

## The Catholic Social Justice Tradition

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Vice President, Mission Services  
Catholic Health Association

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### Outline

**Relationships**

**Preliminary understandings**

**Theological foundations**

**Church's social tradition**

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### ***Caritas in Veritate*** **Benedict XVI**



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**Fundamentally**

**Justice is about  
relationships**

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**Preliminary  
understandings**

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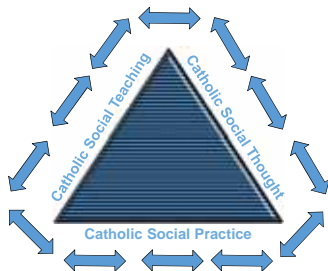
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**Catholic Social Tradition**



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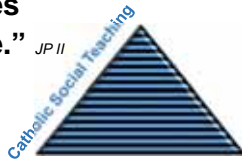
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## Catholic social teaching

Encyclicals, pastoral letters,  
conciliar documents, etc.

“Accurate formulation of the  
results of a careful reflection on  
the complex realities  
of human existence.” *JP II*

Rooted in scripture



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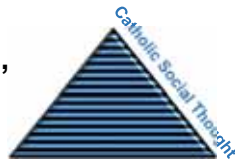
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## Catholic social thought

Work of theologians,  
philosophers, economists,  
political scientists, management  
theorists, educators, etc.

Ongoing in Catholic  
schools, seminaries,  
health care,  
other ministries



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## Catholic social practice

Actions of individuals,  
organizations ministering  
with, for the Church

Dynamic movements  
emerged to serve needy  
(Catholic Worker,  
Catholic Relief Services,  
Catholic Charities,  
Catholic health care)



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## Not only Catholics

Walter Rauschenbusch (Baptist)

Washington Gladden  
(Congregational)

Isidore Singer (Jewish)

Abraham Heschel (Jewish)

Martin Luther King, Jr. (Baptist)

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## Catholic social tradition

A centuries-old tradition  
of theology and practice

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Rooted in the  
prayer and  
liturgical life of  
the faithful

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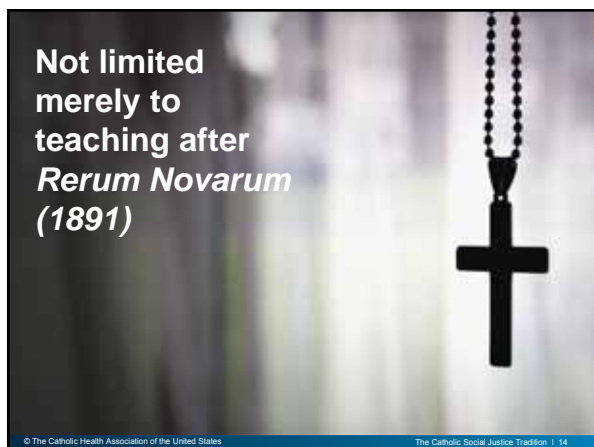
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# Theological foundations

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## Old Testament

**Notion of justice –**  
***“fidelity to the demands***  
***of a relationship”***

**Person called to justice**  
**(as part of a community)**

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## Old Testament

**Recognize Yahweh’s justice**

**In spite of human failings,**  
**Yahweh’s justice endures**

**Call’s people to accountability**

**Restores harmony to the people**

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## New Testament

**Jesus the fulfillment  
of prophets of old**

**Ministry of the servant**

**Concern for poor, disadvantaged  
oppressed, imprisoned**

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## New Testament

**Like prophets Amos  
and Nathan, Jesus  
brings the word of justice**

**He teaches, heals, challenges,  
even alienates some**

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## Theologians

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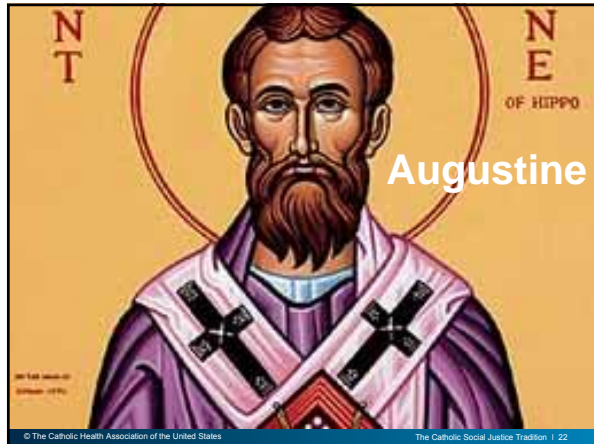
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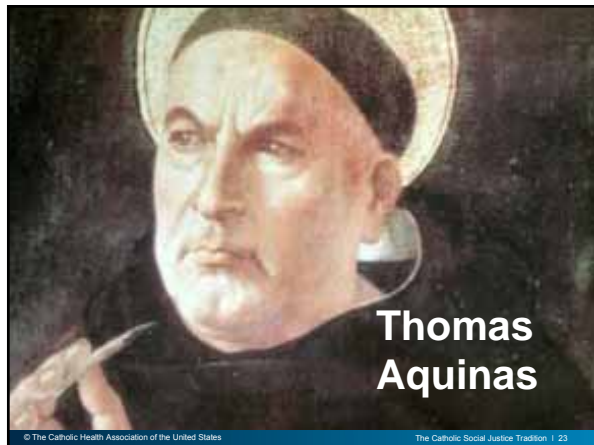
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## Papal teaching

Articulated most widely during height of industrial revolution

Encyclicals to Church and world

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## Papal teaching

Involved Church in public and economic life

Driving force (and moral muscle) was pastoral

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## Phases of modern social justice

Late 19<sup>th</sup> century focused on needs of emerging working (industrial) class

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## Phases of modern social justice

**First half of 20<sup>th</sup> century  
new and more just  
economic order**

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## Phases of modern social justice

**Contemporary phase**

**Building peace through  
development of peoples**

**Human rights**

**Environmental concerns**

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***Ethical and Religious Directives***

**Human dignity**

**Care for the poor**

**Common good**

**Stewardship of resources**

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**Created in image and  
Likeness of God**

**Possessing inalienable dignity**

**Every life sacred;  
deserving respect, protection**

**Right to the means for proper  
development of life**

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## Care of the poor

**Biblical mandate (OT and NT)**

**All levels of ministry**

**Outreach to needs of the poor**

**Poor in our midst (employees)**

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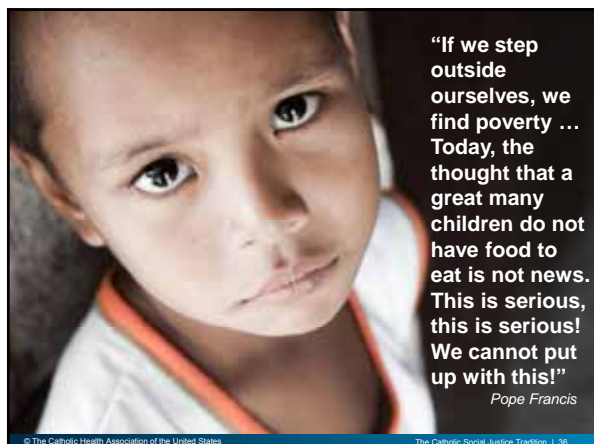
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## Common good

**“The common good is realized when economic, political and social conditions ensure protection for the fundamental rights of all individuals and enable all to fulfill their common purpose and reach their common goals.”**

*USCCB, Economic Justice for All*

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## Common good

**Humans are social by nature**

**Our dignity is connected to relationships with others**

**Responsibility for well-being of others, betterment of society (solidarity)**

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## Common good

**Responsibility to contribute to social conditions/structures, allowing persons to reach their full potential and realize dignity**

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## Common good

**Involves world view, think systemically**

**Judicious ability to weigh goods, determine priorities**

**Neither utilitarianism nor pragmatism**

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## Common good

### **Socialism**

**State ownership  
Individuals sacrificed for whole  
Minimal participation  
Centralized government; authority at top  
Political action curtailed**

### **Common good**

**Private ownership and profit  
Broad participation (subsidiarity)  
Distributed authority; diffuse responsibility  
Encourages political involvement**

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## Subsidiarity Participation



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## Subsidiarity, Participation

**“A principle in social organization: functions which subordinate or local organizations perform effectively belong more properly to them than to a dominant central organization.”**

*Webster*

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## Subsidiarity, Participation

**British term – being at the “coal face”**

**Work changes people; can either enhance or suppress person’s dignity**

**“Work is for man (sic); not man for work.”**

*JP II, Laborem Exercens*

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## Principle of subsidiarity

**“Recognizes that in human societies, smaller communities exist within larger ones ...**

**The principle insists that the freedom and input of those closest to the effects to be felt should not be arbitrarily disregarded.”**

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace,  
*The Vocation of the Business Leader*

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## Principle of subsidiarity

**“A community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of lower order ... but rather, should support it in case of need and help to coordinate its activity ... with a view to the common good.”**

JP II, *Centesimus Annus*

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## Subsidiarity

**“The more participatory the workplace, the more likely each worker will be to develop ... This fosters initiative, creativity and a sense of shared responsibility.”**

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace,  
*The Vocation of the Business Leader*

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### Dignity of work, 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.”**

*JP11, Laborem Exercens*

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### Dignity of work, rights of workers

**“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.”**

*USCCB, Seven Principles of Social Justice*

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### Responsible stewardship



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## **Responsible stewardship**

**Realization all that  
we have is gift**

**Resources  
(time, talent, treasure)**

**Promotes equity of care**

**Requires dialogue with others**

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## **Responsible stewardship**

**Involves subsidiarity**

**Empowering others**

**Decision-making at  
fundamental levels  
(close to the coal face)**

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## **Responsible stewardship**

**Creation is a gift of God  
entrusted to all**

**Includes the Earth's  
resources; human and  
financial resources**

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## Responsible stewardship

**Called to be caretakers**

**Protect the planet and  
its resources**

**Share resources equitably**

**Manage individual gifts,  
time and talents**

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## Responsible stewardship

**Develop all of creation, be  
creative, realize potential,  
bring fruition; participate in  
God's creative powers**

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**Pope Francis**  
*Laudato Si*  
May 24, 2015

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## ***Laudato Si***

**All of creation is Brother and Sister to us – human dignity in context of creation**

**Current state – unsustainable**

**Care for the Earth; care for poor**

**Call for conversion**

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## ***Caritas in Veritate* – Benedict XVI**

**The responsibility of the Church is to “ ... awaken the spiritual energy without which justice, which always demands sacrifice, cannot prevail and prosper.”** <sup>(28)</sup>

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## ***Caritas in Veritate***

**Clearly connects justice to a culture of life**

**Arises from “integral human development”**

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## *Caritas in Veritate*

**Affects all aspects  
of contemporary life**

**Economic  
Civic/political/social  
Environmental  
Employment  
Health and health care**

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## **Applications to health care**

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### Applications to health care

**Care for the poor**

**Poverty is powerful  
determinant of poor health**

**Men and women**

**Adults and children**

**Whites and persons of color**

**Least care to African-American  
and Hispanic women**

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### Applications to health care

**Poverty and sickness**

**Poverty connects to:**

**Infant birth weight, mortality rate**

**Illiteracy**

**Housing, homelessness**

**Plight of children**

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### Applications to health care

**Expressed in**

**“cured diseases”**

**Hansen’s disease, TB, others**

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### Applications to health care

**“This is our poverty: the poverty of the flesh of Christ, the poverty that brought the Son of God to us through his Incarnation. A poor Church for the poor begins by *reaching out to the flesh of Christ*. If we reach out to the flesh of Christ, we begin to understand something, to understand what this poverty, the Lord’s poverty, actually is; and this is far from easy.”**

*Pope Francis*

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### Applications to health care

#### Labor issues

**A Catholic health care institution must treat its employees respectfully and justly.**

*Directive 7*

**What does this mean?**

**How is it expressed?**

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### Applications to health care

**Equal employment opportunities**

**Workplace promoting participation**

**Ensure safety and well-being**

**Just compensation, benefits**

**Recognize right to organize, bargain collectively**

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### Applications to health care

**“As we contemplate the vast amount of work to be done, we are sustained by our faith that God is present alongside those who come together in his name to work for justice ... Only if we are aware of our calling, as individuals and as a community, to be part of God’s family ... will we be able to generate a new vision.”**

Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (78)

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### Applications to health care

**“ ... to demand our openness to understand it in depth and to mobilize ourselves at the level of the ‘heart,’ so as to ensure that current economic and social processes evolve towards fully human outcomes.”**

Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (78)

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## Reflection and discussion

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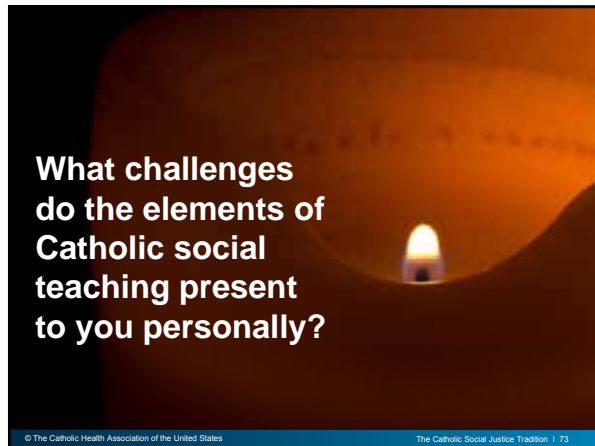
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