

>>> **Catholic Social Teaching for Youth Ministry** <<<
CST: Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers
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

...God created humans in God's image; in the divine image God created them; male and female God created them. God blessed them, saying: "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth." *Gen 1:26-28*

...But the Lord said, "I have witnessed the affliction of my people in Egypt and have heard their cry of complaint against their slave drivers, so I know well what they are suffering. Therefore I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians ...
Ex. 3:7

...You shall not defraud poor and needy laborers, whether other Israelites or aliens who reside your land in one of your towns. You shall pay them their wages daily before sunset, because they are poor and their livelihood depends on them; otherwise they might cry to the Lord against you... *Deut. 24:14-15*

...For every human, moreover, to eat and drink and enjoy the fruit of all his labor is a gift of God. *Eccles. 3:13*

...Woe to him who builds his house on wrongs, his terraces on injustice; who makes his neighbor work for nothing and does not give them their wages... *Jeremiah 22:13*

...Prosper the work of our hands, O Lord. Prosper the work of our hands. *Psalms 90*

...Jesus said to his disciples: "No one can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second... You cannot be the slave both of God and of money."
Matt. 6:24

...In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets. *Matthew 7:12*

...The parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard... *Matthew 20:1-16*

...You have stored up treasure for the last days. Behold, the wages you withheld from the workers who harvested your fields are crying aloud, and the cries of the harvesters

Papal Encyclicals & Bishops' Statements

It is the challenge of our Lord Jesus Christ who laid out our continuing challenge in the Sermon on the Mount...Let us explore together what it means to be "poor in Spirit" in a consumer society; to comfort those who suffer in our midst; to "show mercy" in an often unforgiving world; to "hunger and thirst for justice" in a nation still challenged by hunger and homelessness, poverty and prejudice; to be "peacemakers" in an often violent and fearful world; and to be the "salt of the Earth and the light of the world" in our own time and place. *A Century of Social Teaching*, USCCB, 1990

All work has a threefold moral significance. First, it is a principle way that people exercise the distinctive human capacity for self-expression and self-realization. Second, it is the ordinary way for human beings to fulfill their material needs. Finally, work enables people to contribute to the well-being of the larger community. Work is for one's family, for the nation, and indeed for the benefit of the entire human family. *Economic Justice for All*, USCCB

A just wage is the legitimate fruit of work. To refuse or withhold it can be a grave injustice. In determining fair pay both the needs and the contributions of each person must be taken into account. "Remuneration for work should guarantee a person the opportunity to provide a dignified livelihood for himself and the family on the material, social, cultural and spiritual level, taking into account the role and the productivity of each, the state of the business and the common good. Agreement between the parties is not sufficient to justify morally the amount to be received in wages."

Catechism of the Catholic Church, (2434)

Work is more than a way to make a living; it is an expression of our dignity and a form of continuing participation in God's creation. The economy must serve people, not the other way around. All work is essential and equally valued. If the dignity of the work and the worker are to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected – the right to decent and fair wages, to organize and join a union, to private property, and to economic initiative. The economy exists to serve the common good of all people.

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

Learn More

Office of Peace & Justice, Catholic Diocese of Raleigh

www.dioceseofraleigh.org

919-821-9751 jurski@raldioc.org

Office of Social Justice – Archdiocese of St. Paul/Minneapolis

www.osjspm.org

National Catholic Educational Association

Journey to Justice: Transforming Heart & Schools with Catholic

Social Teaching, by Connie Fourrie

Order at www.ncea.org – religious education dept. – resource

Catholic Labor Network

www.catholiclabor.org

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 realize the dignity of work and worker, that all work is essential for the human person and common good.

Overview

Read the Catholic Teaching on work on the back 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 work is in the kingdom of God given for us and for the world.

~Expand your familiarity with Church teachings on labor by reading Pope John Paul II's *Laborum Exercens*, (www.osjspm.org)

Preparation

The U.S. Bishops created the Catholic Campaign for Human Development to help bring poor people themselves out of poverty. CCHD provides grants to groups in the U.S. who are changing the structures that cause poverty, and helps to educate Catholics about their role in combating poverty here at home. The work of the Campaign is supported by a annual collection taken up nationwide in most parishes the weekend before Thanksgiving. 20% of the collection is kept within the diocese for local grants. North Carolina has several national grants awarded to groups every year. (for more information visit their website at www.nccbuscc.org/cchd) Explore the link – *povertyusa*
 Download a handout.

Curriculum

**Catholic Campaign for Human Development
 Educate to Activate**

In Ten Minutes

Brainstorm using newsprint:
 What does our faith say about work ?
 about workers?

This is open discussion with no right answers. List responses . When finished put a check mark beside those which our faith teaches. Add to the list as needed. The group will on its own come to a vision for the dignity of work and worker, and our call as Christians to live out our faith in our work.

Explain to the group that many people, through no fault of their own do not have work, nor the means to work, and therefore are unable to support themselves or family. Nor are they able to realize their own dignity or contribute to the common good . This is a key part of the cycle of poverty that faces thousands in America. Today, 31 million children in the U.S. will not have enough to eat . How do you feel about that?

Introduce the Catholic Campaign for Human Development as a call for our participation as Catholics to help break the cycle of poverty and advocate for justice for all people. Distribute the handout: discuss and invite them to share this with their family.

More

Your group is encouraged to actively participate in the November collection campaign in your community. The diocese needs your help, and the fruit of your work would benefit you and so many others. There is no better way to learn and grow in our faith; place faith in action and experience its grace; and prepare for the workplace that lies in the years ahead.

Have a small group check out the possibilities of promoting CCHD this fall by visiting the CCHD website,: www.nccbuscc.org/cchd (and *povertyusa* link)

Office of Peace & Justice, Diocese of Raleigh
www.dioceseofraleigh.org – peace & justice department
 (919-821-9751 – jurski@raldioc.org)

Promotion is creative fun and a work of importance at the same time!!

...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*