

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)
1990	_____	<i>Redemptoris Missio</i> (John Paul II) (Missionary Activity of the Church)
1991	_____	<i>Centesimus Annus</i> (John Paul II) (One Hundred Years)

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.

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)



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.

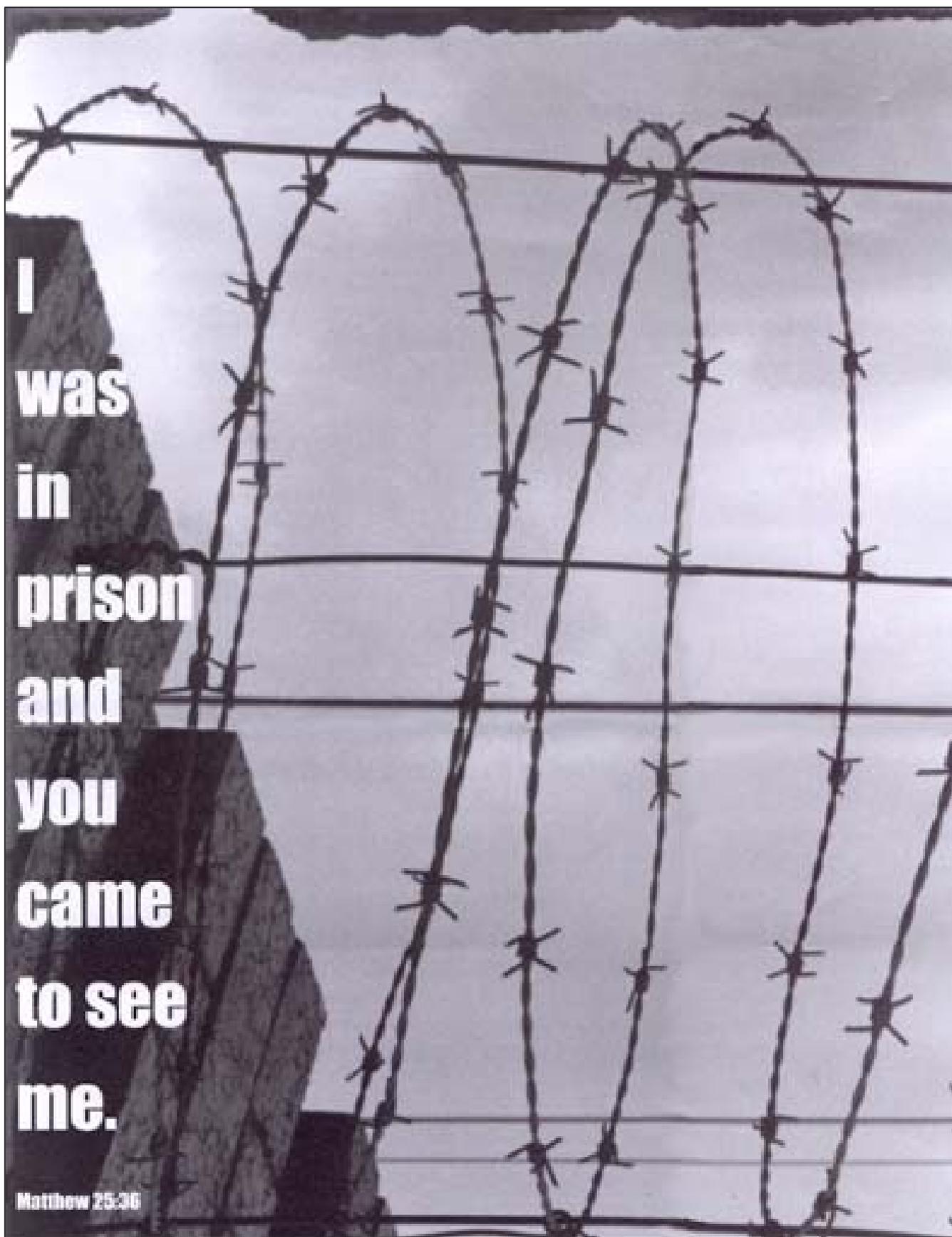
The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,
for he has anointed me
he has sent me to bring good news to the poor,
to proclaim liberty to captives
and to the blind new sight
to set the downtrodden free
to proclaim the Lord's year of favour.

Luke 4:18



For I was hungry and you gave me food;
I was thirsty and you gave me drink;
I was a stranger and you made me welcome;
naked and you clothed me,
sick and you visited me,
in prison and you came to see me.

Matthew 25:36



**I
was
in
prison
and
you
came
to see
me.**

Matthew 25:36

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING APPLIED TO PRISONS

Pope John Paul II:

Message for the Jubilee on Prisons, July 2000

“Not to promote the interests of prisoners would be to make imprisonment a mere act of vengeance on the part of society, provoking only hatred in the prisoners themselves.”

“For all to play their part in building the common good they must work, in the measure of their competence, to ensure that prisoners have the means to redeem themselves, both as individuals and in their relations to society.”

“Regulations contrary to the dignity and fundamental rights of the human person should be definitively abolished from national legislation, as should laws which deny prisoners religious freedom.”

“To make prison life more human it is more important than ever to take practical steps to enable prisoners as far as possible to engage in work which keeps them from the degrading effects of idleness.”



United States Catholic Bishops:

Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice, November 2000

Human Life and Dignity: The fundamental starting point for all of Catholic Social Teaching is the defence of human life and dignity: every human person is created in the image and likeness of God and has an inviolable dignity, value, and worth, regardless of race, gender, class or other human characteristics. Therefore, both the most wounded victim and the most callous criminal retain their humanity. All are created in the image of God and possess a dignity, value and worth that must be recognised, promoted, safeguarded and defended. For this reason, any system of penal justice must provide those necessities that enable inmates to live in dignity: food, clothing, shelter, personal safety, timely medical care, education and meaningful work adequate to the conditions of human dignity.

Human Rights and Responsibilities: Crime and corrections are at the intersection of rights and responsibilities. Those who commit crimes violate the rights of others and disregard their responsibilities. But the test for the rest of us is whether we will exercise our responsibility to hold the offender accountable without violating his or her basic rights. Even offenders should be treated with respect for their rights.

Family, Community and Participation: Likewise, maintaining community and family connections can help offenders understand the harm they've done and prepare them for reintegration into society. Isolation may be necessary in some rare cases; but while cutting off family contact can make incarceration easier for those in charge, it can make reintegration harder for those in custody.

The Common Good: The social dimension of our teaching leads us to the common good and its relationship to punishment. According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, punishment by civil authorities for criminal activity should serve three principal purposes: (1) the preservation and protection of the common good of society, (2) the restoration of public order, and (3) the restoration or conversion of the offender.

The concept of “redress”, or repair of the harm done to the victims and to society by the criminal activity, is also important to restoring the common good. This often neglected dimension of punishment allows victims to move from a place of pain and anger to one of healing and resolution. In our tradition, restoring the balance of rights through restitution is an important element of justice.

The Option for the Poor and Vulnerable: This principle of Catholic Social Teaching recognises that every public policy must be assessed by how it will affect the poorest and most vulnerable people in our society. Sometimes people who lack adequate resources from early in life (i.e. children, especially those who have been physically, sexually or emotionally abused, the mentally ill and people who have suffered discrimination) turn to lives of crime in desperation or out of anger or confusion. Unaddressed needs—including proper nutrition, shelter, health care and protection from abuse and neglect—can be stepping stones on a path towards crime. Our role as Church is to continually work to address these needs through pastoral care, charity and advocacy.

Subsidiarity and Solidarity: These two related principles recognise that human dignity and human rights are fostered in community. Subsidiarity calls for problem-solving initially at the community level: family, neighbourhood, city and state. It is only when problems become too large or the common good is clearly threatened that larger institutions are required to help. This principle encourages communities to be more involved. Criminal activity is largely a local issue and, to the extent possible, should have local solutions. Neighbourhood Watch groups, community-oriented policing, school liaison officers, neighbourhood treatment centres and local support for ex-offenders all can be part of confronting crime and fear of crime in local communities.

Solidarity recognises that “we are all really responsible for all”. Not only are we responsible for the safety and well-being of our family and our next-door neighbour, but Christian solidarity demands that we work for justice beyond our boundaries. Christians are asked to see Jesus in the face of everyone, including both victims and offenders. Through the lens of solidarity, those who commit crimes and are hurt by crime are not issues or problems; they are sisters and brothers, members of one human family. Solidarity calls us to insist on responsibility and seek alternatives that do not simply punish, but rehabilitate, heal and restore.



RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Restorative justice is founded, not on the judgement and punishment of others, but on the restoration of peace and right relationships in the community.

Principles of Restorative Justice:

- 1. The victim is a central part of the process**
- 2. Justice requires offenders to accept responsibility and accountability for their actions**
- 3. The restoration of harm and the reparation of relationships is the goal of restorative justice**
- 4. Restorative justice focuses on the crime and its consequences rather than the person who committed it**
- 5. Crime occurs between people.**

