

**Spirit**  **OF**  
**Christ**  
CATHOLIC COMMUNITY



May 16, 2026



# Announcements

- 1) Next Week: Last Mystagogy class
  - a) Meet in John XXIII
- 2) Mass in a Month Podcast

# CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

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# RELEVANCE?



**Pope Leo XIII**

1810-1903

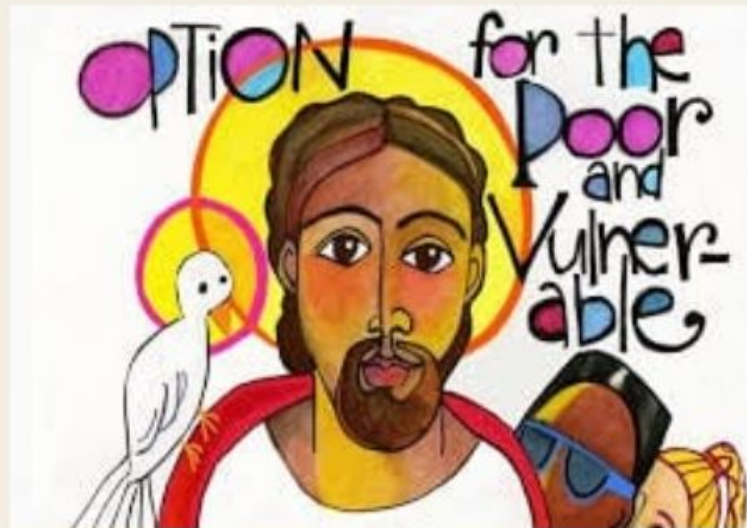


**Pope Leo XIV**

1955-

# WHAT IS CST?

The Church's social teaching is a rich treasure of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of modern society. Modern Catholic social teaching has been articulated through a tradition of papal, conciliar, and episcopal documents. The depth and richness of this tradition can be understood best through a direct reading of these documents. -USCCB



# WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

Then God said, “**Let us make humankind in our image**, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” **So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.** (Genesis 1:26-27)

# DEFINING TERMS

- Human Dignity
- Social Justice
- Consistent Ethic of Life
- Solidarity
- Common Good
- Subsidiarity



# SEVEN THEMES

01. Life & Dignity of the Human person

02. Call to Family, Community & Participation

03. Rights & Responsibilities

04. Option for the Poor & Vulnerable

05. Dignity of Work & Rights of Workers

06. Solidarity

07. Care for Creation

# TO WHOM DOES CST APPLY?

When Pope Leo XIII wrote *Rerum Novarum* (1891) at the height of the industrial revolution, he addressed it to: To **Our Venerable Brethren the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, Bishops, and other ordinaries of places having Peace and Communion with the Apostolic See.**

John XXIII wrote *Pacem en Terris* in 1963 during the Cold War, his encyclical is addressed to: To Our Venerable Brethren the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, Bishops, and all other Local Ordinaries who are at Peace and in Communion with the Apostolic See, and to the Clergy **and Faithful of the entire Catholic World, and to all Men of Good Will.**

Pope Benedict wrote *Caritas en Veritae* in (2009) to the **Bishops, priests and deacons, men and women religious, the lay faithful, and all people of good will on integral human development in charity and truth.**

# **SERVANT OF GOD, DOROTHY DAY**

**“I only love God as much as the  
person I love the least.”**

**"The Gospel takes away our right  
forever, to discriminate between the  
deserving and the undeserving poor."**



# EXAMPLES: LIFE & DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

All human beings, therefore, are ends to be served by the institutions that make up the economy, not means to be exploited for more narrowly defined goals. Human personhood must be respected with a reverence that is religious. **When we deal with each other, we should do so with the sense of awe that arises in the presence of something holy and sacred. For that is what human beings are: we are created in the image of God (Gn 1:27).**"

(United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Economic Justice for All, no. 28)

# EXAMPLE: SUBSIDIARITY

"Subsidiarity respects personal dignity by recognizing in the person a subject who is always capable of giving something to others."

(Pope Benedict XVI, *Charity in Truth* [Caritas in Veritate], no. 57)

# EXAMPLE: RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

"We must speak of man's rights. Man has the right to live. He has the right to bodily integrity and to the means necessary for the proper development of life, particularly food, clothing, shelter, medical care, rest, and, finally, the necessary social services. In consequence, he has the right to be looked after in the event of ill health; disability stemming from his work; widowhood; old age; enforced unemployment; or whenever through no fault of his own he is deprived of the means of livelihood."

(St. John XXIII, *Peace on Earth* [Pacem in Terris], no. 11)

"As for the State . . . It has also the duty to protect the rights of all its people, and particularly of its weaker members, the workers, women and children. It can never be right for the State to shirk its obligation of working actively for the betterment of the condition of the workingman."

(St. John XXIII, *Christianity and Social Progress* [Mater et Magistra], no. 20)

# EXAMPLE: OPTION FOR THE POOR

"The Church's love for the poor . . . is a part of her constant tradition.' This love is inspired by the Gospel of the Beatitudes, of the poverty of Jesus, and of his concern for the poor. . . . 'Those who are oppressed by poverty are the object of a preferential love on the part of the Church which, since her origin and in spite of the failings of many of her members, has not ceased to work for their relief, defense, and liberation!'"

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 2444, 2448, quoting *Centesimus annus*, no. 57, and *Libertatis conscientia*, no. 68)

# EXAMPLE: DIGNITY OF WORK & RIGHTS OF WORKERS

“To exercise pressure upon the indigent and destitute for the sake of gain, and to gather one’s profit from the need of another, is condemned by all laws, human and divine.”

(Pope Leo XIII [On Capital & Labor], *Rerum Novarum*, no 17)

# EXAMPLE: SOLIDARITY

"[Solidarity] is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all."

(St. John Paul II, On Social Concern [Sollicitudo rei Socialis], no. 38)

# EXAMPLE: CARE FOR 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)

"The dominion granted to man by the Creator is not an absolute power, nor can one speak of a freedom to 'use and misuse,' or to dispose of things as one pleases. The limitation imposed from the beginning by the Creator himself and expressed symbolically by the prohibition not to 'eat of the fruit of the tree' (cf. Gen 2:16-17) shows clearly enough that, when it comes to the natural world, we are subject not only to biological laws but also to moral ones, which cannot be violated with impunity. A true concept of development cannot ignore the use of the elements of nature, the renewability of resources and the consequences of haphazard industrialization - three considerations which alert our consciences to the moral dimension of development." (St. John Paul II, *On Social Concerns* [Sollicitudo rei Socialis], no. 34)

# REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Have you ever learned about Catholic Social Teaching? When/from whom?  
-If not, what would you like to hear more about?
- What intrigues/challenges/surprises you about this collection of teachings?
- What personal application do you see CST having: In the workplace, economically, politically, technologically, theologically?
- How is the Church responding to some of the current issues of our day? What CST themes or Scriptural inspiration do you notice the Pope, Cardinals, Bishops, drawing upon in various addresses/letters/the news?
- In light of Catholic social teaching's foundation on human dignity, do I employ a consistent ethic of life? If so, how so? If not, where might I begin?
- Where is one area where I feel inclined to begin to adopt these teachings?

# RESOURCES

[USCCB website](#), Catholic Social Teaching

[\*Dilexi Te\*, Pope Leo XIV Apostolic Exhortation to All Christians on Love of the Poor.](#)

[Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, Vatican](#)

[Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship](#)

[Cabrini Pledge](#)

# Closing Prayer

