

The Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching

(Via USCCB Communications)

1. Life and Dignity of the Human Person

Advocating against abortion, euthanasia, the death penalty, and war. Every life is precious and deserves equal protection.

2. Call to Family, Community, and Participation

Strengthening and supporting the social aspect of human life, including marriage and family life. Every person deserves the equal opportunity to have a voice in society.

3. Rights and Responsibilities

Not only does every person have the *right* to be part of society, but every person has the *responsibility* to be part of society, and to work toward the common good. We are called to protect human life and dignity.

4. Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

Putting the needs of the poor and vulnerable before our own. We must work to help those who cannot help themselves before we focus on our own wants and interests.

5. The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

The economy must serve the people. We must protect the basic rights of workers – fair wages, supportive unions, private property, and dignified/productive work.

6. Solidarity

Justice, peace, equality, unity. We are all one family despite all of our racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences, and we must love and support our family in a peaceful way.

7. Care for God's Creation

Caring for our Earth is a requirement of our faith. We must protect our planet and its inhabitants.

Charitable Works

- Participate in donation drives and volunteer events through church and school
- Become a tutor
- Volunteer at a soup kitchen
- Grab some friends and visit residents at a nursing home – sing to them, play cards with them, socialize – or send holiday cards to the residents
- Donate water to an organization that distributes it to Flint
- Volunteer at, or donate to, a food pantry
- Plan a “senior prom” at a nursing home
- Organize yard clean-ups for elderly or disabled members of the community
- Engage in a clean-up of your neighborhood, school, a nearby beach, etc.
- Take an adult with you and visit a homeless shelter. Play games with and talk to the guests
- Make blankets for hospital patients, nursing home residents, or the homeless
- Donate personal items to, or volunteer at, a center for women and children
- Get involved with The Friendship Circle, The Special Olympics, or a camp for kids with special needs
- Help immigrants or refugees transition to their new life/home
- Start a recycling program at your school or volunteer with the existing program
- Coach a children’s sports team
- Ask around to adults at church, relatives, teachers, and peers about places that you can volunteer or donate to!
- Donate to these reputable organizations:
 - Vista Maria
 - Catholic Relief Services
 - Mary’s Mantle

If you are ever interested in organizing your own service project through the church or are looking for ways to volunteer, call Eva/Colleen at 734-464-2020 for more information. Youth involvement and leadership is always appreciated and encouraged!

Social Justice Actions

- BE KIND!
 - Stick up for people who are being bullied or excluded. Then reach out to them and be a friend
 - Don't use derogatory terms to talk about others. "Retard" is unkind. "That's gay" is unkind. The N word, with or without a hard "R" is unkind.
 - Don't judge people, no matter how they live their lives. Leave the job of making judgements to God. Instead be inclusive, kind, and open-minded.
- Stay involved with decisions being made by our governments. Watch your district's school board meetings online. Pay attention to the national and local news. Know who the federal representatives are for Michigan and your district. Follow Pope Francis on Twitter! @Pontifex
- Create and share artwork, writing, song, or dance that expresses your beliefs (and call Eva/Colleen at St. Edith at 734-464-2020 so we can display your art at the church!)
 - Reuse materials you would ordinarily throw away to turn trash into treasure! This will help reduce waste and keep the planet healthy!
- Do your part to protect the environment
 - Use a power strip for all your appliances and turn it off when you're not using it. Unplug your charger when you aren't charging your phone/device
 - Turn off the tap water while you brush your teeth. Take a shower instead of a bath, and try to take shorter showers to save water
 - Turn off any lights and fans when you leave a room
 - Recycle paper, plastic, and glass! Donate old clothes, books, and toys rather than throwing them out. Take old crafting supplies, egg cartons, toilet paper rolls, etc. to your school's art teacher
 - Bike, walk, carpool, or use public transportation
- Participate in fair-trade shopping

Prayers

- PRAYER FOR PEACE IN OUR COMMUNITIES: O Lord our God, in your mercy and kindness, no thought of ours is left unnoticed, no desire or concern ignored, and so we turn to you in our hour of need. Surrounded by violence and cries for justice, fill us with your mercy so that we, in turn, may be merciful to others. Strip away pride, suspicion, and racism so that we may seek peace and justice in our communities. Strengthen our hearts so that they beat only to the rhythm of your holy will. Be with us, O Lord, in our efforts, for only by the prompting of your grace can we progress toward virtue and unity. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
- PRAYER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT: God of Creation, we come together to listen to your word and to find ways to care for the earth you gave to us. The earth is a beautiful gift for all. Blue skies, green grass, fish in the oceans and rivers, plants and vegetables grown in the rich dark soil. You have given us watermelon, apples; pumpkins and peaches and the list goes on. We know the earth is in danger, and we pray that you teach us how to be good caretakers and stewards of this gift. We pray this in your Son's name. Amen.
- PRAYER FOR IMPOVERISHED PEOPLE: Come, Holy Spirit, and open our hearts, minds, and souls to your presence. Grace us with the strength to follow the examples of Jesus. Like Jesus, may the Spirit provide us with a voice to cry out for justice for the poor. Remind us that what we do to the least of those among us, we do to you.