

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING – A RESOURCE PAGE

Catholic Social Teaching is based on the belief that God has a plan for creation, a plan to build his kingdom of peace, love and justice. It holds that God has a special place in this story for each of us, whoever we are. Our part in this plan isn't just limited to things 'spiritual', or things we might do on Sundays, but that it involves every aspect of our lives, from the things we pray about, to how we live as responsible global citizens. Our part in this story is a kind-of vocation for the common good, a call to treat everyone as your brothers and sisters and is something that we all share. Catholic Social Teaching is the tradition of papal reflection about how we live this vocation for the common good in our world

The Principles of Catholic Social Teaching:

Dignity of the Human Person

The Common Good

Community and Participation

Solidarity

Dignity of Work

Peace & Reconciliation

Care of Creation

This website:

Catholic Social Teaching Faith in a better world from the Catholic Archdiocese in UK

<https://www.catholicsocialteaching.org.uk/>

is structured around these themes and offers explanations, resources, reflections and stories for each one. We hope these will help you to better understand and reflect upon Catholic Social teaching (CST) as well as challenge you and support you in better responding to our shared vocation for the common good.

It has an extensive resource library relating to Catholic Social Teaching. You can listen to a wide range of broadcasts related to Catholic Social Teaching and view a series of reflections inspired by CST.

Putting into Practice

Applying abstract principles is always difficult but John XXIII outlined a well-tried procedure:

- (a) examine the concrete situation (**See**);
 - (b) evaluate it with respect to the principles (**Judge**);
 - (c) decide what should be done in the circumstances (**Act**). (*Mater and Magistra*, paragraph 23)
- This methodology is precisely what is followed in

The Pastoral Cycle.



Key Documents

With the exception of a Council Pastoral Constitution and a Synod statement, the following are all papal texts, but there are also documents from regional conferences of bishops, like those of CELAM (Latin America) or FABC(Asia) – particularly that of Medellin (1968) and Puebla (1979) – which applied CST to their own context and reflected on such ideas as conscientisation, basic communities and option for the poor. Many of these themes have been picked up by the wider Church. There have also been contributions from the Pontifical Council for Justice & Peace: – on Debt (1986), Homelessness (1987), Racism (1988), Refugees (1992) and Land Reform (1997).

1891 Rerum Novarum – “Of New Things” – Leo XIII

The Condition of Labour examines working conditions in industrialised countries and insists on workers' rights. The Church, employers & workers should work together to build a just society.

1931 Quadragesimo Anno – “On the Fortieth Year” – Pius XI

The Reconstruction of the Social Order at the time of major economic depression, QA criticises abuses of capitalism & communism. Unity between capital & labour. Ownership brings social responsibilities. Subsidiarity.

1961 Mater et Magistra – “Mother & Teacher” – John XXIII

Christianity & Social Progress Updates earlier teaching and applies to agriculture and aid to developing countries, thus 'internationalising' CST. Role of laity in applying social teaching as an integral part of Christian life.

1963 Pacem in Terris – “Peace on Earth” – John XXIII

Peace on Earth With the immanent threat of nuclear war, this is a plea for peace based on the social order from a framework of rights and duties applying to individuals, public authorities and the world community.

1965 Gaudium et Spes – “The Joys and Hopes” Vatican II

The Church in the Modern World Church's duty is discernment of the signs of the times in the light of the Gospel. Principles of cultural development and justice, enhancing human dignity and the common good. Work for peace.

1965 Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity - Paul VI

The participation of the Laity with the clergy

1967 Populorum Progressio – “The Development of Peoples” Paul VI

The Development of Peoples Charter for development – ‘the new name for peace’. Deals with structural poverty, aid and trade. Limits put on profit motive and the right to private property. Christians to strive for international justice.

1971 Octogesima Adveniens – “On the Eightieth Year” – Paul VI

A Call to Action Rome doesn't necessarily have the answer: need for local church to respond to specific situations. Urbanisation has brought new injustices. We are called to political action.

1971 Justitia in Mundo – “Justice in the World” – Synod

'Justice is a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel...' The Church must examine its conscience about its lifestyle and so witness to the Gospel. Importance of Education for Justice.

1975 Evangelii Nuntiandi – “Evangelisation in the Modern World” - Paul VI

Profound links between evangelisation and development and liberation. Only the kingdom is absolute; everything else is relative. All levels of society are to be transformed by the power of the good news.

1981 Laborem Exercens – “On Human Work” – John Paul II

On Human Work For JP II work is the central social issue. Work increases human dignity. Priority of labour over capital. Rights of workers (especially women) and unions. Critique of capitalism as well as Marxism.

1987 Sollicitudo Rei Socialis – “The Social Concern of the Church” – John Paul II

Social Concern Updates Populorum Progressio with analysis of global development: North/South divide blamed on confrontation between capitalism and Marxism. Conversion from 'Structures of sin' towards solidarity and option for the poor.

1991 Centesimus Annus – “The One Hundredth Year” – John Paul II

One Hundred Years Review of CST and major events of the last century, constantly affirming human dignity and human rights, justice and peace. The fall of Marxism does not signify a victory for capitalism.

1996 – The Common Good

In 1996 the catholic Bishops of England & Wales produced The Common Good in preparation for a General Election. Strongly critical of dominant market values it also serves as a readable introduction to CST and its application to some of the issues facing our society.

2009 Caritas in Veritate – “Charity in Truth” – Benedict XVI

Charity in Truth Updates Populorum Progressio with a comprehensive review of development and some reflection on the economic crisis and business ethics. Provides a theological framework for CST.

Some other documents of John Paul II contain important sections for CST:

Redemptor Hominis (1979): human dignity & human rights; modern technology; war & arms race.

Dives in Misericordia (1980): growing disparity in wealth; justice is shaped by the power of love.

Redemptoris Missio (1990): pro inculturation & economic liberation; but true liberation is in Christ.

Tertio Millennio Adveniente (1994): J&P a necessary condition for celebrating Jubilee of year 2000.

Evangelium Vitae (1995): brings together CST and teaching on sex & the family as ‘Gospel of life’.

Novo Millennio Ineunte (2000): challenges of ecology, peace and human rights; all to work for J&P.

2010 – Choosing the Common Good

In March 2010 our bishops produced another document, Choosing the Common Good, in order to reach a shared vision about the sort of society we want to live in. **“Given our recent past we need to restore trust in our society between individuals, citizens & the state, and in our institutions (especially in MPs, Bankers and the Church itself)”**. Hence they sought agreement on the principles & values for a just and civil society. These core principles are the Common Good, integral human development and the pursuit of virtue. (These are key themes of CST and apply to all of us).

2013 Evangelii Gaudium – The Joy of the Gospel – Pope Francis

While not a papal encyclical, Evangelii Gaudium gives particular attention to the ‘social dimension of Evangelisation’.

2015 Laudato Si’ – On Care for Our Common Home – Pope Francis

Laudato Si’ is a passionate call to all people of the world to take “swift and unified global action”, particularly in relation to the destruction of the environment.

2016 Amoris Laetitia – The Joy of Love – Pope Francis

Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on Love in the Family

2020 Fratelli Tutti – Brothers and Sisters All – Pope Francis

Encyclical Letter on Fraternity and Social Friendship

Compiled by Brian Davies, Social Justice Specialist, Birmingham Justice & Peace commission, England



End poverty
Promote justice
Uphold dignity

Catholic Social Teaching covers all spheres of life – the economic, political, personal and spiritual.

With human dignity at its centre, a holistic approach to development founded on the principles of CST, is what Pope Paul VI called ‘authentic development’. Explore the Catholic Social Teaching principles and *how these principles guide our decisions and help us make sure that good development happens*.

This is a site that schools from Primary to Secondary levels can find helpful. The site has comics, cartoons, videos and tool kits to help explain what social teaching is and how the teaching can be applied to the lives of the children and young people.

<https://www.caritas.org.au/learn/cst>

The US Conference of Catholic Bishops has this website on the Catholic Social Teachings

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

CAFOD provide reflections on social justice and poverty into workshop activities – including a range of prayers, liturgies and reflections across Church season

https://www.catholicsocialteaching.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/hands_medium-cafod.jpg

Catholic Social Teaching - Missio

<https://missio.org.uk/catholic-social-teaching>



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Catholic Social Thought
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