

# A SUMMARY OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHINGS

During the past 100 years, papal statements, Vatican II and Conferences of Bishops have addressed urgent issues which have both national and international reach - such as human rights, economic depression, development, political participation, and war and peace. These messages are not only Church doctrine, but also provide individuals with a framework for action. Catholic Social Teaching calls people everywhere, and of every faith, to work toward the elimination of poverty, to speak out against injustices, and to actively shape a more peaceful and just world.

## **Human Beings Are Sacred, A Clear Reflection Of God**

The test of every policy is whether it enhances or threatens human life and dignity. We support pro-life from conception to the end of life and this includes opposition to capital punishment.

## **Because Each Person Is An Image Of God, Each Person Has Basic Rights and Responsibilities**

Every person has basic rights and responsibilities that flow from our human dignity and that belong to us as humans, regardless of any social or political structures. These include freedom from discrimination and ability to acquire basic human needs such as living wage employment, housing, food, clothing, health care, education and social services.

## **Our Choices Are Made To Support The Greatest Common Good.**

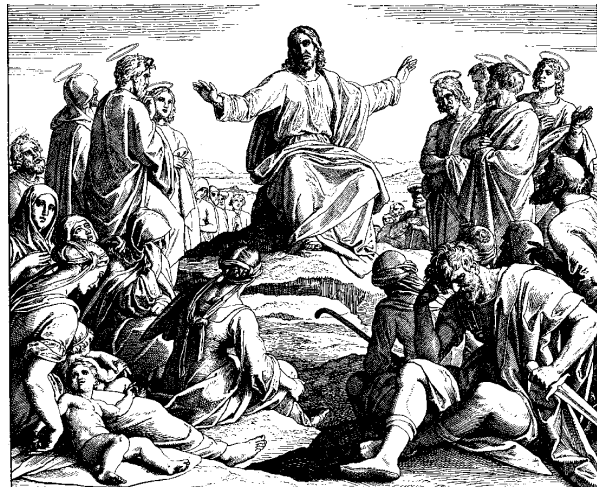
In order for all of us to have an opportunity to grow and develop fully, a certain social fabric must exist within society. This is the common good. Numerous social conditions -- economic, political, material and cultural - impact our ability to realize our human dignity and reach our full potential.

## **Solidarity**

We are all part of one human family -- whatever our national, racial, religious, economic or ideological differences - and in an increasingly interconnected world, loving our neighbor has global dimensions. We are obligated to work for peace and justice globally.

## **Preferential Love for the Poor And Vulnerable**

In every economic, political and social decision, a weighted concern must be given to the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable. When we do this we strengthen the entire community, because the powerlessness of any member wounds the rest of society. Following the example of Christ, we seek leaders who have compassion for those among us suffering from poverty or need. Examples include



low-income and homeless people, refugees, elderly, marginal groups and those with special needs.

## **Stewardship**

There is an inherent integrity to all of creation and it requires careful stewardship of all our resources, ensuring that we use and distribute them justly and equitably --- as well as planning for future generations.

## **Dignity And Rights Of Workers**

Work is an expression of dignity. The economy exists to serve people, not vice versa. Basic rights of workers include: the right to do productive work, to decent and fair wages, to organize and join unions, to take economic initiative and to own private property.

## **Caring For Gods Creation**

We have a responsibility to care for the Earth God has entrusted to us, and to make decisions that have a positive long-term effects on this planet and its resources. The world's resources shared equitably.

## **Promotion of Peace**

Peace is fruit of justice and is dependent on right order among humans and nations. The continued global arms race must cease. Progressive disarmament is necessary for secure future.