

Principles of Catholic Social Teaching:

The dignity of the human person:

The focal point of CST is the human person, made in the image of God, and so having fundamental freedom and dignity, the basis for human rights. Recognizing this image in our neighbor, the teaching rejects any policy or system that reduces people to economic units or passive dependence.

The Common Good

People exist as part of society. Every individual has a duty to share in promoting the welfare of the community and a right to benefit from that welfare. This applies at every level: local, national and international. Public authorities exist mainly to promote the common good and to ensure that no section of the population is excluded.

Solidarity

As members of the one human family, we have mutual obligations to promote the rights and development of peoples across communities and nations. Solidarity is the fundamental bond of unity with our fellow human beings and the resulting interdependence. All are responsible for all; and in particular the rich have responsibilities towards the poor. National and international structures must reflect this

Subsidiarity

All power and decision-making in society should be at the most local level compatible with the common good. Subsidiarity will mainly mean power passing downwards, but it could also mean passing appropriate powers upwards. The balance between the vertical (subsidiarity) and the horizontal (solidarity) is achieved through reference to the common good

Option for the poor

Implicit in earlier CST, this has now been taken up with new urgency and far-reaching consequences for pastoral action. Fidelity to Christ means seeing him above all in the faces of suffering and wounded people.