



“Action on behalf of justice is a constitutive dimension of preaching the Gospel.” —*Justice in the World*, 6

### **See education as a liberating force.**

“Education demands a renewal of heart, a renewal based on the recognition of sin in its individual and social manifestations. It will also inculcate a truly and entirely human way of life in justice, love and simplicity.” —*Justice in the World*, 51

**TAKE ACTION** — Enroll in PSIM or CST minor. Attend justice lectures on campus. Read a spiritual writer.

### **Defend a consistent ethic of life.**

“The fight against legalized abortion and against the imposition of contraceptives and the pressures exerted against war are significant forms of defending the right to life.” —*Justice in the World*, 25

**TAKE ACTION** — Visit death row in Michigan City. Attend the March for Life. Pray for peace.

### **Care for the earth.**

“It is impossible to see what right the richer nations have to keep up their claim to increase their own material demands, if the consequence is either that others remain in misery or that the danger of destroying the very physical foundations of life on earth is precipitated.” —*Justice in the World*, 70

**TAKE ACTION** — Join GreeND. Recycle. Eat what you take at the dining hall. Use electricity and water wisely.

### **Recognize international solidarity as essential for development.**

“Let recognition be given to the fact that international order is rooted in the inalienable rights and dignity of the human being.” —*Justice in the World*, 64

**TAKE ACTION** — Advocate with Catholic Relief Services. Enroll in an international seminar. Work with refugees.

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#### **BACKGROUND AND RESOURCES**

**Throughout the 2011-12 academic year**, the Center for Social Concerns' courses, events, and efforts will work on building

justice in our world. In 1971 the World Synod of Bishops issued *Justice in the World*. This statement emphasized the need for

Catholics to be action oriented and to work through ecumenical and interfaith efforts to build sustainable justice and peace. For

more information, visit [socialconcerns.nd.edu](http://socialconcerns.nd.edu).





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#### ABOUT CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT

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**Catholic social thought encompasses aspects of Catholic doctrine relating to matters dealing with the collective welfare of humanity.** A distinctive feature of Catholic social thought is its concern for the poorest members of society. This concern echoes elements of Jewish law and the prophetic books of the Old Testament, and recalls the teachings of Jesus Christ recorded in the New Testament.

The foundations of modern Catholic social thought are widely considered to have been laid by Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical letter *Rerum Novarum*. From this founding document, subsequent papal documents, conciliar documents, and statements from Bishops' conferences in the past 100+ years, several principles can be drawn.

For more readings and resources on Catholic Social thought visit [socialconcerns.nd.edu](http://socialconcerns.nd.edu)

## PRINCIPLES OF

# CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT

### ① **The Common Good**

We are called to be ministers of hope for others to serve the greater good. In community we realize the fulfillment of our dignity and rights in relationship with others.

### ② **The Life and Dignity of the Human Person**

All people are a reflection of the image of God and thus all human life is sacred. We are all called to pursue peace and help overcome poverty, racism, and other conditions that demean human life.

### ③ **Rights and Responsibilities**

People have basic rights and responsibilities that derive from their dignity as creatures made in God's image. Catholic teaching emphasizes that people have a right to life and to the basic necessities that provide quality to life: food, shelter, health care, education, and employment. We are called to respect the rights of others and to seek the common good.

### ④ **Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers**

Work is an expression of our dignity and an expression of our involvement in God's creation. Our work should empower us to create a better future; it should never demean or detract from our inherent human dignity.

### ⑤ **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable**

While the common good embraces all, those who are in greatest need deserve preferential concern. A moral test for society is how we treat the weakest among us.

### ⑥ **Caring for God's Creation**

Care for the earth is a duty of our Catholic faith. We are all called to be careful stewards of God's creation and to ensure a safe and hospitable environment for vulnerable human beings now and in the future.

### ⑦ **Living Solidarity**

We are all responsible for all. As members of the common human family, we should strive to foster community and to live in solidarity with all our neighbors.