The Principles of Catholic Social Teaching
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Wheel of Justice

1. Human Dignity
2. Community and Common Good
3. Family & Community Participation
4. Rights & Responsibilities
5. Option for the Poor
6. Solidarity
7. Stewardship
8. Subsidiarity
9. Economic Justice

The diagram illustrates the interconnected principles of Catholic Social Teaching, highlighting the importance of human dignity at the center, with outward connections to community and common good, family and community participation, rights and responsibilities, option for the poor, solidarity, stewardship, subsidiarity, and economic justice.
Belief in the inherent dignity of the human person is the foundation of all Catholic social teaching. Grounded in the idea that persons are created by God in God’s image and likeness, thus, human life is sacred. Human dignity is the starting point for a moral vision of society.
The Dignity of Each Human Person

Every human being is created in the image and likeness of God and redeemed by Jesus Christ.

Thus, each person is valuable and worthy of respect.
Common Good and Community

- Human beings are both sacred and social.
- Dignity and rights are realized and protected in relationships and in wider society.
- How we organize economics, politics, law, and policies in our societies directly affects human dignity and the protection of human rights.
- In a moral society, economics, politics, law, and public policy protect human dignity.
The Common Good

The common good is the social condition that promotes the dignity of persons, allowing them to reach their full potential and receive the rights and privileges necessary for a happy life.
Participation

• All persons have the right and the responsibility to participate in the economic, political, and cultural life of society.

• Thus, each person contributes to the good of the whole society to promote the common good and well-being of all human beings.
Rights and Responsibilities

• Every person has a fundamental right
  – to life
  – to freedom
  – to the necessities of life
  – to things necessary to live a full and decent life, such as
    • education
    • employment
    • health care
    • ownership of property
Subsequently, the right to life also means a right to a society that makes possible:

– Freedom of speech
– Freedom of religion
– Humane working conditions
– The ability to raise and provide for a family
– Affordable and decent housing
– Health care
Rights and Responsibilities

- Rights and freedoms come with duties and responsibilities
  - to family
  - to help sustain and promote the rights of others
  - to participate in forming and maintaining a just society
  - to participate, as far as we are able, in work
  - to respect and promote the rights and freedoms of others
Preferential Option for the Poor

• The moral conscience of a society can be measured by “how it treats its most vulnerable members. The poor are the most urgent moral claim on the conscience of the nation.”

• Nations are called to develop and uphold policies that protect the poor and vulnerable: widows, the unborn, persons with disabilities, the ill, the homeless and the elderly.
Preferential Option for the Poor

“Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world…”
“...for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink...”
“...I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing...”
“...I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.”
The Catholic Church believes that Christ’s presence in today’s world is made known when we reach out in love to those in need:

- The poor and the sick
- Those who hunger and thirst for nourishment and for justice
- The homeless and the elderly
- Those who are imprisoned by abuse, drugs, alcohol, or depression
Thus says the LORD:

Share your bread with the hungry, shelter the oppressed and the homeless; clothe the naked when you see them, and do not turn your back on your own.

If you bestow your bread on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted; Then light shall rise for you in the darkness, and the gloom shall become for you like midday. — Isaiah 58: 7,10
Solidarity

Every human being belongs to the one family of God. If we acknowledge human dignity, we are our sisters’ and brothers’ keepers.

To be in solidarity in a global and interdependent world means to respect and promote personal, social, economic, and political rights throughout the world and for all people.
Stewardship of God’s Creation

- All that is good in this world is a gift from God.
- God calls us to be good and wise stewards of these gifts.
- We fulfill this responsibility when we treat the environment and all forms of life with respect, when we use these gifts in a way that sustains their quality and existence for future generations.
The Creator is present in the beauty of created things. He calls us to share in His creation.
Subsidiarity

- Social organization and governments exist for the good of the individual.
- When governments assume their proper role, higher level organizations only perform functions that cannot be handled effectively and efficiently at a lower level (by individuals or lower level organizations.)
- Those closest to the problem or task are first in line to assume the task.
Gawad Kalinga: Local people working together to help the poor and the homeless.
Economic Justice

• The economy of a country and of the world must serve all people.
• All workers have the right to productive work, to a safe working environment, and to a fair wage.
• Catholic social teaching also supports the workers’ right to form unions.
• The right to property and profit is limited by the right of all persons to the basic necessities of life.
Workers on Strike
Equality of All

“To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”
- 1 Corinthians 12:7

• The inherent dignity of all persons demands the equality of all persons.
• The many cultures, nationalities, and religions that make up the mosaic of human life is God’s gift of diversity and not a justification for prejudice and discrimination.
Almighty and eternal God, may your grace enkindle in all of us a love for the many unfortunate people whom poverty and misery reduce to a condition of life unworthy of human beings.

Arouse in the hearts of those who call you Father a hunger and thirst for social justice and for fraternal charity in deeds and in truth.

Grant, O Lord, peace to souls, peace to families, peace to our country and peace among nations.

Amen.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT:

• Office for Social Justice
  Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis
  http://www.osjspm.org

• Social Justice – A Basic Introduction

• St. Mary’s Press (Living in Christ Series, 2012)
Christian Vision of the Church in Society

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