

10 principles of Catholic Social Teaching

1. **Bedrock: The Principle of Human Dignity.** Every human being is created in the image of God and redeemed by Jesus Christ, and therefore is invaluable and worthy of respect as a member of the human family. Every person--regardless of race, sex, age, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, employment or economic status, health, intelligence, achievement or any other differentiating characteristic is worthy of respect. It is not what you do or what you have that gives you a claim on respect; it is simply being human that establishes your dignity. Given that dignity, the human person is, in the Catholic view, never a means, always an end.

2. **The Principle of Respect for Human Life;** Every person from the moment of conception to natural death, has inherent dignity and a right to life consistent with that dignity. Human life at every stage of development and decline is precious and therefore worthy of protection and respect. It is always wrong directly to attack innocent human life. The sacredness of human life is part of any moral vision for a just and good society.

3. **The Principle of Association.** The person is not only sacred but also social. How we organize our society--in economics and politics, in law and policy directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. The center is the family; family stability must always be protected & never undermined. By association with others human persons achieve their fulfillment.

4. **The Principle of Participation.** People have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable have a right not to be shut out from participating in those institutions that are necessary for human fulfillment especially with work. "Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected--the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to organize and join unions, to private property, and to economic initiative" (

5. **The Principle of Preferential Protection for the Poor and Vulnerable,** to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first because the common good requires it. The opposite of rich and powerful is poor and powerless. If the good of all, the common good, is to prevail, preferential protection must move toward those affected adversely by the absence of power. Otherwise the balance needed to keep society in one piece will be broken to the detriment of the whole.

6. **The Principle of Solidarity;** we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they live. We are one human family & solidarity means that 'loving our neighbor' has global dimensions in an interdependent world leading to choices that will promote and protect the common good.

7. **The Principle of Stewardship.** We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. We are managers, not owners; morally responsibility for the protection of the environment; using our personal talents, our attention to personal health and our use of personal property.

8. **The Principle of Subsidiarity,** the responsibilities and limits of government, and the essential roles of voluntary associations putting a proper limit on government by insisting that no higher level of organization should perform any function that can be handled efficiently and effectively at a lower level of organization by human persons who, individually or in groups, are closer to the problems and closer to the ground. Oppressive governments are always in violation of the principle of subsidiarity; overactive governments frequently violate this principle.

9. **The Principle of Human Equality** coming from their essential dignity. Social and cultural discrimination in fundamental rights are not compatible with God's design. Underlying is the simple principle of fairness.

10. **The Principle of the Common Good=** the social conditions that allow people to reach their full human potential and to realize their human dignity.