



CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

Our holy Catholic Church guides us in so many ways, including giving us an entire body of information concerning Catholic Social Teaching. Beginning with *Rerum Novarum* (*On the Condition of Labor*), written by Pope Leo XIII in 1891, many important documents have been written that apply the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ to the challenges of modern society. This lesson presents only the very basic concepts of Catholic Social Teaching.

There are seven basic principles of Catholic Social Teaching:

DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON: Every person, beginning at conception, is sacred and made in the image and likeness of God. Our belief in the sanctity of life and the inherent dignity of the person is the foundation of all principles of the social teaching of the Catholic Church.

FAMILY, COMMUNITY, AND PARTICIPATION: The human person is both sacred and social. How we organize our society, economically and politically, directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. We are called to respect all of God's gifts of creation and to be good stewards of the earth and all its resources. The family is the central social institution that must be strengthened, not undermined. We believe people have the right and duty to participate in society, seeking the well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES: 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. Every person has a fundamental right to life and to those things required for human decency such as food, shelter, education, and employment. We have a corresponding responsibility to one another to seek these things for the larger society.

OPTION FOR THE POOR: The moral test of society is how it treats its most vulnerable members. The poor have the most urgent claim on the conscience of the nation, and we must look at how public policy decisions affect the poor.

DIGNITY OF WORK: 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. Basic rights of workers must be respected, such as the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to organize and join unions, and to private property, if the dignity of work is to be protected.

SOLIDARITY: We are one human family. Solidarity is action on behalf of one human family, calling us to help overcome the divisions in our world. Our responsibility to each other crosses national, racial, economic, and ideological differences. We are called to work globally for justice.

CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION: The goods of the earth are gifts from God. We have a responsibility to care for these goods as stewards and trustees, not as mere consumers and users.

for younger saints

1. Who gave you life?
 - a. Mom and Dad
 - b. God
 - c. the doctor who delivered you
2. What is the fourth commandment?
3. What did Jesus' mother, Mary, tell the servers at the wedding at Cana?
4. Who served the poor and dying in India?
5. Who was the perfect example of loving and serving the poor?
6. Who said, "*Love one another as I have loved you*"?
 - a. Moses
 - b. Paul
 - c. Jesus
7. We are called by God to be good stewards of the earth's resources.

true false
8. Recite your memory verse for this month.

What Did You Learn About Catholic Social Teaching?

for younger saints

Quiz Answers

1. Who gave you life?
 - a. Mom and Dad
 - b. God
 - c. the doctor who delivered you
2. What is the fourth commandment?
Honor your father and mother.
3. What did Jesus' mother, Mary, tell the servers at the wedding at Cana?
"Do whatever he tells you."
4. Who served the poor and dying in India?
Mother Teresa
5. Who was the perfect example of loving and serving the poor?
Jesus
6. Who said, "*Love one another as I have loved you*"?
 - a. Moses
 - b. Paul
 - c. Jesus
7. We are called by God to be good stewards of the earth's resources.
true false
8. Recite your memory verse for this month.
"A clean heart create for me, God." Psalm 51:12

What Did You Learn About Catholic Social Teaching?

for older saints

1. What is the Hebrew word for “the poor”?
2. Who are the four groups of people included among the anawim?
3. Where in the Gospel does Jesus tell us we will ultimately be judged by what we did for the least of our brothers?
4. What is our most basic “right”?
5. What is Catholic social teaching founded upon?
6. Who was the perfect example of loving and serving the poor?
7. Recite your memory verse for the month.

What Did You Learn About Catholic Social Teaching?

for older saints

1. What is the Hebrew word for “the poor”?

anawim

2. Who are the four groups of people included among the anawim?

Widows, orphans, strangers, and the poor

3. Where in the Gospel does Jesus tell us we will ultimately be judged by what we did for the least of our brothers?

Matthew 25:40

4. What is our most basic “right”?

The right to life

5. What is Catholic social teaching founded upon?

The Holy Scriptures

6. Who was the perfect example of loving and serving the poor?

Jesus

7. Recite your memory verse for the month.

“I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father.” Matthew 5:44-45a