

Catholic Social Justice and Peace

Overview

Jesus said “ Whatever you do for the least of My children you do for Me” and he left this as a challenge for all of us. The Catholic Church teaches the importance of social justice in that it leads to peace.

What comes to mind when you hear the words justice and peace?

The world designed by God is a world of justice – God’s justice not man’s. Mary’s canticle is an outburst of gratitude towards God – one who has done



great things for her. The words say the world designed by God cannot be one in which some hoard wealth and riches while others suffer. Love must inspire justice and the struggle for peace

The Catholic Teachings

There are 6 key principles of Catholic social teachings summarized as follows:

- 1) Dignity of the Human Person
 - All people reflect the image of God through all stages from conception to death
 - People take precedence over things and structures
 - Systems are meant to serve people not vice versa – think about our current industrial culture
- 2) Community and the common Good
 - We must model God’s self-giving love
 - The human person is both sacred and community special

- In community we fulfill our dignity in relationships with others
- 3) Rights and Responsibilities
 - As we are created by God we have basic rights and responsibilities
 - Right to life and the basic necessities of life
 - Right to food, shelter, health care, education and employment
 - We are all called to respect the rights of others for the common good
 - 4) Options for the Poor
 - The Gospel tells us to put the poor first
 - When there is injustice, Christians are to be an example to oppose it
 - Those in most need require the greatest response
 - 5) Dignity of Work
 - Work is an expression of God’s creation
 - People have a right to decent work, fair wages and private property
 - The economy exists to serve the people, not vice versa
 - 6) Solidarity
 - We are one human family, under the mystical body of Christ
 - We need to build community that empowers human potential
 - When working for peace and justice we build the body of Christ

How are we doing?

In a saying from Mother Teresa. She said, “The only things we get to take with us into heaven are those things we gave away while here on earth”. Think about that. She was not referring to the physical things of here but to demonstrate that God is pleased when we give our Time, Talent and Treasures in service to others in need.