

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH COMMUNITY, COVINGTON, WA

“THE LAUDATO SI ACTION PLATFORM, CATHOLIC SOCIAL
TEACHING, AND CREATION CARE MINISTRY”

MARCH 22, 2022

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



We acknowledge that we are on the traditional land of the Coast Salish People. We honor with gratitude the land itself and the Coast Salish People, past, present, and future. May we nurture our relationships with Native neighbors and shared responsibilities to their homelands where we all reside today.



OPENING PRAYER: *A Prayer for our Earth*, by Pope Francis

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,

to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace. Amen.



PARTICIPATING SECTORS



Individuals and Families

Parishes and Dioceses

Economy

Hospitals

Educational Institutions

Groups and Organizations

Religious Orders

LAUDATO SI GOALS (LSG'S)



CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

The Church's social teaching is a rich treasure of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of modern society. Modern Catholic social teaching has been articulated through a tradition of papal, conciliar, and episcopal documents. The depth and richness of this tradition can be understood best through a direct reading of these documents. In these brief reflections, we highlight several of the key themes that are at the heart of our Catholic social tradition.



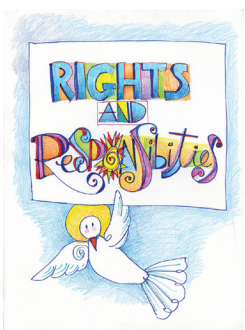
LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching. In our society, human life is under direct attack from abortion and euthanasia. Human life is threatened by cloning, embryonic stem cell research, and the use of the death penalty. The intentional targeting of civilians in war or terrorist attacks is always wrong. Catholic teaching calls on us to work to avoid war. Nations must protect the right to life by finding effective ways to prevent conflicts and resolve them by peaceful means. We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.



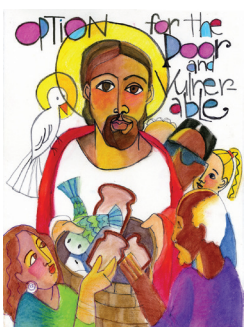
CALL TO FAMILY, COMMUNITY, AND PARTICIPATION

The person is not only sacred but also social. How we organize our society—in economics and politics, in law and policy—directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. Marriage and family are the central social institutions that must be supported and strengthened, not undermined. We believe people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.



RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Catholic tradition teaches that human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Therefore, every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities—to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.



OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE

A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. In a society marred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, our tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgment (Mt 25:31-46) and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.



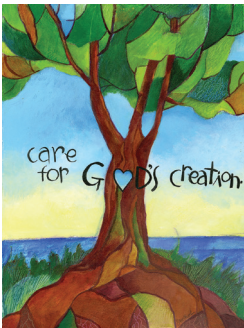
THE DIGNITY OF WORK AND THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS

The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected—the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to the organization and joining of unions, to private property, and to economic initiative.



SOLIDARITY

We are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they may be. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world. At the core of the virtue of solidarity is the pursuit of justice and peace. Blessed Pope Paul VI taught that "if you want peace, work for justice."¹ The Gospel calls us to be peacemakers. Our love for all our sisters and brothers demands that we promote peace in a world surrounded by violence and conflict.



CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION

We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.



Text is drawn from United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions*. © Copyright 2017, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services. All rights reserved. *Photos courtesy of Brother Mickey McGrath, OSFS.*

¹Paul VI, *For the Celebration of the Day of Peace* (Rome: January 1, 1972).



CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING AND CLIMATE CHANGE



WHAT IS CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING?

“Catholic social teaching is a central and essential element of our faith. Its roots are in the Hebrew prophets who announced God’s special love for the poor and called God’s people to a covenant of love and justice.” (<http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/>)

Catholic Social Teaching is the body of Church doctrine that describes how Catholics are called to transform the world by proclaiming and living the Gospel. Modern Catholic social teaching has been articulated by a variety of Church authorities. The U.S. Catholic Bishops have a terrific overview. That overview is the source of our quotations here, and is a good reference for your pastor, fellow parishioners, or others who might be curious about how Catholic teaching relates to climate change.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops identifies *Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching*, and four are especially important in the face of climate change.

1) Life and Dignity of the Human Person

“The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching.”

The consequences of climate change—food and water scarcity, climate migration, and more frequent severe weather events—compromise human life and dignity. The World Health Organization [estimates](#) that climate change already causes 150,000 annual fatalities, and warns that further climate change could cause an additional 250,000 deaths each year from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhea and heat stress.

To live the Catholic value of protecting human life and dignity, we must address climate change.

Your pastor, parish council, or other leaders your Creation Care Team encounters might be curious about how Catholic teaching relates to climate change. The Church’s tradition of social teaching can provide some answers.

This overview informs you about the basics of this tradition. As always, we’d love to hear if other materials have worked well for you, and to answer any questions you might have. Please feel free to reach us at programs@catholicclimatecovenant.org if you’d like to chat.



2) Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

"A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring."

The effects of climate change disproportionately harm poor and vulnerable people. People who are living in poverty don't have the resources needed to recover from a devastating hurricane, or the resources needed to build new irrigation systems as rainfall patterns change. This is particularly unjust because the poor are often least responsible for contributing to the causes of climate change.

To live the Catholic value of caring for poor and vulnerable people, we must address climate change.

3) Solidarity

"At the core of the virtue of solidarity is the pursuit of justice and peace."

The Catholic vision of justice is based in the understanding that we are all children of God. As brothers and sisters, we all share the Earth as our common home. Sharing the planet well means limiting our disproportionate contribution to climate change. Sharing it with our children and grandchildren means conserving its delicately balanced systems and resources for the future.

To live the Catholic value of solidarity, we must address climate change.

4) Care for God's Creation

"Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored."

Climate change brings real changes to God's Creation. Melting glaciers, rising sea levels, and species extinction all compromise our calling to keep and till the Earth. We are servant leaders who are called to maintain Creation as we would a beautiful garden.

To live the Catholic value of caring for God's good gift of Creation, we must address climate change.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING AND CREATION CARE TEAMS

As a Creation Care Team leader, you have a special responsibility to help your community understand how these elements of Catholic Social Teaching relate to the call to address climate change.

The [Creation Care Resource Library](#) has lots of ideas and step-by-step guides for how to integrate Catholic Social Teaching on ecology in your community. Here are some additional ideas:

- Take a look at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' [website](#). It may bring other ideas of how to address Catholic Social Teaching and climate change to mind.
- Schedule study and discussion time on Catholic Social Teaching and climate change with your Creation Care Team and with your parish or school.
- Speak with your adult formation, catechism, and school staff about incorporating these commitments to Creation care when discussing Catholic Social Teaching.
- Share one of the above themes in the bulletin for four consecutive weeks.
- Suggest to your pastor that he give a homily about Catholic Social Teaching and Creation care. Share this overview with him.



CLOSING PRAYER: *Prayer for Creation*, from Catholic Charities USA

God of beauty, and God of truth, everything in your creation is connected, for all share a common origin in your creating hand. Fill us with a spirit of praise, gratitude, wisdom, and courage, that we might care for creation and not misuse it, ensure that its goods are shared in justice with all our brothers and sisters, and speak out on its behalf whenever it is threatened. Amen.

