



## **Best Kept Secret!**

- What is the best kept secret of the Catholic Church?
  - Doctrine of Social Justice
- Body of teaching
  - Social, Economic, Political, Cultural
  - Forgotten, or unknown
- Two documents (U.S. Bishops)
  - Peace Pastoral 1983
  - Economic Pastoral 1986
- Considered Radical/Not Authentic Teaching
- Drawn heavily on Documents
  - Popes, Vatican II, Synod of Bishops, Bishops' Conferences





- Corporal Works of Mercy
  - Feed the hungry
  - Drink to the thirsty
  - Clothe the naked
  - Shelter the homeless
  - Visit the sick
  - Ransom the captive
  - Bury the dead

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# **Sharing Catholic Teaching: Challenges and Directions**

- "Catholic social teaching emerges from the truth of what God has revealed to us about himself."
- Based on and inseparable from our understanding of human life and human dignity.
- Our commitment to the Catholic social mission must be rooted in and strengthened by our spiritual lives, including participation in the reception of the Body and Blood of Christ.

## Roots of CST

- Old Testament Teaching
  - Social Obligation & Responsibility of Jewish Law
- Flows from teachings of Jesus Christ
  - Sermon on the Mount
  - Matthew 25: 31-43
  - Parables
    - Prodigal Son
    - Good Samaritan
  - "Love one another ..."
- Acts of the Apostles
  - All things held in communion
  - Healing of blind beggar
    - "He went laughing and leaping ..."

## "Diakonia"

- "To serve"
  - Teaching about social responsibility
  - Living out responsibility
- Jesus' command:
  - "Love God AND neighbor"
  - Concern for life
    - · Dignity of EVERY man, woman and child
    - Regardless of status or stage in life
  - Concern of church in history



#### Rerum Novarum

- Pope Leo XIII
  - Encyclical
  - "On the dignity and right of workers"
- Not ideology or political philosophy
- "it springs from the Good News about salvation in Jesus Christ and that there is a definite content to Catholic Social Teaching which springs from the Word of God as lived and reflected on within the life of the church."

**Msgr William Murphy** 

"Catholic Social Teaching: A consistent and Coherent Message"

# **Major Themes**

- Rich treasure of wisdom
  - Building a just society
- Moral Principles and Coherent Values
- Respect for Human Life
  - · Here, abroad, throughout the world
- Articulated in Papal, Conciliar, & Episcopal Documents
  - "Pacem in Terra" Pope St. John XXIII
  - "Humanae Vitae" Pope St. Paul VI
  - · "The Gospel of Life" Pope St. John Paul II
  - Etc.



# **Major Themes**

- Life & Dignity of the Human Person
  - · All human life is sacred
  - Dignity of human person is foundational
- Call to Family, Community & Participation
  - Human person is sacred and social
  - Family is central
- Rights and Responsibilities
  - Human rights to be protected
  - Responsibilities met
- Option for the Poor & Vulnerable
  - Growing prosperity for some, poverty for others
  - Deepening divisions between rich and poor



# **Major Themes**

- Dignity of Work & Rights of Workers
  - · Bottom line has precedence
  - Rights of workers ignored
  - Economy should serve people
- Solidarity
  - One human family
    - · No national, racial, ethnic, economic, or ideological differences
  - "Love our neighbor" has global dimensions
- Care for God's Creation
  - Stewardship of creation
  - Called to protect people and the planet

#### Seamless Garment

- Joseph Cardinal Bernardin
- Linkage of all life issues
  - Constitutes a "seamless garment"
  - · All issues of life, woven together
- Called to serve the least among us
- Urgent attention and priority to ALL life issues



#### Defense of Human Life

- Church's Mission: Defend Human Life
  - Conception to Natural Death
- There are Key Issues
- However:
  - Indifference to: Poverty, violence, injustice
- Continue to Address:
  - Racism, Sexism, Poverty, Hunger, Employment, Education, Housing & Homelessness, Health Care, Multi-Cultural Issues, Imprisoned, Sexual Abuse, Sex Trafficing, ETC.
- Each person has: Fundamental Human Dignity
  - · We are ALL Children of God, made in His image and likeness

#### Defense of Human Life

- Human Life is Sacred
- Involves "Creative action of God!"
- Human life begins:
  - · Moment of creation, i.e., the moment of conception
- Human life ends:
  - Natural Death
- Jefferson's Formula
  - "Endowed by their creator ..."
  - Unalienable Rights: Life, liberty, pursuit of happiness
    - 1st among these, "Life", most basic of human rights



- Life and Dignity of the Human Person
  - Direct attacks against innocent civilians
    - Targeting non-combatants to be condemned
  - Legitimate defense by Military Force
    - Rigorous consideration
  - "Just War" Theory
    - · Damage inflicted: lasting, grave, & certain
    - All other means are impractical, or ineffective
    - Serious prospects of success
    - Use of arms not to produce evils greater or graver



- Life and Dignity of the Human Person
  - Racism
  - Other Forms of Discrimination
    - Sex and Age
  - Sexual Abuse
    - Children
    - Human Trafficking
  - Self Image
    - Society's standard of worth
    - Feelings of Inadequacy
    - Made in the image of God



- Rights and Responsibilities
  - Insults to Human Dignity
    - Subhuman living conditions
    - Arbitrary Imprisonment
    - Deportation
    - Slavery
    - Prostitution
    - Selling of women and children
    - Disgraceful working conditions
  - People treated as tools for profit
  - "Know the name of the cleaning person, the same as you know the CEO"

- Option for the Poor
  - Inadequate or Non-existent Health Care
  - Cities with Adequate Housing
  - Proper Nourishment
  - Affordable Housing

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- Call to Family, Community, & Participation
  - Crime Rate
  - Lack of Security
  - Justice, NOT Vengeance
    - Punishment must have clear purpose
    - Protect society
    - Rehabilitation
  - Human Dignity, even for Criminals
    - · Each is a child of God
  - Sr. Helen Prejean
  - We are all Community



- Dignity and Rights of Workers
  - Minorities participate in farm economy
  - Fair Standard for Minimum Wage
  - Workers Rights v Maximum Profits

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- Solidarity
  - Global World Economy
  - Binds People in Common Family
  - · "Am I my brother's keeper?"
    - Global Implications

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- Care for God's Creation
  - Isaiah: God created the world "to be lived in, not designing it to be a wasteland!"
  - Stewardship
  - Creation entrusted to us
  - Use of resources for future generations
  - Climate change is real
  - · Dominion over the earth



# **Catholic Social Teaching**

 All of these are issues of Social Justice that we cannot ignore. Respect for the dignity of the human person demands a commitment to human rights across a broad spectrum. The development of a compassionate culture is all of our responsibility.

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