

Evangelii Nuntiandi 1975 Pope Paul VI
(Evangelization in the Modern World)
Preaching should address people of all cultures, respecting their differences and proclaiming the Gospel as liberation from all oppression..

Redemptor Hominis 1979 Pope John Paul II
(Redeemer of Humankind)
Exposes the threat to human dignity and rights of unbridled technology, violence, discrimination, terrorism, unemployment and poverty. Calls for creating economic and political structures that remedy social injustices...

Laborem Exercens 1981 Pope John Paul II
(On Human Work)
Emphasizes once again the primacy of person over things and of labor over capital. Calls for workplace justice as responsibility of society, employer and worker...

Sollicitudo Rei Socialis 1987 Pope John Paul II
(The Social Concerns of the Church)
Names the East-West polarization as harmful to full development of poor nations. Calls for solidarity and for an option for the poor by affluent nations. Points to the injustice of so few having so much and the many having so little of the resources of nature and material goods...

Centesimus Annus 1991 Pope John Paul II
(The 100th Year)
In celebration of the 100th anniversary of Rerum Novarum, this document reaffirms its principles and call for a society where all people have access to meaningful, safe work...

(For more details on each document see Shaping A New World, a NETWORK publication from which this information was taken.)

The Challenge of Peace 1983 U.S. Catholic Bishops
Exposes the horrors of nuclear warfare to life on this planet. Examines the Church's teaching on war and peace and calls for the creation of peace worldwide.

Economic Justice for All 1986 U.S. Catholic Bishops
Written to call all Catholics to shape a society that better protects the dignity and basic rights of all. Reiterates that every economic decision and institution must make decisions and be evaluated on whether it protects or undermines the dignity of the human person. All members of society have special obligation to the poor and vulnerable in its midst.

Encyclicals and Documents Containing Major Social Justice Teachings

- Rerum Novarum** 1891 Pope Leo XIII
(On the Condition of Labor)
Presents rights and responsibilities of capital and labor, e.g. just wages, equitable distribution of goods, workers can organize...
- Quadragesimo Anno** 1931 Pope Pius XI
(Forty Years After: On Restructuring the Social Order)
Exposes and condemns effects of greed and concentrated economic power on working people and social order. Reiterates much of Rerum Novarum...
- Mater et Magistra** 1961 Pope John XXIII
(Mother and Teacher: Christianity and Social Progress)
Deplores widening gap between rich and poor nations, arms build-up and situation of farmers. Challenges to seek the international common good through cooperation and mutual assistance...
- Pacem in Terris** 1963 Pope John XXIII
(Peace on Earth)
Calls for disarmament and a world-wide public authority to promote universal common good. Recognize that all nations have equal dignity and right to self-development...
- Gaudium et Spes** 1965 Second Vatican Council
(Joy and Hope: The Church in the Modern World)
States responsibility of Christians to work for structures to make more just peaceful world. Base political and economic decisions on human dignity..
- Populorum Progression** 1967 Pope Paul VI
(On the Development of Peoples)
Condemns economic structures promoting inequality. Calls for international agreements to limit competition and restore equality of opportunity for poor nations...
- Octogesima Adveniens** 1971 Pope Paul VI
(Eightieth Anniversary: A Call to Action)
Calls for political action for economic justice. Challenges Catholics to analyze the situation of one's society objectively, apply Catholic social principles, identify action for justice...
- Justice in the World** 1971 Synod of Bishops
"Action on behalf of justice is a constitutive part of preaching and living the Gospel". The right to development includes both economic growth and economic and political participation by the people. The Church should model the justice to which she calls others...