

# Why Justice and Peace?

"If you want peace work for justice." - *Pope Paul VI*

## Key Terms:

### Charity and Justice

- Psalm 85:10 - "Mercy and truth have met each other: justice and peace have kissed."
- Genesis 4:8-15 - I am my brother's and sister's keeper
- Matthew 25: 31-46 - Just as you did it to the least of these, you did it to me.
  
- "You love God as much as the one you love the least." - *Dorothy Day*

Justice begins with charity and charity leads to justice. In essence, charity is to get to know the person and give them a fish. Justice is to ask why the person has no fish, understand why this is, and remove the obstacles that prevents them from having fish – all the while teaching them to fish.

In *Caritas in Veritate* Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI explains: "If we love others with charity, then first of all we are just toward them" (#6). In this understanding of charity a kind thought and gesture must always be followed with a commitment to address any witnessed injustice.

Charity does not mean to help another, but to accept and receive them as a gift because "God created man and woman in his image" (Genesis 1:26-31). When we receive another we receive an image and likeness of God. Hence, "to love someone is to desire that person's good and to take effective steps to secure it."  
- *Benedict XVI, Caritas in Veritate #7*

### 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, *Sollicitudo rei Socialis* #38

"The reality of human solidarity, which is a benefit for us, also imposes a duty. Many people today would claim that they owe nothing to anyone, except to themselves. They are concerned only with their rights, and they often have great difficulty in taking responsibility for their own and other people's integral development." - *Benedict XVI, Caritas in Veritate #43*

“Today more than ever, I think it is necessary to educate ourselves in solidarity, to rediscover the value and meaning of this very uncomfortable word (solidarity), which oftentimes has been left aside, and to make it become a basic attitude in decisions made at the political, economic and financial levels, in relationships between persons, peoples and nations. It is only in standing firmly united, by overcoming selfish ways of thinking and partisan interests, that the objective of eliminating forms of indigence determined by a lack of food will also be achieved. A solidarity that is not reduced to different forms of welfare, but which makes an effort to ensure that an ever greater number of persons are economically independent. Many steps have been taken in different countries, but we are still far from a world where all can live with dignity.” - *Pope Francis, Message for World Food Day, Oct. 16, 2013*

## **Subsidiarity**

Subsidiarity is a preferential option given to localized initiatives for local and global solutions. Subsidiarity emphasizes that justice is not possible without relationship both to humanity and creation as a whole.

“Subsidiarity respects personal dignity by recognizing in the person a subject who is always capable of giving something to others.” - *Pope Benedict XVI, Caritas in Veritate #57*

“Let us keep in mind the principle of subsidiarity, which grants freedom to develop the capabilities present at every level of society, while also demanding a greater sense of responsibility for the common good from those who wield greater power.” - *Pope Francis, Laudato Si’ #196.*

“Whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where men are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society, but they do more harm to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury.” - *Pope Paul VI, Gaudium et Spes #27*

# Seven Pillars of Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic Social Teaching is a doctrine of the Church rooted in scripture, developed through the lived reality of our world. These principles are not listed in order of importance – rather, each serves as a lens to compliment the others in a comprehensive fashion, holding together a seamless tapestry that strives to protect the dignity of the individual and the collective good for all people, in all places and times.

## 1. Life and Dignity of the Human Person

Each person comes into the world as a beloved child of God. Each person is unique and a gift to be received by the world. Regardless of how an individual sees one's self or how society views an individual, each person is objectively created out of, and for, intrinsic goodness. Each person is cherished by God, loved unconditionally and our task is to do likewise. Life begins at conception and ends in hopeful fullness with God. Any way which human dignity is destroyed or degraded – including practices of putting material goods before people – is contrary to human nature.

### A. Scripture References - Life and Dignity of the Human Person

Genesis 1:26-31	Romans 12: 9-18
Deuteronomy 10:17-1	1 Corinthians 3:16
Psalms 139:13-16	Galatians 3:27-28
Proverbs 22:2	James 2:1-8
Luke 10:25-37	1 John 3: 1-2
John 4:1-42	1 John 4:7-12

### B. References of Church Tradition - Life and Dignity of the Human Person

“Human persons are willed by God; they are imprinted with God's image. Their dignity does not come from the work they do, but from the persons they are.” - *St. John Paul II, On the Hundredth Year (Centesimus annus) #11*

“The dignity of the individual and the demands of justice require, particularly today, that economic choices do not cause disparities in wealth to increase in an excessive and morally unacceptable manner.” - *Benedict XVI, Caritas in Veritate (Charity in Truth) #32*

“It is not ‘progressive’ to try to resolve problems by eliminating a human life.” - *Pope Francis’ Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium #213-214*

## 2. Call to Family, Community, and Full Participation

As each human being is sacred and beloved they are also social beings. The building block and fundamental cell of all societies is the family. Fostering healthy marriages in family life and caring for each person from conception is the responsibility of everyone and reflects how society is organized toward the common good. Culture, law, and politics should reflect values that stabilize and ignite healthy family life. Special vigilance and protection is needed for those who are poor and vulnerable.

### A. Scripture References - Call to Family, Community and Full Participation

Genesis 2:18	Romans 12:4-8
Genesis 4:8-15	Hebrews 10:24-25
Leviticus 25:23-43	James 2:14-17
Jeremiah 7:5-7	1 Peter 4:8-11
Micah 6:6-8	1 John 3:16-18
John 15:12-17	1 John 4:19-21
Acts 2:43-47	

### B. References from Church Tradition - Call to Family, Community and Full Participation

“The first and fundamental structure for a ‘human ecology’ is the family . . . founded on marriage, in which the mutual gift of self as husband and wife creates an environment in which children can be born and develop their potentialities, become aware of their dignity and prepare to face their unique and individual destiny.” - *St. John Paul II, On the Hundredth Year (Centesimus Annus) #39*

“The family is the foundation of co-existence and a remedy against social fragmentation. Children have a right to grow up in a family with a father and a mother capable of creating a suitable environment for the child’s development and emotional maturity.” - *Pope Francis, Humanum Conference, November 17, 2014*

## 3. Rights and Responsibilities

In order for human dignity to be protected, for families to thrive, and for communities to grow, the rights and responsibility of each person in society must be met and upheld. These rights hold in place all basic rights that are needed for nurturing. They include: life, clean water, nutritional food, shelter, clothing, education, healthcare, property, the right to freely and openly participate in political processes, religious freedom, meaningful employment, and basic social services. These rights will not come about unless each fulfills their duty of ensuring their neighbour is receiving these rights as a primary responsibility for all to all.

#### A. Scripture References - Rights and Responsibilities

Leviticus 25:35	Jeremiah 29:4-7
Ruth 2:2-23	Matthew 25: 31-46
Tobit 4:5-11	Luke 16:19-31
Proverbs 31:8-9	Acts 4:32-35
Isaiah 1:16-1	2 Corinthians 9:6-15
Jeremiah 22: 13-16	
James 2:14-18 - <i>Faith without works is dead.</i>	

#### B. References of Church Tradition - Rights and Responsibilities

“Rights must be religiously respected wherever they exist, and it is the duty of the public authority to prevent and to punish injury, and to protect every one in the possession of his own. Still, when there is question of defending the rights of individuals, the poor and badly off have a claim to especial consideration. The richer class have many ways of shielding themselves, and stand less in need of help from the State; whereas the mass of the poor have no resources of their own to fall back upon, and must chiefly depend upon the assistance of the State.” - *Pope Leo XIII, Rerum Novarum, 1891 #37.*

“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.” - *Pope John XXIII, Pacem in Terris #11*

“In human society one man's natural right gives rise to a corresponding duty in other men; the duty, that is, of recognizing and respecting that right. Every basic human right draws its authoritative force from the natural law, which confers it and attaches to it its respective duty. Hence, to claim one's rights and ignore one's duties, or only half fulfill them, is like building a house with one hand and tearing it down with the other.” - *Pope John XXIII, Pacem in Terris #30*

### 4. Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

How we treat Christ alive in our sister and brother – especially the poor and vulnerable – is crucial to our salvation and a visible sign of the progress of our society. The poor and vulnerable must be served in a sense of awe and gratitude through relationship, for they are our greatest ally in the human family.

## **A. Scripture References – Option for the Poor and Vulnerable**

Exodus 22:20-26

Leviticus 19:9-10

Job 34:20-28

Proverbs 31:8-9

Sirach 4:1-10

Isaiah 25:4-5

Isaiah 58:5-7

Matthew 25:34-40 (What you do for the least among you, you do for Jesus.)

Luke 4:16-21

Luke 6:20-23

1John 3:17-18

## **B. References of Church Tradition – Option for the Poor and Vulnerable**

" 'He who has the goods of this world and sees his brother in need and closes his heart to him, how does the love of God abide in him?' Everyone knows that the Fathers of the Church laid down the duty of the rich toward the poor in no uncertain terms. As St. Ambrose put it: 'You are not making a gift of what is yours to the poor man, but you are giving him back what is his. You have been appropriating things that are meant to be for the common use of everyone. The earth belongs to everyone, not to the rich.' " - *Paul VI On the Development of Peoples (Populorum Progressio)*, #23

"Therefore everyone has the right to possess a sufficient amount of the earth's goods for themselves and their family. This has been the opinion of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, who taught that people are bound to come to the aid of the poor and to do so not merely out of their superfluous goods. Persons in extreme necessity are entitled to take what they need from the riches of others. Faced with a world today where so many people are suffering from want, the council asks individuals and governments to remember the saying of the Fathers: 'Feed the people dying of hunger, because if you do not feed them you are killing them,' and it urges them according to their ability to share and dispose of their goods to help others, above all by giving them aid which will enable them to help and develop themselves." - *Gaudium et Spes (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)* #69

"Within the community of believers there can never be room for a poverty that denies anyone what is needed for a dignified life." - *Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est* #20.

"When we read the Gospel we find a clear indication: not so much our friends and wealthy neighbours, but above all the poor and the sick, those who are usually despised and overlooked, 'those who cannot repay you' (Lk 14:14). There can be no room for doubt or for explanations which weaken so clear a message. Today, and always, 'the poor are the privileged recipients of the

Gospel', and the fact that it is freely preached to them is a sign of the kingdom that Jesus came to establish. We have to state, without mincing words, that there is an inseparable bond between our faith and the poor. May we never abandon them." - *Pope Francis, Evangelium Vitae #48.*

## 5. The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

Economic systems and places of employment must be set up in way that they are designed and functioning to serve people rather than the reverse. Work is to be a participation in the co creation of the kingdom of God. All able people have the right to a living wage, a safe work environment, meaningful work and have the responsibility to participate in creation through the gift of their labour. The fundamental need to rest and pursue true leisure in solidarity with the Father is a further common good to be preserved.

### A. Scripture References - The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

Genesis 2:1-3

Genesis 2:15

Deuteronomy 5:13-15

Deuteronomy 14:28-29

Deuteronomy 24:14-15

Sirach 34:20-22

Isaiah 58:3-7

Jeremiah 22:13

Matthew 20:1-16

Mark 2:27

Luke 3:10-14

Luke 12:13-21

James 5:1-6

### B. References of Church Tradition - The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

"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, On the Hundredth Year (Centesimus annus) #43*

"As the Church solemnly reaffirmed in the recent Council, "the beginning, the subject and the goal of all social institutions is and must be the human person." 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." - *Paul VI, Octogesima Adveniens #14*

## 6. Solidarity

Whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences, we are one human family called to love our neighbour. At the core of solidarity is the pursuit of justice and peace.

### A. Scripture References - Solidarity

Genesis 12:1-3

Psalms 72

Psalms 122 *For the sake of the Lord, I will seek your good.*

Zechariah 8:

Matthew 5:

Matthew 5:21-24

Romans 13:8-

1 Corinthians 12:12-26 *If one member of Christ's body suffers, all suffer. If one member is honored, all rejoice.*

Colossians 3:9-17

1John 3:16-18

### B. References of Church Tradition - Solidarity

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## 7. Care for all of God's Creation

All of creation was made to be good and for the common good. Individually and collectively we are called into the joy of stewardship for all creation. Peace and right relations serve as the foundation to harmony and unity in preserving the Earth. Catholics are called to eliminate waste, and excess, to live in a simplicity that is attractive and freeing.

### A. Scripture References – Care for all of God's Creation

Genesis 1:1-31

Daniel 3:56-82

Genesis 2:15

Matthew 6:25-34

Leviticus 25:1-7

Romans 1:20

Deuteronomy 10:14

1 Corinthians 10:26

Psalms 24:1-2

### B. References From Church Tradition – Care for all of God's Creation

“My dear friends, God's creation is one and it is good. The concerns for nonviolence, sustainable development, justice and peace, and care for our environment are of vital importance for humanity. They cannot, however, be understood apart from a profound reflection on the innate dignity of every human life from conception to natural death: a dignity conferred by God himself and thus inviolable.” - *Benedict XVI, Address, Welcoming Celebration by Young People for World Youth Day in Sydney, Australia, July 17, 2008*

“The world is not something indifferent, raw material to be utilized simply as we see fit. Rather, it is part of God's good plan, in which all of us are called to be sons and daughters in the one Son of God, Jesus Christ (cf. Eph 1:4-12).” - *Benedict XVI, Apostolic Exhortation Sacramentum Caritatis, February 22, 2007*

“We see increasing sensitivity to the environment and the need to protect nature, along with a growing concern, both genuine and distressing, for what is happening to our planet... Our goal is not to amass information or to satisfy curiosity, but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it.” - *Pope Francis, Laudato Si' #19.*

“The human environment and the natural environment deteriorate together; we cannot adequately combat environmental degradation unless we attend to causes related to human and social degradation. In fact, the deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet... The impact of present imbalances is also seen in the premature death of many of the poor.” - *Pope Francis, Laudato Si' #48.*