uphold one set of duties while trampling on the other. (Pope Benedict XVI, *Charity in Truth* [[Caritas in Veritate](#)], nos. 48, 51)

Care for Creation

We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation.

Changes in lifestyle based on traditional moral virtues can ease the way to a sustainable and equitable world economy in which sacrifice will no longer be an unpopular concept.

For many of us, a life less focused on material gain may remind us that we are more than what we have.

Rejecting the false promises of excessive or conspicuous consumption can even allow more time for family, friends, and civic responsibilities.

A renewed sense of sacrifice and restraint could make an essential contribution to addressing global climate change.

(United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, [Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good](#))

Care for Creation

We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation.

How is the call to care for God's creation connected with our concern for the life and dignity of every person—both at home and around the world, now and in future generations?

Green Teams

Pope Francis' Catechesis

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2020

1: Faith, Hope and Love

Dear Brothers and Sisters: In responding to the grave challenges caused by the present pandemic, we Christians are guided by the wisdom and strength born of the virtues of faith, hope and love.

As God's gifts, these virtues heal us and enable us in turn to bring Christ's healing presence to our world. They can inspire in us a new and creative spirit to help us face today's deeply rooted physical, social and spiritual infirmities and change the unjust and destructive behaviors that threaten the future of our human family.

Today the Church seeks to continue the Lord's healing ministry, not only to individuals but also to society as a whole. **She does this by proposing a number of principles drawn from the Gospel, which include: the dignity of the human person, the common good, the preferential option for the poor, the universal destination of goods, solidarity, subsidiarity and the care for our common home.** In coming weeks, I will reflect on these and other themes of the Church's social doctrine, confident that they can shed light on today's acute social problems and contribute to the building of a future of hope for coming generations.

Human Dignity

Dear Brothers and Sisters, in our continuing catechesis on the effects of the current pandemic in the light of the Church's social doctrine, we now consider the theme of human dignity.

The pandemic has made us more aware of the spread within our societies of a false, individualistic way of thinking, one that rejects human dignity and relationships, views persons as consumer goods and creates a “throw away” culture (cf. [*Evangelii Gaudium*, 53](#)).

In contrast, faith teaches that we have been created in God's image and likeness, made for love and for communion of life with him, with one another and with the whole of creation. Jesus tells us that true discipleship consists in following his example by spending ourselves in service of others.

Our God-given dignity and the rights that arise from it are the ultimate foundation of all social life, and have serious social, economic and political implications. **In responding to the pandemic we Christians are called to combat all violations of human dignity as contrary to the Gospel, and to work for the wellbeing of our whole human family and our common home.**

Preferential Option for the Poor

Dear Brothers and Sisters, in our reflection on the current global pandemic, we have seen that it has made us sensitive to an even graver virus affecting our world: that of social injustice, lack of equal opportunity and the marginalization of the poor and those in greatest need.

Christ's example and teaching show us that a preferential option for the poor is an essential criterion of our authenticity as his followers. Christian charity demands that, beyond social assistance, we listen to their voices and work to overcome all that hinders their material and spiritual development.

Our desire for a return to normality should not mean a return to social injustices or to a delay of long overdue reforms. Today we have an opportunity to create something different: an ethically sound economy, centered on persons, especially the poor, in recognition of their innate human dignity. How sad it would be if, for example, access to a Covid-19 vaccine were made available only to the rich, and not to others in equal or greater need! May the Gospel inspire us to find ever more creative ways to exercise that charity, grounded in faith and anchored in hope, which can heal our wounded world and promote the true welfare of our entire human family.

Common Good

In our continuing reflections on the effects of the current pandemic, we have seen how our world's problems are becoming ever more evident and indeed more serious. Among these is social inequality, itself the fruit of an unjust global economy that creates boundless wealth for a relative few and greater impoverishment for the rest of our human family. **In God's plan, the earth was created as a garden, to be cultivated, not brutally exploited.**

As stewards of creation, we are called to ensure that its fruits, which are destined for all, are in fact shared by all. The Church reminds us that the principle of the subordination of private property to the universal destination of goods is the first principle of the whole ethical and social order. **When millions of people lack access to primary goods, when inequality and lack of opportunity threaten the very fabric of society, and when greed endangers the very environment in which we live, none of us can stand by idly. Christian hope, which trusts in the transforming grace of the risen Christ, impels us to work for the healing of our world and the building of a more just and equitable social order.**

Solidarity

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

in our continuing reflection on the current pandemic, we have seen how closely connected we are, dependent on one another precisely because we were created by God and share a common home. We can only emerge stronger from the present crisis if we do so together.

The Church's social doctrine thus speaks of the need for the virtue of *solidarity*. Authentic solidarity is not just about offering help to others; it is a matter of justice; it requires a radical change in our thinking that looks to the good of the community, defends the right to life for all, and promotes a just sharing of the earth's goods.

The Biblical story of the Tower of Babel shows what happens when a society seeks to build its own way to heaven, forsaking God, losing sight of solidarity with the most vulnerable, and valuing things over relationships. This destructive "Babel syndrome" is countered by the event of Pentecost, where the gift of the Holy Spirit creates a harmonious unity in diversity for the true building up of society. May the Spirit grant us the wisdom and creativity to find those forms of solidarity needed in our post-Covid world, for the healing of interpersonal and social ills, and the growth of the human family in fraternity, justice and peace.

Common Good

Dear Brothers and Sisters, in our reflections on the current pandemic in the light of the Church's social doctrine, we have seen that the common good must be the goal of our individual and collective efforts to heal our wounded world.

Our Christian commitment in this regard is inspired by God's unconditional love, which calls us to set no limits on our love for others and our concern for their welfare. As members of the one human family, our wellbeing is a public not simply a private good.

By placing every human person and the common good at the center of our cultural, economic and political activity, we will create a genuinely healthy, just and peaceful world, and so contribute to the building of a true "civilization of love". **The coronavirus heeds no cultural or political barrier or distinction – nor must we impose any barrier or distinction on our love as we work for the common good in responding to the grave problems brought to the fore by the pandemic, in fidelity to our Christian vocation.**

Solidarity

Dear Brothers and Sisters, in our continuing catechesis on the effects of the current pandemic in the light of the Church's social doctrine, we have reflected on the need for *solidarity* with all our brothers and sisters, especially the poor, the vulnerable and the excluded.

As individuals, as communities and as men and women of faith, we are called to work together in bringing healing and hope to our world. Solidarity, for its part, implies respect for the principle of *subsidiarity*, whereby every level of society, from the state to every intermediate and lesser group, including families and the Church, has a proper role to play in revitalizing the social fabric.

As Saint Paul teaches, all the members of the body, even those apparently most insignificant, are essential to the good functioning of the whole. The lockdown has made us appreciate the quiet efforts of so many individuals and groups to serve the larger community. As we look to the future, may the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity guide our efforts to emerge from the crisis by working for a social order ever more just and respectful of the dignity and gifts of each of its members.

Participation

Dear Brothers and Sisters, in the series of catechesis that concludes today, we have reflected on the effects of the current pandemic in the light of the Church's social doctrine. Our world needs to be healed not only of the present virus, but also of the "social ills" of inequality, injustice and exclusion that afflict so many of our brothers and sisters in the human family.

In the light of Christ's teaching, we have seen the importance of solidarity, subsidiarity and respect for human dignity for the shaping of a society in accord with the values of God's Kingdom, a society that gives priority to its poorest and most vulnerable members, and to the responsible stewardship of the goods of creation. Just as Jesus brought physical and spiritual healing to the sick, so we too are called to bring the Gospel's healing power to the task of creating a more just, inclusive and participatory society at every level.

In this way, by God's grace, we will emerge from the present crisis with renewed hope for the building of a world ever more consistent with our human dignity and lofty vocation.

Resources

Resources

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: Series on Catholic Social Teaching called CST101 – available on YouTube.

Scripture and Tradition; discussion and prayer:

<https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching>

Compendium of Social Doctrine

The document provides an overview of the Church's social teachings on a variety of issues including salvation, the role of the family, the principle of common good, the rights of workers, morality and the economy, hope for peace, and a Christian's role in civic society.

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html

Prayer

[HTTPS://WWW.CRS.ORG/RESOURCE-CENTER/PRAYER-OTHER](https://www.crs.org/resource-center/prayer-other)