

**>>> Catholic Social Teaching for Adult Groups <<<  
CST: Rights and Responsibilities  
Catechesis for the Catholic Diocese of Raleigh**

Faced with the grave social problems which, with different characteristics, are present throughout America, Catholics know that they can find in the Church's social doctrine an answer which serves as a starting point in the search for practical solutions. Spreading this doctrine in an authentic pastoral priority. In this regard, special care must be taken to train lay persons capable of working, on the basis of the faith in Christ, to transform earthly realities. *Ecclesia in America*, Pope John Paul II, 1999

**Scripture**

"Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness..." Gen. 1:26

...God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who is not partial and takes not bribe, who executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and who loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Deut. 10:17-19

Let me hear what the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people... Psalm 85

Woe to him who builds his house by unrighteousness and his upper rooms by injustice; who makes his neighbors work for nothing, and does not give them their wages...

Jeremiah 22:13

"Watch out, and beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees"...

Matt. 16:6

Beatitudes Matthew 5:1-7:29

The First Commandment Mark 12:28-34

The Rich Man and Lazarus Luke 16:19-31

"So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet." John 13:26

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. Philippians 2:5-11

For this is the message you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?

1Jn 3:11, 17

You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God. 1Peter 1:23

**Papal Encyclicals & Bishops' Statements**

While public debate is often divided between those who focus on personal responsibility and those who focus on social responsibility, our tradition insists that both are necessary. 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 and to work for the common good.

*Sharing Catholic Social Teaching*, U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1999

Beginning our discussion of the rights of the human person, we see that everyone has the right to life, to bodily integrity, and to the means which are suitable for the proper development of life; these are primarily food, clothing, shelter, rest, medical care, and finally the necessary social services.

Therefore a human being also has the right to security in cases of sickness, inability to work, widowhood, old age, unemployment, or in any other case in which one is deprived of the means of subsistence through no fault of one's own.

*Peace on Earth*, Pope John XXIII, 1963

These fundamental personal rights -- civil and political as well as social and economic -- state the minimum conditions for social institutions that respect human dignity, social solidarity, and justice. They are all essential to human dignity and to the integral development of both individuals and society, and are thus moral issues. Any denial of these rights harms persons and wounds the human community. Their serious and sustained denial violates individuals and destroys solidarity among persons.

*Economic Justice for All*, U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1997

A person's social nature makes it evident that the progress of the human person and the advance of society itself hinge on one another. From the beginning, the subject and the goal of all social institutions is and must be the human person which for its part and by its very nature stands completely in need of social life. It grows increasingly true that the obligations of justice and love are fulfilled only if each person, contributing to the common good, according to one's own abilities and the needs of others, also promotes and assists the public and private institutions dedicated to bettering the conditions of human life.

*Guadium Et Spes*, Vatican Council, 1965

By means of her social doctrine, the Church shows her concern for human life in society, aware that the quality of social life -- that is, the relationships of justice and love that form the fabric of society -- depend in a decisive manner on the protection and promotion of the human person, for whom every community comes into existence. In fact, at place in society are the dignity and rights of the person, and peace in the relationships between persons and between communities of persons. These are goods that the social community must pursue and guarantee.

*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 2005

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Life and Dignity of Person >>> Rights and Responsibilities of the Human Person >>> Call to Family, Community, Participation >>>

Solidarity >>> Care of Creation >>> Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers >>> Option for the Poor and Vulnerable >>>

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- Objectives:** To learn the themes of Catholic social teaching, its gift, its roots in the life of Christ and the Gospel, papal encyclicals and bishops' statements, its challenge to today's Catholics and its essential role in Catholic faith and identity.  
 To journey more deeply in our life of faith; to respond in our world today in light of Catholic social teaching, as salt and light; and to rejoice in the Good News.  
 To learn more about Catholic Relief Services and its role for the world and for the Church.

**Overview**

Read the Catholic Teaching on the reverse page.  
 ~Reflect on this teaching :  
 In your own life, your community, country and world.  
 In connection with the other themes of CST listed on the border.  
 In Jesus' life as son of a carpenter.  
 As a vision of what family is in the kingdom of God given for us and for the world.

**Preparation**

**Materials:**  
 Newsprint & Marker  
 Copies of Page 1 of this teaching  
 Bibles

Experience and involving our faith life in this Church teaching of rights & responsibilities will be The Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform which began in June, 2004, and links Catholics in this important work through [www.justiceforimmigrants.org](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org)

Visit the website and investigate: make copies of:  
*About the Campaign*  
 Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform  
 Excerpts from *Strangers No Longer*  
 Catholic Bishops' Position  
*Facts & Figures: Frequently Asked Questions*  
 Pending Legislative Proposals  
 Catholic Church's Position  
*Action Alerts*  
 Page 1

**Group Study**

Briefly define CST on Rights & Responsibilities. As a group, list on newsprint what are the universal rights and responsibilities of the human family. Discuss. How are rights and responsibilities linked? What does our faith teach? Hang completed newsprint as reference for discussion.

Break into small groups and using the copies of page 1 of the teaching, read together and discuss the Church's teaching. Would you add or subtract from the newsprint list? Why? What happens when rights are met? What happens when they aren't met? Vision rights and responsibilities at work.

Regroup and redefine rights and responsibilities using newsprint.

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Introduce: Experiencing this teaching through a current issue important to our nation, the Church and the world today: The Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform.

Distribute handouts. Break into two groups:  
 Group 1 will study *About the Campaign Material*  
 Group 2 will study *Facts & Figures: Frequently Asked Questions*

With designated leader from each group, share information.

What rights and responsibilities are being addressed? How do you feel about this issue? Do we have a responsibilities towards the rights of others? Who are the immigrants in our area?

Invite the group to put faith to action through this campaign. As a group or individually, the Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform invites you to become a part of the work of rights and responsibilities for immigrants and for the common good of all.

Pass out page 1 of Action Alert and discuss what you can do. Make a plan.

Closing prayer.

...everyone must consider every neighbor without exception as another self, taking into account first of all their life and the means necessary to living it with dignity, so as not to imitate the rich man who had no concern for the poor man Lazarus (Luke 16:18-31). ...Furthermore, whatever is opposed to life itself, ...whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, ...as well as disgraceful working conditions, where men are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society, but they do more to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury. *Gaudium et Spes*

## ***The Prayer of St. Francis***

O Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me bring love.  
Where there is injury, pardon.  
Where there is doubt, faith.  
Where there is despair, hope.  
Where there is darkness, light.  
Where there is sadness, joy.

O, Divine Master,  
Grant that I may not so much seek  
To be consoled as to console,  
To be understood as to understand,  
To be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive,  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
And it is in dying to ourselves that we are born to eternal life.

