

Catholic Diocese of Raleigh

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES



Human dignity is respected and the common good is fostered only if human rights are protected and basic responsibilities are met. Every human being has a right to life, the fundamental right that makes all other rights possible, and a right to access to those things required for human decency – food and shelter, education and employment, health care and housing, freedom of religion and family life. The right to exercise religious freedom publicly and privately by individuals and institutions along with freedom of conscience need to be constantly defended. In a fundamental way, the right to free expression of religious beliefs protects all other rights. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities – to one another, to our families, and to the larger society. Rights should be understood and exercised in a moral framework rooted in the dignity of the human person.

Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, No. 49
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

“The Church proclaims the right of all to the common good, personal responsibility as well as social rights. It is the responsibility of the state to ensure that the basic rights of each citizen is preserved and defended.”

Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Teaching and the U.S. Economy, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

For Reflection:

“He said to them, ‘Give them some food yourselves.’ They replied, ‘Five loaves and two fish are all we have, unless we ourselves go and buy food for all these people.’ Now there were numbered about five thousand. Then he said to his disciples, ‘Have them sit down in groups of fifty.’ They did so and made them all sit down. Then taking the five loaves and two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessings over them, broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the people. They ate and were satisfied.”

Luke 9: 13-17

Faithful Citizenship Prayer:

God our Father, may your Holy Spirit guide me in all my decisions and actions. Hear my prayers, and increase in me the will to follow your Son Jesus. Help me to draw on the resources of my faith as I use the opportunities of our democracy to shape a society more respectful of the life, dignity, and rights of the human person, especially the poor and vulnerable. I ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

www.faithfulcitizenship.org