

# **Seven Foundations of Catholic Social Teaching**

## **1. Life and Dignity of the Human Person**

All people are sacred, created in the image and likeness of God. Each person's life and dignity must be respected from conception to natural death. A person's dignity is not affected by disability, poverty, age, race, or sex.

## **2. Family, Community, and Participation**

The human person is both sacred and social. Marriage – a sacramental lifelong commitment between a woman and a man – and Family are the foundations for social life. We realize our dignity and rights in relationship with others, in community. Every person has a right to participate in social, economic, and political life, and a duty to advance the well-being of all, especially the weak and vulnerable.

## **3. Rights and Responsibilities**

All people have a fundamental right to life, faith, family, food, shelter, health care, education, and employment, as well as a right to participate in decisions that affect their lives. With these rights each person has a responsibility to respect and secure these rights for all people. Government has a responsibility to promote dignity, protect rights, and provide for the common good.

## **4. Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable**

The poor have the most urgent moral claim on our conscience. We are called to care for the poor and work to shape priorities and public policy that benefit the poor and vulnerable. The measure of our society is how we care for and stand with the poor and vulnerable.

## **5. Stewardship of God's Creation**

The goods of the earth are gifts from God, entrusted to us and intended by God for the benefit of everyone. We have a responsibility to care for these goods as stewards and trustees, not as mere consumers and users. We show our respect to our creator by caring for creation

## **6. Dignity of Work, Rights of Workers, and Economic Initiative**

Work is a way of participating in and continuing God's act of creation. The economy must serve people, not the other way around. All workers have a right to productive work, decent and fair wages, and safe working conditions. Workers have a fundamental right to organize and join unions, and to participate in decisions that affect them in the marketplace. They also have a duty to exercise these rights in ways that advance the common good. People have a right to economic initiative and private property but must exercise these rights in ways that do not cause injustice by creating excesses for some when others lack basic needs.

## **7. Solidarity and Peace**

We are one human family, created by one God. We are our sisters' and brothers' keepers. What happens to one person affects all people. We are called to be peacemakers and to work for justice. Peace is a positive, action-oriented concept, not just the absence of war. Peace is the fruit of justice, dependent upon right order among human beings and human institutions.