

Themes of Catholic Social Teaching

“Call to Family Community and Participation”



The person is not only sacred but also social. How we organize our society—in economics and politics, in law and policy—directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. Marriage and the family are the central social institutions that must be supported and strengthened, not undermined. We believe people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.

Scripture

Genesis 2:18	It is not good for man to be alone
Genesis 4:8-15	I am my brother's and sister's keeper.
Leviticus 25:23-43	What you own belongs to the Lord and is given for the good of all.
Jeremiah 7:5-7	Act justly, love kindness, and walk humbly with God.
John 15:12-17	This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you.
Acts 2:43-47	Life among the believers.
Romans 12:4-8	We are one body, individually members one of another.
Hebrews 10:24-25	Rouse one another to love and good works.
James 2:14-17	Our faith is dead if we ignore others in need.
1 Peter 4:8-11	Serve one another with the gifts you have received.
1 John 3:16-18	We ought to lay down our lives for one another.
1 John 4:19-21	Those who love God must love their brothers and sisters.

Tradition

Family

“The existence of each individual is deeply tied to that of others: life is not simply time that passes; life is a time for interactions.” (Pope Francis, *Brothers and Sisters to Us* [[Fratelli Tutti](#)], no. 66)

“Human beings are so made that they cannot live, develop and find fulfillment except ‘in the sincere gift of self to others.’ [62] Nor can they fully know themselves apart from an encounter with other persons: ‘I communicate effectively with myself only insofar as I communicate with others.’ [63] No one can experience the true beauty of life without relating to others, without having real faces to love. This is part of the mystery of authentic human existence. “Life exists where there is bonding, communion, fraternity; and life is stronger than death when it is built on true relationships and bonds of fidelity. On the contrary, there is no life when we claim to be self-sufficient and live as islands: in these attitudes, death prevails.’ [64]” (Pope Francis, *Brothers and Sisters to Us* [[Fratelli Tutti](#)], no. 87)



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"The family is thus an agent of pastoral activity through its explicit proclamation of the Gospel and its legacy of varied forms of witness, namely solidarity with the poor, openness to a diversity of people, the protection of creation, moral and material solidarity with other families, including those most in need, commitment to the promotion of the common good and the transformation of unjust social structures, beginning in the territory in which the family lives, through the practice of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy." (Pope Francis, *On Love in the Family* [[Amoris Laetitia](#)], no. 290, quoting the Final Report of the Synod of Bishops, 10/24/15)

Economic and social policies as well as organization of the work world should be continually evaluated in light of their impact on the strength and stability of family life. The long-range future of this nation is intimately linked with the well-being of families, for the family is the most basic form of human community. Efficiency and competition in the marketplace must be moderated by greater concern for the way work schedules and compensation support or threaten the bonds between spouses and between parents and children. (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, [Economic Justice for All](#), no. 93)



Community/Participation

Local individuals and groups can make a real difference. They are able to instill a greater sense of responsibility, a strong sense of community, a readiness to protect others, a spirit of creativity and a deep love for the land... Social problems must be addressed by community networks and not simply by the sum of individual good deeds. (Pope Francis, *On Care for Our Common Home* [[Laudato Si'](#)], nos. 179, 219)

People in every nation enhance the social dimension of their lives by acting as committed and responsible citizens, not as a mob swayed by the powers that be. Let us not forget that “responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation.” (Pope Francis, *The Joy of the Gospel* [[Evangelii Gaudium](#)], no. 220, quoting United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, [Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship](#), Nov. 2007, no. 13)

The primary norm for determining the scope and limits of governmental intervention is the “principle of [subsidiarity](#)”... This principle states that, in order to protect basic justice, government should undertake only those initiatives which exceed the capacities of individuals or private groups acting independently. Government should not replace or destroy smaller communities and individual initiative. Rather, it should help them contribute more effectively to social well-being and supplement their activity when the demands of justice exceed their capacities. These do not mean, however, that the government that governs least, governs best. Rather it defines good government intervention as that which truly “helps” other social groups contribute to the common good by directing, urging, restraining, and regulating economic activity as “the occasion requires and necessity demands”. (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, [Economic Justice for All](#), no. 124)

