

Catholic Social Teaching 1891–1991

1891	<i>Rerum Novarum</i> (Leo XIII) (The Condition of Labour)
1931	<i>Quadragesimo Anno</i> (Pius XI) (The Reconstruction of the Social Order – 40 th year)
1961	<i>Mater et Magistra</i> (John XXIII) (Mother and Teacher – Christianity and Social Progress)
1963	<i>Pacem in Terris</i> (John XXIII) (Peace on Earth)
1965	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i> (Vatican II) The Church in the Modern World
1967	<i>Populorum Progressio</i> (Paul VI) (Progress/Development of Peoples)
1971	<i>Octogesima Adveniens</i> (Paul VI) (Apostolic Letter: Call to Action – 80 th year)
1971	<i>Justice in the World</i> (Synod of Bishops)
1975	<i>Evangelii Nuntiandi</i> (Paul VI) (Evangelisation in the Modern World)
1981	<i>Laborem Exercens</i> (John Paul II) (On Human Work)
1987	<i>Sollicitudo Rei Socialis</i> (John Paul II) (Social Concerns of the Church)
1989	<i>Peace with God the Creator, Peace with all of Creation</i> (John Paul II)
1990	<i>Redemptoris Missio</i> (John Paul II) (Missionary Activity of the Church)
1991	<i>Centesimus Annus</i> (John Paul II) (One Hundred Years)

Prepared by Social Action Office – CLRIQ

Key Principles of Catholic Social Teaching Expanded

1. Human Dignity

Human beings are created in the image of God and, therefore, are endowed with dignity. This inherent dignity carries with it certain basic rights and responsibilities which are exercised within a social framework.

2. The Common Good

While the dignity of the human person is affirmed, individuals live in common with others and the rights of individuals must be balanced with the wider common good of all. The rights and needs of others must be always respected.

3. The Principle of Solidarity

Human beings are social by nature and do not exist merely as individuals. When considering the human community it must be remembered that it consists of individuals and social elements.

4. The Principle of Subsidiarity

This principle recognises that society is based on collectives or communities of people ranging from small groups or families right through to national and international institutions. As a rule of social organisation, this principle affirms that a higher level community should not interfere in the life of a community at a lower level of social organisation.

5. The Purpose of the Social Order

The social order must uphold the dignity of the human person.

6. The Purpose of Government

The purpose of government is the promotion of the common good. Governments are required to actively participate in society to promote and ensure social justice and equity.

7. The Principle of Participation

Individuals and groups must be enabled to participate in society.

8. The Universal Purpose of Goods

The world's goods are meant for all. Although the Church upholds the right to private property this is subordinate to the right to common use and the overall common good. There is a social mortgage on private property.

9. The Option for the Poor

This refers to seeing the world through the eyes of the poor and standing with the poor in solidarity. This should lead to action for justice with and on behalf of those who are poor and marginalised.

Catholic Social Teaching



Summary of the Main Encyclicals and Documents

***Rerum Novarum*: On the Condition of Labour (Leo XIII, 1891)**

Lays out the rights and responsibilities of capital and labour;
Describes the role of Government in a just society;
Condemns atheistic communism;
Upholds the right to private property.

***Quadragesimo Anno*: On Reconstructing the Social Order (Pius XI, 1931)**

Condemns the effects of greed and concentrated political and economic power and proposes that social organisation be based on the principle of subsidiarity.

***Mater et Magistra*: Mother and Teacher (John XXIII, 1961)**

Identifies the widening gap between the rich and poor nations as a global concern of justice;
Raises concerns about the arms race;
Calls upon Christians to work for a more just world.

***Pacem in Terris*: Peace on Earth (John XXIII, 1963)**

Focus on human rights as the basis for peace;
Calls for disarmament;
Stating the need for a world-wide institution to promote and safeguard the universal common good.

***Gaudium et Spes*: The Church in the Modern World (Vatican Council document, 1965)**

Clear recognition that the Church is immersed in the modern world;
Condemns poverty;
Warns about the threat of nuclear war;
Christians must work to build structures that uphold justice and peace.

***Populorum Progressio*: On the Development of Peoples (Paul VI, 1967)**

Focus on human development – ‘development is the new name for peace’;
Condemns the situation that gives rise to global poverty and inequality;
Calls for new international organisations and agreements that promote justice and peace.

Octogesima Adveniens: An Apostolic Letter: A Call to Action (Paul VI, 1971)

Calls for political action for economic justice;
Develops the role of individual local churches in responding to unjust situations and acting for justice.

Justice in the World (Synod of Bishops, 1971)

States that “action for justice” is a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel.

Evangelii Nuntiandi: Evangelisation in the Modern World (Paul VI, 1975)

Links the work of doing justice with evangelisation;
The Gospel is about liberation from all oppressive structures;
Respect for cultures.

Laborum Exercens: On Human Work (John Paul II, 1981)

Affirms the dignity of work and the dignity of the worker;
Affirms the rights of labour;
Calls for workplace justice.

Sollicitudo Rei Socialis: The Social Concerns of the Church (John Paul II, 1987)

Includes the “option for the poor” as a central tenet of Church teaching;
Also develops the notions of ‘solidarity’, the ‘structures of sin’ and ‘the social mortgage on property’;
Suggests that the resources used for the arms race be dedicated to the alleviation of human misery;
Nature must be considered in development.

Peace with God the Creator, Peace with Creation – Pastoral Letter (John Paul II, 1990)

The ecological crisis is a moral crisis facing humanity;
Respect for nature and ecological responsibility is a key tenet of faith;
The integrity of creation must be upheld;
Ecological education to nurture a new global solidarity that takes account of nature.

Centesimus Annus: One Hundred Years (John Paul II, 1991)

Reaffirms the principles of Catholic Social Teaching over one hundred years;
Celebrates *Rerum Novarum*;
Identifies the failures of both socialist and market economies.

(This Summary has been adapted and developed from NETWORK 1998,
Shaping a New World, pp 5-11)





Day in and day out, the prison environment communicates one thing to prisoners – shame. As we go about our day, it’s built into the wake-ups, the body counts, our prison jobs, the mainline stampedes to the mess hall and the body searches upon leaving, the periodic room shakedowns and urine drops for drug testing, and the “bend them over and spread’em” full body searches coming and going from the visiting room. There are continual messages built into the system and consciously and unconsciously reinforced by staff and prisoners alike reminding us that we are second class human beings at best – just a body to count, of no real value other than as grist for the mill of the growth-oriented corrections industry. Even when staff and prisoners exchange pleasantries or good-natured banter, the subtle or not so subtle message is almost always there: “You’re an inmate, a thug, a criminal; I’m not. I am a human being. I count; you don’t.”

(From a United States prison system)



I had to do four days in breach. The breach are consisted of four cells two on each side facing each other. One cell was called the 'cage'. This was a particularly scary cell because no light came into this cell. The windows were caged so it can't be seen out of. Mostly difficult women were put into this cell. (By difficult I mean women the officers could not control.) The other cells were plain as they consisted of a bed base, shower with no shower curtain and window in which the officers would view you showering. Sometimes there would be mattresses and sometimes not. These particular cells weren't clean at the best of times. The door between the cells on the other side was always locked when women were in the breach cells, so there was no communication with other inmates.

Meals would be brought up on trays – quite often cold and mostly finger food so they didn't have to supply cutlery. Women are limited to what they could have in these cells as for the most part all privileges are relinquished whilst on breach. Books, pens, pencils and paper are not allowed. If you are lucky, there may be a bible in the cell. Toiletries are also not permitted in the cell. It is at the officers' discretion and availability as to whether you shower or not and have access to clean clothing, once again at their discretion.

(David Brown and Meredith Wilkie, *Prisoners as Citizens: Human Rights in Australian Prisons*, the Federation Press, 2002, p.238)



Imagine someone places a narrow bench and plastic mattress in a soundproof bathroom and locks you in there, indefinitely. Once or twice a day three big guys come in, shackle you at the wrists and order you to strip, squat and cough. They escort you down a featureless corridor and into an enclosed yard about the same size as your bathroom/cell for one hour of ‘exercise’. When they take you back they watch you strip and squat again. Food is shoved through a slot. you eat sitting on your bed. You are woken every two hours during the night when an officer shines a torch in your face for the ‘headcount’. Once a month you can see immediate family in a tiny cubicle through reinforced plastic. Occasionally a prison doctor calls through the slot to ask if you are ill. A camera in the corner follows your every move. Prison guards in a computerised control room watch you while you sleep, while you use the toilet or have a shower or sit weeping on the bed.

(David Brown and Meredith Wilkie, *Prisoners as Citizens: Human Rights in Australian Prisons*, the Federation Press, 2002, p.228)



The day I was chucked out, they dropped me off at a place I had never been to. When I asked the driver where the dole office was, he said that he didn't know and just drove off. Can you imagine how I felt at that moment? Well, I can tell you mate that I was scared witless. Anyway, after lugging my stuff around for about an hour, I finally found it, and all the hassles I had getting money off them with all the questions I had to answer. Most of them I didn't know, like your tax file number, your residential address, how far are you willing to travel to work, all that kind of stuff. I just wouldn't have a clue what to tell them. After about three hours I was finally out of there, but my troubles weren't finished with yet because I still didn't know where the hell I was. So I just waited in a bus stop to go to the centre of the city. When I finally got there I just walked around for a while totally lost, there was just so many people around the streets and I felt as if every one of them was looking at me. So I jumped in a cab and asked him to take me to a place I could stay for the night. He took me to a hostel which cost \$30 a night. The room was a small one just like a cell, I sort of felt at home, you know. That first night, all I could think about was how I could be put back inside.

No wonder so many people go back to jail with the great release plan they have for them.

(David Brown and Meredith Wilkie, *Prisoners as Citizens: Human Rights in Australian Prisons*, the Federation Press, 2002, pp.281-282)



Step 1: Listen to the life stories of those affected by the issue

Questions

- Who are the people affected by this issue?
- How are they affected?

Step 2: Search out the facts

Questions

- Why do you think this is happening?
- Who do you think gains from the current situation?
- Who do you think loses?

Step 3: State your position on the issue

Questions

- What is your vision of a just society?
- What do you believe about this issue?
- How do you think a just society would respond to this issue?

Step 4: Find the political connection

Questions

- From your perspective, what specific actions should elected officials take to address this issue?
- What do you think might help promote these actions?
- What do you think might hinder these actions?

(Developed by *NETWORK*, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby in the United States)

SOME FACTS REGARDING QUEENSLAND PRISONS



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On any given day in 1999-2000 there were 5,061 prisoners in Queensland.

Increase in Prison building

July 1999

Wolston Correctional Centre and the replacement of Brisbane Women's correctional Centre opened at Wacol. Cost \$132 million.

August 1999

\$5.2 million 96 bed residential style extension opened at the Rockhampton Correctional Centre.

September 1999

120 bed facility commissioned at Palen Creek Correctional Centre. Cost \$4 million.

March 2000

A new 20 bed Maximum Security Unit became operational at the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre.

Launch of 400 bed expansion at Woodford Correctional Centre increasing its capacity to 1,000. It will be one of the largest secure centres in Australia. Cost \$68.8 million.

Foundation stone laid for the Capricorn Correctional Centre. Cost \$89.5 million. This Centre is to replace the Rockhampton Correctional Centre.

June 2000

153 bed extension at Borallon Correctional Centre opened.

Maryborough Correctional Centre project began. The new centre will provide an additional 500 beds. Cost \$97 million.

That is, Correctional Services outlaid approximately \$400 million in buildings in 1999-2000.



Church Documents

- **Message of His Holiness John Paul II for the Jubilee on Prisons**, 9 July 2000
- ***Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice*** – A Statement of the Catholic Bishops of the United States
- ***Broken Laws or Broken People*** – A Joint Project of the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (Brisbane) and Catholic Prison Ministry 2000

Books

- Jim Consedine, ***Restorative Justice: Healing the Effects of Crime***, Revised Edition, Plowshares Publishing 1995
- Helen Bowen and Jim Consedine (Eds), ***Restorative Justice: Contemporary Themes and Practice***, Plowshares Publishing 1999
- David Brown and Meredith Wilkie (Eds), ***Prisoners as Citizens: Human Rights in Australian Prisons***, The Federation Press 2002

Related Articles

- Dr Andrew Coyle, ***Restorative Justice in the Prison System***, International Centre for Prison Studies, King's College, University of London
- Howard Zehr and Harry Mika, ***Fundamental Concepts of Restorative Justice***, 1997 Mennonite Central Committee
- Tom Cavanagh, facilitator, ***Adopting New Values for the Courts: What is Restorative Justice?*** <http://www.restorativejustice.com/published.html> (click on third dot point – it will open as a *Word* document)
- Anne-Marie Cusac, ***What's the Alternative? Society has to respond to lawbreakers, but it doesn't always have to lock them up*** <http://www.motherjones.com/prisons/alternatives.html>
- ***Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners***, GA res 45/111, annex, 45 UN GAGOR supp. (No. 49A) at 200, UN Doc. A/45/49 (1990)
- Joanna Davidson, ***Prison Reform: Working for Just and Effective Systems*** <http://www.changemakers.net/journal/99april/davidson.cfm>

Websites

- **Justice Action – Australia:** <http://www.justiceaction.org.au/>
- **Restorative Justice in Australia** (Australian Institute of Criminology): <http://www.aic.gov.au/rjustice>
- **Restorative Justice Online** (International Centre for Justice and Reconciliation): <http://www.restorativejustice.org>
- **Restorative Justice by Tom Cavanagh:** <http://www.restorativejustice.com/>
- **Center for Restorative Justice & Peacemaking** (University of Minnesota): <http://ssw.che.umn.edu/rjp/>
- **Queensland Government – Department of Corrective Services:** <http://www.dcs.qld.gov.au>
- **Restorative Justice Project** (Fresno Pacific University, Centre for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies): <http://www.fresno.edu/pacs/rjp/>
- **Real Justice** (International Institute for Restorative Practices): <http://www.realjustice.org>
- **International Centre for Prison Studies** (King's College, London): <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/depsta/rel/icps/home.html>
- **Crime Research Centre** (The University of Western Australia): <http://www.crc.law.uwa.edu.au/>
- **Human Rights Watch – Prisons:** <http://www.hrw.org/prisons/>

