

RCIA
Social Justice and Spirituality
Session 21

“Society ensures social justice when it provides the conditions that allow associations or individuals to obtain what is their due, according to their nature and their vocation. Social justice is linked to the common good and the exercise of authority.”

(CCC # 1928)



CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE TEACHING

7 Major Themes of Catholic Social Justice Teachings

Dignity of the Human Person

Each person is sacred, made in the image of God.

World practices:

Capital punishment, legalized abortion, materialism, pornography, unrestrained commercialism, drug trafficking, abuse, and euthanasia.

Option for the Poor

The moral test of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable members. The poor have the most urgent moral claim on the conscience of the nation. The "option for the poor," is not an adversarial slogan that pits one group or class against another. Rather it states that the deprivation and powerlessness of the poor wounds the whole community.

World Practices:

Neglect of those who are poor, those who are older, women and children, lack of affordable housing and medical care for those who are needy, a growing gap between impoverished and wealthy people and nations.

Rights and Responsibilities

Every person has a right to the basic material necessities that are required to live a decent life.

World Practices:

Institutionalized racism, neglect of minority communities, ethnic genocide, imprisonment of political dissidents, abuse of prisoners, denial of political and social freedom.

Economic Justice

The economy must serve people, not the other way around.
People are more important than things. Labor is more important than capital.

World Practices:

Displacement of people from their land, widespread unemployment, unjust labor practices, low wages in impoverished countries, sweatshops, child labor, global systems of economic injustice.

Stewardship of God's Creation

The goods of the earth are gifts. We hold them in trust, as stewards.

World Practices:

Environmental destruction, loss of habitat for creatures and people, unsustainable consumption of global resources.

Participation

All people have a right to a minimal level of participation in the economic, political, and cultural life of society.

World Practices:

Individualism, class divisions and stereotyping gender discrimination, ethnic, racial and religious intolerance, neglect of immigrants and refugees.

Global Solidarity and Development

"It is a firm and preserving determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all... because we are all responsible for all." Pope John Paul II

World Practices:

Nationalism and economic competition, ethnic division, persecution of minority populations, small and large scale military conflicts, gang violence.

Reflection Questions

1. In what ways do you see Catholic social teaching challenging our "American" way of life?
2. Why are themes such as solidarity, interconnectedness, and justice part of the foundation of Catholic Social teaching?
3. What does the emphasis on human dignity throughout Catholic social teaching mean to you personally?
4. Did anyone one of the seven themes stick out to you in particular as we read through them? If so, what thoughts did you have, or why do you think that one stuck out to you?
5. Knowingly or unknowingly, do you promote or participate in any of the world practices listed above?

"Let justice flow like a river." Amos 5: 24