

Catholic Social Teaching: Rights and Responsibilities

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Key Discussion Questions:

Why has the appeal to “rights” become an important and vital part of the Church’s social teaching?

2.) What rights are the most important to you?

3.) What have you heard in the news lately about the violations of human rights?

4.) What are recent signs of hope that indicate that the global community is moving toward a more just world where all peoples’ rights are respected?

What are the responsibilities of us as a Catholic Christian Community and as a Black Catholic Christian Community to address the concerns of CST?

Resources for CST Principles

Seek Justice That You Might Live: Reflections and Resources on the Bible and Social Justice

John R. Donahue, S.J.

<https://www.usccb.org/resources/seven-themes-catholic-social-teaching-resource>

https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651207_dignitatis-humanae_en.html

<https://researchguides.ben.edu/c.php?g=261667&p=4243537tml>

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home Pope Francis, June 18, 2015

<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>



Catholics worldwide strive to follow Jesus' example of relating to one another. He openly embraced those that others shunned. He looked into the eyes of the afflicted and poor with compassion and love. Jesus calls us to do the same. He calls us to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, and welcome the stranger.

The Church identifies seven key principles of Catholic Social Teaching that stand today as a guide for furthering the education and understanding of what our response should be to the needs of those in our midst. Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee fully embraces these principles as our core values. Our mission and vision, our programs and services are all wrapped around these vital tenants.

The Seven Principles of Catholic Social Teaching

- **Life and Dignity of the Human Person –**

All people are sacred, made in the image and likeness of God. People do not lose dignity because of disability, poverty, age, lack of success, or race. This emphasizes people over things, being over having.

- **Call to Family, Community, and Participation –**

The human person is both sacred and social. We realize our dignity and rights in relationship with others, in community. "We are one body; when one suffers, we all suffer." We are called to respect all of God's gifts of creation, to be good stewards of the earth and each other.

- **Rights and Responsibilities –**

People have a fundamental right to life, food, shelter, health care, education and employment. All people have a right to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities to respect the rights of others in the wider society and to work for the common good.

- **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable –**

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. We are called to look at public policy decisions in terms of how they affect the poor.

- **The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers –**

People have a right to decent and productive work, fair wages, private property and economic initiative. The economy exists to serve people, not the other way around.

- **Solidarity –**

We are one human family. Our responsibilities to each other cross national, racial, economic and ideological differences. We are called to work globally for justice.

- **Care for God's Creation –**

The goods of the earth are gifts from God. We have a responsibility to care for these goods as stewards and trustees, not as mere consumers and users.

For more information about Catholic Charities, visit www.ccmke.org

"Our faith teaches us that poor people are not issues or problems but sisters and brothers in God's one human family."

~ USCCB
(United States Conference of Catholic Bishops)