

Faith Formation

Catholic Social Teaching

S t . I g n a t i u s L o y o l a P a r i s h

Seven Themes of CST

1. [Life and Dignity of the Human Person](#)
2. [Call to Family, Community, and Participation](#)
3. [Rights and Responsibilities](#)
4. [Option for the Poor and Vulnerable](#)
5. [The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers](#)
6. [Solidarity](#)
7. [Care for God's Creation](#)

Catholic Social Teaching (Cont.)

Faith and Justice. Sometimes expressed as "A Faith that does Justice" or "Service of Faith and Promotion of Justice." For Jesuits Faith and Justice were distinctly linked in [Decree 4 of General Congregation 32](#) (1974-1975).

Those Jesuits who had gathered from around the world for this Congregation witnessed a world in which many had no knowledge of God, a world where human achievements led many to forget or reject humanity's ultimate mystery and purpose, and a world though interdependent still divided by an injustice that is institutionalized in social, economic and political structures.

Even though many of the injustices of the day are ingrained in the very fabric of society, change in society will only come from a reform of policy and laws as well as reform of the individual heart. Today we can see how laws, in and of themselves, do not prevent oppression, racism and division. It really has been an

interesting year in which so many have stood up to bear witness to the shortfall of laws and societal structures. Yet what has been lacking is a grounding of social action in faith with roots in religious experience. While scripture does not directly address current issues of technology, capitalism and multi-national economies, it does bring us back to the inherent dignity of the individual, a special attention to the poor and the vulnerable, a willingness to sacrifice for the good of others and a reliance on God rather than nation or self.

The links to the themes of Catholic Social Teaching on the US Bishops website include many scriptural citations that help us to see the connection of scripture and social teaching. Likewise, some of the key church documents are likewise referenced. What is missing is some of what you may have experienced this past year, the witness and testimony of so many concerning racism,

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Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching (5- 7)

Above is a listing of the [Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching \(CST\)](#). This Lent we ask folks to contemplate one of the themes during each of the weeks of Lent. It doesn't have to be a Lenten penance. In fact, each teaching can open for you new fonts of understanding

with regards to the scriptures.

Our fifth theme is, [The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers](#). Have you been one of those who has shifted to "work at home" during the pandemic? Did you find it less fulfilling, somehow more than awkward not having the usual social interactions? Or for

those who were able to continue to work "at work", did you find it hard to adjust to social distancing, to mask wearing, to split shifts and hours? If so, maybe you have begun to see that work is much more than simply production. It is the right to work with others, to do more

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Finding God in All Things

inequality, the need for jobs, a better distribution of the world's goods, and a simple concern for one another.

If you wish to see a great example of this blending of scripture, tradition and experience, you may want to read the "[The Telling Takes US Home: Taking Our Place in the Stories That Shape Us, A People's Pastoral from the Catholic Committee of Appalachia \(2015\)](#)". It is patterned after two previous pastoral letters penned by the Bishops of Appalachia. I believe it reflects well our Catholic Social Teaching tradition applied to the experience and traditions of the people of Appalachia. It is an example of CST come alive.

Nevertheless, our Catholic tradition does believe that our faith should lead us to seek justice, and more than justice, to show both mercy and care for those in need.

[Begin here](#) for a listing of all seven themes. [Click here](#) for a handout listing all seven. A wonderful [children's version is here](#).

Seven Themes of CST (Continued)

than manage a screen. As Pope Francis is quoted in [Laudato Si](#),

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.

Hopefully, when the pandemic is over, not only will all be able to work again, but all will be able to find work a place where we can share these human goods once again.

[Solidarity](#) Once again quoting Pope Francis and [Laudato Si](#),

In the present condition of global society, where injustices abound and growing numbers of people are deprived of basic human rights and considered expendable, the principle of the common good immediately

becomes, logically and inevitably, a summons to solidarity and a preferential option for the poorest of our brothers and sisters.

This summons to solidarity is more than a common cause, it is daring to enter into relationship with the oppressed and marginalized, willing to listen, to see through their eyes, willing to sacrifice on behalf of others. Quoting St. John Paul II, [On Social Concern](#),

[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.

[Care for God's Creation](#)

If anyone has been able to connect the dots between care for God's creation and care for God's children it has been Pope Francis. While the term Ecological Justice may be relatively new, most are now aware of the disproportionate effect of climate change on the poor and poor countries. We have come to see how interconnected we are as a people, how our lifestyles and means of production effect the climate and effect others. As Pope Francis says in [Laudato Si](#),

Everything is connected. Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society.