

---

**"REFLECTING ON THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN RESPONSE TO THE WAY WE LIVE IN THE MORDERN WORLD, THE CHURCH HAS DEVELOPED A SERIES OF PRINCIPALS FOR REFLECTION, TOGETHER WITH CRITERIA FOR JUDGEMENT THAT OFFERS DIRECTIVES FOR ACTION. IT IS KNOWN AS CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING... THE CRITERIA ARE TRULY EXPRESSIONS OF LOVE."**

**- POPE FRANCIS, LET US DREAM: THE PATH TO A BETTER FUTURE.**

**ROMERO  
CENTER FOR  
ECONOMIC AND  
SOCIAL JUSTICE**



PO Box 2816  
Dunedin, Florida 34697



[theromero-center@gmail.com](mailto:theromero-center@gmail.com)



[romero-center.com](http://romero-center.com)

Copyright 2021, Romero Center for Economic and Social Justice. All rights reserved. Non-Profit reproduction permitted with attribution.



**CATHOLIC SOCIAL  
TEACHING**

**THE ROMERO CENTER  
FOR ECONOMIC AND  
SOCIAL JUSTICE**

## WHAT IS CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

Derived from the Scriptures, Catholic Social Teaching is a rich and historic collection of writings that embody the way in which Jesus taught his followers to conduct their lives so as to benefit all members of society in a fair and just way. **It is an essential part of the Catholic faith.**

Starting in 1891, as the result of abuses of the Industrial Revolution, Pope Leo XIII issued his encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, *on the subject of worker rights and responsibilities*. Since that time, many additional encyclicals have expanded the reach Catholic Social Teaching. For example, Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si*, defines the role of Catholic Social Teaching to address climate change.

In his most recent book, [Let Us Dream: The Path To A Better Future](#), Pope Francis noted, "Reflecting on the Kingdom of God in response to the way we live in the modern world, the Church has developed a series for reflection, together with criteria for judgment that offers directives for action. It is known as Catholic Social Teaching".

## PRINCIPLES OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), defines Catholic Social Teaching through seven distinct principles, as follows:

- ✦ Life and dignity of the human person. All people are made in the image and likeness of God. People do not lose their dignity due to disability, poverty, age, lack of success or race. Focus is on people over things, being over having.
- ✦ A call to family, community and participation of all in society. All persons must have a seat at the table;
- ✦ The rights and responsibilities of all persons to life, food, shelter, health care, education, employment plus the right to participation in decisions that affect their lives. Conversely



persons are expected to respect the rights of others and to work for the common good.

- ✦ Option for the poor and the vulnerable. The moral test of society is how we treat its weakest members.
- ✦ The dignity of work and the rights of workers. People have the right to decent and productive work, fair wages and private property, in addition to the right to organize. The economy exists to serve the people, not the other way around.
- ✦ Solidarity. Our responsibilities cross national, racial, economic and ideological differences. We are called globally to work for justice.
- ✦ Care for God's creation. Creation is a gift from God. We are obliged to care for God's creation as stewards and trustees, not just as users.

Catholic Social Teaching is not a "cafeteria plan", where we can choose to adopt one part, while discarding others. As Pope Francis has noted, all aspects are "equally sacred".

## CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING IS IMPORTANT

CST is an important part of our Catholic faith and the Church's guidance on how we are to conduct our lives, as that relates to our society and our planet. **As an integral part of our faith, we are obliged to actively apply the social teachings of the Church.** At the same time, all faiths are encouraged to take these teachings into account as well

## CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING AS A FRAMEWORK TO MAKE BETTER DECISIONS

In a similar way that Catholics around the world think, the Romero Center believes that Catholic Social Teaching provides an important and useful framework to explore and discern many of today's important social and justice issues.

**People in positions of power and influence where decisions and opinions are made have a special obligation to consider Catholic Social Teaching because the decisions they make and the opinions they promote have such wide ranging impact on the world around them.**

For example, take the issue of environmental racism, where many of the world's most chronic environmental problems take place where the poor and voiceless live.

In terms of Catholic Social Teaching, these practices affect several of the aforementioned principles.

Likewise, consider immigration policy. While Catholic Social Teaching permits nations to control their borders, they must take into account the dignity of those seeking to emigrate.

Other issues where Catholic Social Teaching have an impact include, our safety net, labor issues, the treatment of minorities, LGBT rights, the role of women in society, peace vs. conflict, the death penalty, the fairness of economic policy and more.