

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

The Church's social teaching is a rich treasure of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of modern society. Modern Catholic social teaching has been articulated through a tradition of papal, conciliar, and episcopal documents. The depth and richness of this tradition can be understood best through a direct reading of these documents. In these brief reflections, we highlight several of the key themes that are at the heart of our Catholic social tradition.



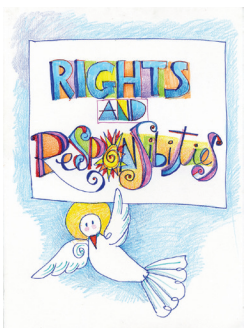
LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching. In our society, human life is under direct attack from abortion and euthanasia. Human life is threatened by cloning, embryonic stem cell research, and the use of the death penalty. The intentional targeting of civilians in war or terrorist attacks is always wrong. Catholic teaching calls on us to work to avoid war. Nations must protect the right to life by finding effective ways to prevent conflicts and resolve them by peaceful means. We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.



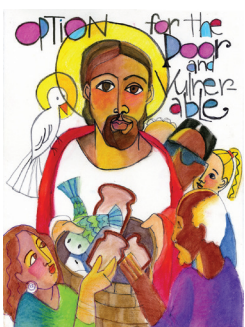
CALL TO FAMILY, COMMUNITY, AND PARTICIPATION

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 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.



RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Catholic tradition teaches that human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Therefore, every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities—to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.



OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE

A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. In a society marred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, our tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgment (Mt 25:31-46) and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.



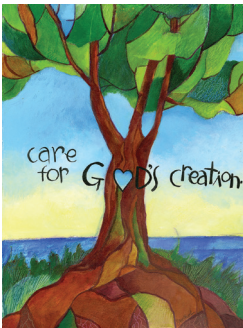
THE DIGNITY OF WORK AND THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS

The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected—the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to the organization and joining of unions, to private property, and to economic initiative.



SOLIDARITY

We are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they may be. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world. At the core of the virtue of solidarity is the pursuit of justice and peace. Blessed Pope Paul VI taught that "if you want peace, work for justice."¹ The Gospel calls us to be peacemakers. Our love for all our sisters and brothers demands that we promote peace in a world surrounded by violence and conflict.



CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION

We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.

CST 101 LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

A discussion guide from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services

OPENING PRAYER: Together, pray, “Prayer for Life and Dignity.”

WATCH: “CST 101: Life and Dignity of the Human Person” on YouTube.

PRAY WITH SCRIPTURE:

Read this Scripture passage twice.

Invite participants to reflect silently after it is read the first time.

“Then God said: Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the tame animals, all the wild animals, and all the creatures that crawl on the earth.

God created mankind in his image;
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.” (*Genesis 1:26-27*)

SHARE:

Every person is made in God’s image.

- In whom is it easy to see God’s image?
- Are there people who you struggle to believe are made in God’s image? Why?

REFLECT ON TRADITION:

Read these passages aloud.

“Every individual, precisely by reason of the mystery of the Word of God who was made flesh (*cf. John 1:14*), is entrusted to the maternal care of the Church. Therefore every threat to human dignity and life must necessarily be felt in the Church’s very heart; it cannot but affect her at the core of her faith in the Redemptive Incarnation of the Son of God, and engage her in her mission of proclaiming the Gospel of life in all the world and to every creature (*cf. Mark 16:15*).”

—St. John Paul II, *The Gospel of Life (Evangelium Vitae)*, no. 3



Photo courtesy of Brother Mickey McGrath, OSFS

“When we speak of mankind, we must never forget the various attacks on the sacredness of human life. The plague of abortion is an attack on life. Allowing our brothers and sisters to die on boats in the Strait of Sicily is an attack on life. Dying on the job because the minimum safety standards are not respected is an attack on life. Death from malnutrition is an attack on life. Terrorism, war, violence; so is euthanasia. Loving life means always taking care of the other, wanting the best for him, cultivating and respecting her transcendent dignity.”

—Pope Francis, [Address to Meeting of the Science and Life Association](#)

DISCUSS:

- How do these passages move or challenge you?
- As people of faith who believe in Christ’s life, death and resurrection, why do we have a special call to ensure that every person’s life and dignity is respected? How can we live out this call?

ACT:

[Read about a group from Georgia](#) that witnesses to the life and dignity of every person through their prayer and action against the death penalty. In your family, neighborhood, school or faith community, how might you be called to act with others to protect human life and dignity?

SEND:

Creator God, help us honor the dignity of all people, especially those in whom God’s face may be difficult to recognize. Inspire us to help protect human life in all its stages, at home and around the world. Amen

Visit crs.org/CST-101 or uscbb.org/cst for all CST 101 resources, including the prayers, stories and videos linked to in these discussion guides.



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OPENING PRAYER

Prayer for Life and Dignity

Eternal God, creator and sustainer of life,
bless us with the courage to defend all life
from conception to natural death.
Bless us with the strength to respect all peoples
from east to west, from north to south,
so that we may truly follow the call of Jesus to be neighbor.
We ask this in the name of Jesus,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Catholic groups mobilize to end the death penalty in Georgia

Upholding the inviolability and dignity of the human person, the Catholic Church [teaches](#) that, in light of the Gospel, capital punishment is inadmissible and can no longer be justified in modern society. Though the death penalty is still carried out in Georgia, Catholics and other people of faith are increasingly coming forward in opposition to its use. In order to build on these good works, our Catholic institutions come together through [Georgia Catholics Against the Death Penalty](#) to promote a spirituality of respect for life that encompasses victims of violent crime as well as those at risk of execution for capital offenses. Working directly with the Archdiocese of Atlanta, Diocese of Savannah, and the Georgia Catholic Conference, we work to build a network of parish leaders and other concerned Catholics to foster ongoing prayerful witness against the death penalty. Key to the struggle for abolition is education. We provide resources and speakers for parishes to offer formation on building a culture of life and advocating for a more restorative criminal legal system. Through this education, we can move toward mobilization and action aimed at awareness, moratorium, and abolition of the death penalty.

Found at <https://www.usccb.org/resources/catholic-groups-mobilize-end-death-penalty-georgia>

CST 101 CALL TO FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND PARTICIPATION

A discussion guide from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services

OPENING PRAYER: Together, pray, “Help Us Build Communities in Keeping with God’s Vision of Justice.”

WATCH: “CST 101: Call to Family, Community and Participation” on YouTube.

PRAY WITH SCRIPTURE:

Read this Scripture passage twice.

Invite participants to reflect silently after it is read the first time.

“[Jesus] unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written:

‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring glad tidings to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to
captives and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to proclaim a year acceptable
to the Lord.’” (Luke 4:17-19)

SHARE:

As members of families and communities,
how can we participate together in Christ’s
mission?

REFLECT ON TRADITION:

Read these passages aloud.

“While building up the Church in love, the Christian family places itself at the service of the human person and the world, really bringing about the ‘human advancement’ whose substance was given in summary form in the Synod’s Message to families: ‘Another task for the family is to form persons in love and also to practice love in all its relationships, so that it does not live closed in on itself, but remains open to the community, moved by a sense of justice and concern for others, as well as by a consciousness of its responsibility towards the whole of society’.”

—St. John Paul II, *The Family in the Modern World* (*Familiaris Consortio*), no. 64



Photo courtesy of Brother Mickey McGrath, OSFS

“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

DISCUSS:

- In our families and faith communities, how can we cultivate a sense of responsibility for building a society in which the dignity of each person is recognized and protected?
- How does your own participation in one or more communities enable you to contribute toward creating a global community in God’s vision of justice?

ACT:

Read about [St. Peter Claver parish](#), in West Baltimore, which seeks to bring faith into conversation with surrounding realities, including violence, racism and policing. In your family, neighborhood, school or faith community, how might you be called to act with others to help shape our local and global communities in God’s vision of justice?

SEND:

Creator God, help us to join with others as disciples who seek to live the Gospel and transform our communities. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen

Visit crs.org/CST-101 or usccb.org/cst for all CST 101 resources, including the prayers, stories and videos linked to in these discussion guides.



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OPENING PRAYER

Help Us Build Communities in Keeping with God's Vision of Justice

Holy Spirit, we praise and thank you!

You anoint us to
bring glad tidings to the poor
proclaim liberty to captives
recover sight for the blind
free the oppressed
and build communities in keeping
with God's vision of justice.

Show us how to be
light of the world
salt of the earth
seeds that sprout love
and leaven that infuses humanity
with the desire to promote
human dignity and solidarity.

Help us to listen so that
those in poverty can lead our efforts to
proclaim a more hopeful vision
liberate captives from injustice
heal the blindness of the powerful
free us all from self-centeredness
and build community to overcome poverty.

Amen.

No Boundaries Coalition

Baltimore, Maryland

The Issue: Residents face violence, poor community-police relations, and other systemic issues in West Baltimore.

For the Sandtown neighborhood, the parish of St. Peter Claver is a refuge from the violence and issues residents face. And thanks to the No Boundaries Coalition (NBC) it's also a place to help bring faith into conversation with the realities around them. Together they open their parish doors for conversations about violence, community-police relations, and other issues the community faces. NBC holds prayer and visibility walks, organizes peace rallies and a produce market, and advocates for school construction and leadership development.

Their Impact: Unifying and empowering residents across the boundaries of race, class, and neighborhood.

After the 2015 death of Freddie Gray and the ensuing riots, NBC brought together 150 faith leaders and community members to help distribute 10,000 pounds of food and supplies and mobilized 1,000 volunteers to clean up the community. They also implemented a Safe Streets Program to train “violence interrupters” to de-escalate tense situations that could turn violent. Today, NBC continues to advocate for increased police accountability and community policing.

The Catholic Campaign for Human Development funds the No Boundaries Coalition, a resident-led advocacy organization building a unified and empowered Central West Baltimore.

Found at <https://povertyusa.org/stories/turning-faith-positive-change>

CST 101 RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A discussion guide from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services

OPENING PRAYER: Together, pray, “Prayer of the Other.”

WATCH: “CST 101: Rights and Responsibilities” on YouTube.

PRAY WITH SCRIPTURE:

Read this Scripture passage twice.

Invite participants to reflect silently after it is read the first time.

“There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day. And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man’s table. Dogs even used to come and lick his sores. When the poor man died, he was carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried, and from the netherworld, where he was in torment, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side.

And he cried out, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering torment in these flames.’ Abraham replied, ‘My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented. Moreover, between us and you a great chasm is established to prevent anyone from crossing who might wish to go from our side to yours or from your side to ours.’ He said, ‘Then I beg you, father, send him to my father’s house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they too

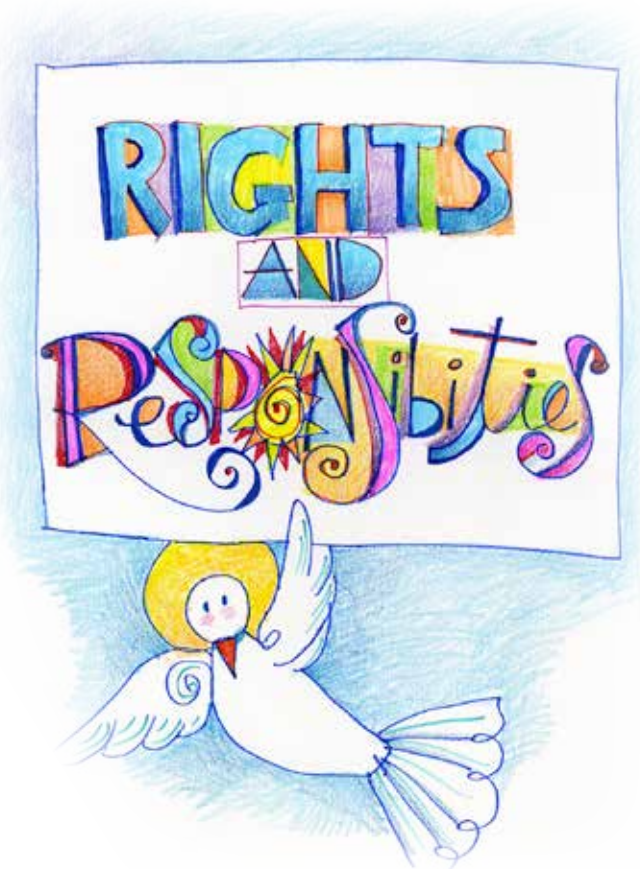


Photo courtesy of Brother Mickey McGrath, OSFS

come to this place of torment.’ But Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them.’ He said, ‘Oh no, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ Then Abraham said, ‘If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.’” (*Luke 16:19-31*)

SHARE:

As you reflect on this passage, do you find yourself connecting more with Lazarus or the rich man? Why?

REFLECT ON TRADITION:

Read these passages aloud.

“We must speak of man’s rights. Man has the right to live. He has the right to bodily integrity and to the means necessary for the proper development of life, particularly food, clothing, shelter, medical care, rest, and, finally, the necessary social services. In consequence, he has the right to be looked after in the event of ill health; disability stemming from his work; widowhood; old age; enforced unemployment; or whenever through no fault of his own he is deprived of the means of livelihood.”

—St. John XXIII, *Peace on Earth (Pacem in Terris)*, no. 11

“In human society one man’s natural right gives rise to a corresponding duty in other men; the duty, that is, of recognizing and respecting that right. Every basic human right draws its authoritative force from the natural law, which confers it and attaches to it its respective duty. Hence, to claim one’s rights and ignore one’s duties, or only half fulfill them, is like building a house with one hand and tearing it down with the other.”

—St. John XXIII, *Peace on Earth (Pacem in Terris)*, no. 30

DISCUSS:

- Where do you see or hear about rights being violated in your community or around the world? Whose responsibility is it to ensure those rights are protected or fulfilled?
- How might God be inviting you to advocate to protect the rights you feel most passionate about, and to ensure that corresponding duties are fulfilled?

ACT:

In the CST 101 video, we hear that one way we can help fulfill our own responsibility to work for the common good is by asking our elected representatives to enact policies that protect people’s rights and responsibilities.

Visit [CRS' Campaigns Action Center](#) and [USCCB's Action Center](#) to learn about legislative advocacy and current issues that address poverty both in the U.S. and around the world. How will you get involved?

SEND:

Loving God, help us do everything we can to build a society where all people are able to exercise their human rights and fulfill their responsibilities. Amen

Visit [crs.org/CST-101](#) or [usccb.org/cst](#) for all CST 101 resources, including the prayers, stories and videos linked to in these discussion guides.



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OPENING PRAYER

Prayer of the Other

Loving God,

Turn my eyes to the other,

that I may see each as you see me—
with an innate dignity that transcends
appearances, circumstances, class,
and all earthly status, which are temporary.
Help me to see the other as Your beloved child, eternally.

Turn my ears to the other,

that I may hear their cries as you hear mine—
with a compassion and tenderness that draws me closer in the midst of suffering.
Help me to hear the other as Your beloved child, eternally.

Turn my mind to the other,

that I may come to understand them as you understand me—
struggling to find meaning and wholeness
in a world that's fragmented, and Your light in a world that's dimmed.
Help me to understand the other as Your beloved child, eternally.

Turn my feet to the other,

that I may approach them across the gaps that divide us—
gaps too often widened by illusions
of family, tribe, creed, race...even otherness itself.
Help me to approach the other as Your beloved child, eternally.

Turn my hands to the other,

that I may serve them as You serve me—
with a touch that cleanses, that heals, that feeds, and that reassures.
Help me to serve the other as Your beloved child, eternally.

Turn my heart to the other,

that I may love them as you love me—
steadfast, forgiving, ever-merciful, with patience, seeing my joy in theirs.
Help me to love the other as Your beloved child, eternally.

Loving God,

Turn my life to the other,

that I may live in solidarity with them, and thus with You, forever.

Amen.

<https://www.crs.org/ways-to-help/advocate/how-to-advocate>

<https://www.votervoice.net/USCCB/home>

CST 101 OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE

A discussion guide from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services

OPENING PRAYER: Together, pray, “Call Us Forth.”

WATCH: “CST 101: Option for the Poor and Vulnerable” on YouTube.

PRAY WITH SCRIPTURE:

Read this Scripture passage twice.

Invite participants to reflect silently after it is read the first time.

“Then the king will say[,] . . . ‘For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?’ And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’”
(Matthew 25:34-40)

SHARE:

Who are Jesus’ “least” brothers and sisters in your community and around the world today?

REFLECT ON TRADITION:

Read these passages aloud.

“The Church’s love for the poor. . . is a part of her constant tradition. This love is inspired by the Gospel of the Beatitudes, of the poverty of Jesus, and of his concern for the poor. . . . ‘Those who are oppressed by poverty are the object of a preferential love on the part of the Church which, since her origin and in spite of the failings of many of her members, has not ceased to work for their relief, defense and liberation.’”

—Catechism of the Catholic Church,
nos. 2444 and 2448, quoting *The Hundredth Year (Centisimus Annus)*, no. 57, and
Freedom of Conscience (Libertatis Conscientia), no. 68

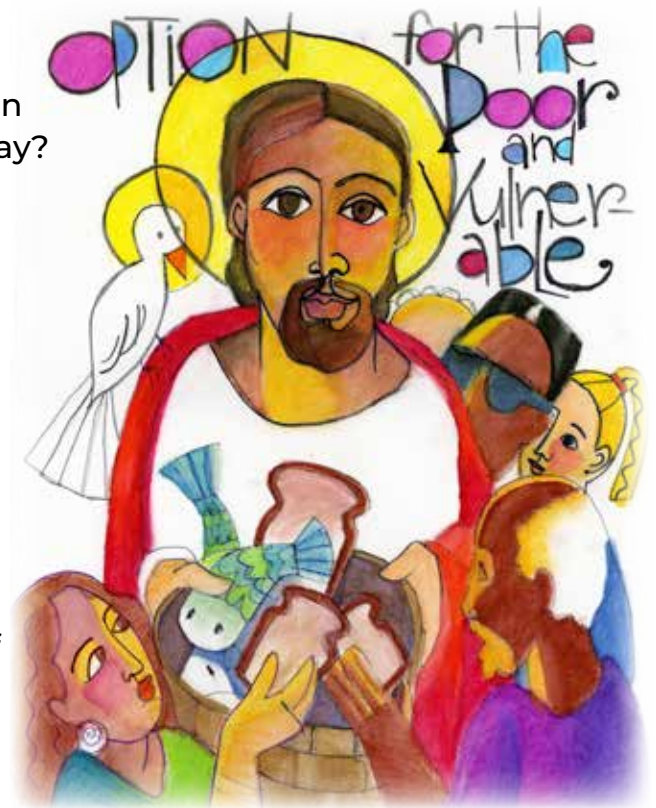


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“The poor not only suffer injustice, they also struggle against it! . . . [Solidarity] means that the lives of all take priority over the appropriation of goods by a few. It also means fighting against the structural causes of poverty and inequality; of the lack of work, land and housing; and of the denial of social and labor rights. It means confronting the destructive effects of the empire of money: forced dislocation, painful emigration, human trafficking, drugs, war, violence and all those realities that many of you suffer and that we are all called upon to transform . . . Love for the poor is at the center of the Gospel.”

—Pope Francis, [Address to the First World Meeting of Popular Movements](#)

DISCUSS:

- How does Jesus’ own poverty, and the witness of his encounter with the “other,” challenge you?
- When have you felt inspired by the work of people living in poverty to transform the causes of injustice? How can you join or support their efforts?

ACT:

Read the stories of Syrian refugees who have fled to Europe in search of a better life and learn about Catholic Relief Services’ response with the support of Catholics in the United States. How are you called to stand with those who are vulnerable?

SEND:

We ask for the intercession of Saint Teresa of Calcutta, that we might never fail to recognize and encounter Jesus in what she called his “most distressing disguise of the poorest of the poor.” Amen

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OPENING PRAYER

Call Us Forth

Good shepherd,
You who rests not until each of your sheep is counted,
You have willed us to do in your name
 what you have done for us.
But we are reluctant,
 we are afraid,
 and we long to hear your voice.
And so we pray...*Call us forth.*

Lord who stands amid the violence and deprivation of war...*Call us forth.*
Lord, who stands amid the rising waters of floods...*Call us forth.*
Lord, who stands with the victim of every type of disaster, remaining through every dark night,
 beside them till morning...*Call us forth.*
Lord, who walks the long walk with the refugee, calling the crude shelter in a strange land "home"
 ...*Call us forth.*
Lord, who remains with the sick, reaches out to the crippled, comforts the dying...*Call us forth.*
Lord, who calls himself brother to the persecuted, the enslaved, the scourged and the marginalized
 ...*Call us forth.*

As you called Peter forth from the safety of the boat,
 and bid him to forsake his fear and hold fast to his faith;
As you called Paul forth from the allure of worldly power,
 and bid him to forsake his sin and hold fast to your truth,
Call us forth to bless.
Call us forth to heal.
Call us forth to speak your Word,
To feed your sheep,
Into encounter,
Into solidarity.
Into love.

Call us forth from our comfort,
 from our indulgence,
 from our doubt,
 from our fearful blindness,
 our willful deafness.

For the sake of our sisters and brothers,
 for the sake of our world,
 for the sake of Your kingdom,
 we pray...
 Call us forth.

Amen

CST 101 DIGNITY OF WORK AND THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS

A discussion guide from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services

OPENING PRAYER: Together, pray, “Prayer for Work.”

WATCH: “CST 101: Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers” on YouTube.

PRAY WITH SCRIPTURE:

Read this Scripture passage twice.

Invite participants to reflect silently after it is read the first time.

“The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out at dawn to hire laborers for his vineyard. After agreeing with them for the usual daily wage, he sent them into his vineyard. Going out about nine o’clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and he said to them, ‘You too go into my vineyard, and I will give you what is just.’ So they went off. [And] he went out again around noon, and around three o’clock, and did likewise. Going out about five o’clock, he found others standing around, and said to them, ‘Why do you stand here idle all day?’ They answered, ‘Because no one has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You too go into my vineyard.’ When it was evening the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Summon the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and ending with the first.’ When those who had started about five o’clock came, each received the usual daily wage. So when the first came, they thought that they would receive more, but each of them also got the usual wage. And on receiving it they grumbled against the landowner, saying, ‘These last ones worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us,

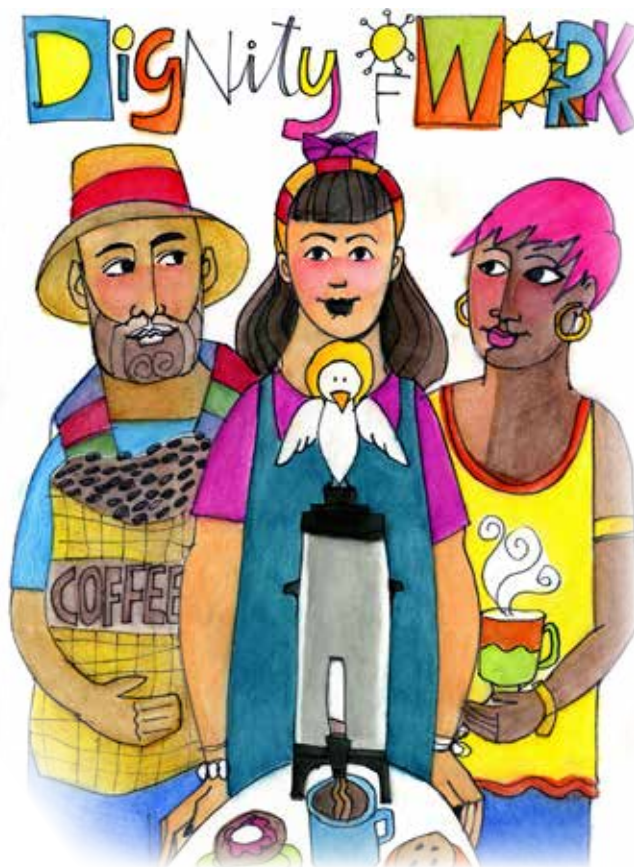


Photo courtesy of Brother Mickey McGrath, OSFS

who bore the day's burden and the heat.' He said to one of them in reply, 'My friend, I am not cheating you. Did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage? Take what is yours and go. What if I wish to give this last one the same as you?' (*Matthew 20:1-14*)

SHARE:

- How can this passage help us reflect on the relationship between work, sufficient wages and human dignity?
- Why does every person have a right to decent work?

REFLECT ON TRADITION:

Read these passages aloud.

"The obligation to earn one's bread by the sweat of one's brow also presumes the right to do so. A society in which this right is systematically denied, in which economic policies do not allow workers to reach satisfactory levels of employment, cannot be justified from an ethical point of view, nor can that society attain social peace."

—St. John Paul II, *The Hundredth Year* (*Centesimus Annus*), no. 43

"In many cases, poverty results from a violation of the dignity of human work, either because work opportunities are limited (through unemployment or underemployment), or 'because a low value is put on work and the rights that flow from it, especially the right to a just wage and to the personal security of the worker and his or her family.'"

—Pope Benedict XVI, *Charity in Truth* (*Caritas in Veritate*), no. 63, quoting St. John Paul II, *On Human Work* (*Laborem Exercens*), no. 8

DISCUSS:

- Where are the dignity of work or the rights of workers violated or protected —both in your own community and around the world?
- How can our purchasing choices impact whether others' rights are violated or protected?

ACT:

Read about one parish's efforts to educate others about how purchasing fair trade products can help vulnerable persons around the world. How can you act in solidarity with workers in your community, or around the world, whose rights are violated?

SEND:

Just God, help us use our power as consumers and voters to ensure that the dignity of workers is respected. May we urge business owners and policymakers to place the dignity of the human person at the center of economic decisions.
Amen

Visit crs.org/CST-101 or usccb.org/cst for all CST 101 resources, including the prayers, stories and videos linked to in these discussion guides.



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OPENING PRAYER

Prayer for Work

Creator God,
thank you for providing us
with the gift to share our talents.

Provide our community, our nation, our world
the fortitude to provide work for all
which is decent and fair.

Make us faithful stewards
of your creation
to enhance the human dignity
of our global family.

We ask this in the name of Jesus,
who lives and reigns
with you and the Holy Spirit
now and forever.
Amen

Teens Educate Parish, Sell Fair Trade Products

During Advent, our parish, [Prince of Peace Catholic Church in Ormond Beach, FL](#), offered a fair trade coffeehouse event for the whole parish and wider community utilizing free materials found at crsfairtrade.org. The day included a sale of fresh-brewed and bagged coffee, chocolate and handcrafts, all fair trade certified, and all of which make great Christmas presents. We taught teens ahead of time about fair trade, and had them run the program from the stage, educating those present on Catholic social teaching, fair trade, and Catholic Relief Services. We used many CRS resources, including videos and presentations We hosted a Catholic music artist concert the same night to encourage people to learn about and buy fair trade products.



CST 101 SOLIDARITY

A discussion guide from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services

OPENING PRAYER: Together, pray, “*Because We Are Yours.*”

WATCH: “CST 101: Solidarity” on YouTube.

PRAY WITH SCRIPTURE:

Read this Scripture passage twice.

Invite participants to reflect silently after it is read the first time.

“Indeed, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are all the more necessary, and those parts of the body that we consider less honorable we surround with greater honor, and our less presentable parts are treated with greater propriety, whereas our more presentable parts do not need this. But God has so constructed the body as to give greater honor to a part that is without it, so that there may be no division in the body, but that the parts may have the same concern for one another. If [one] part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy.”

(1 Corinthians 12:22-26)

SHARE:

To show compassion, from the root words “com” and “passion,” means “to suffer with” another.

- When have you experienced deep compassion for the suffering of another?
- Have you ever experienced compassion for the suffering of a stranger?

REFLECT ON TRADITION:

Read these passages aloud.

“[Solidarity] is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the



Photo courtesy of Brother Mickey McGrath, OSFS

common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.”

—St. John Paul II, *On Social Concern (Sollicitudo rei Socialis)*, no. 38

“The solidarity which binds all men together as members of a common family makes it impossible for wealthy nations to look with indifference upon the hunger, misery and poverty of other nations whose citizens are unable to enjoy even elementary human rights. The nations of the world are becoming more and more dependent on one another and it will not be possible to preserve a lasting peace so long as glaring economic and social imbalances persist.”

—St. John XXIII, *Mother and Teacher (Mater et Magistra)*, no. 157

DISCUSS:

- Do you believe that “we are all really responsible for all”? If so, how does this challenge you?
- How can you join with others to take concrete steps—big or small—to help build a society of solidarity?

ACT:

Explore [this webpage](#) to learn how high school and university students are living out the call to solidarity through CRS Chapters and Clubs. How can you work to educate others about issues that impact our brothers and sisters at home and around the world?

SEND:

Loving God, Father of all people, help sensitize us to the suffering of others so that we can overcome indifference and build up a civilization of love and solidarity. Amen

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OPENING PRAYER

Because We Are Yours

I did not know you
But I was yours.
And they do not know me
And I do not know them
But they are mine
And I am theirs.

Let no chasm, no river, no drought or storm,
No war, no exodus, no border, natural or constructed,
No device of man nor devil
Come between us
Or halt the love that burns within me,
The grace that flows from you.
Let me think on no man lest I think joyful thoughts
of brotherhood,

Let me think on no woman lest I think tender thoughts
of sisterhood,
Friend and stranger,
Ally and enemy,
Brothers,
Sisters.
They are mine
And I am theirs,
Because we are yours.

<https://www.crs.org/ways-to-help/advocate/chapters-clubs>

CST 101 CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION

A discussion guide from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services

OPENING PRAYER: Together, pray, “Prayer to Care for Our Common Home.”

WATCH: “CST 101: Care for God’s Creation” on YouTube.

PRAY WITH SCRIPTURE:

Read this Scripture passage twice.

Invite participants to reflect silently after it is read the first time.

“Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. . . . If God so clothes the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith?” (*Matthew 6:26, 30*)

SHARE:

One way that God reveals himself to us is through his creation.

- Have you experienced awe and wonder at God’s creation?
- What has your experience with nature taught you about the Creator?

REFLECT ON TRADITION:

Read these passages aloud.

“On this earth there is room for everyone: here the entire human family must find the resources to live with dignity, through the help of nature itself—God’s gift to his children—and through hard work and creativity. At the same time we must recognize our grave duty to hand the earth on to future generations in such a condition that they too can worthily inhabit it and continue to cultivate it.”

—Pope Benedict XVI, *Charity in Truth*
(*Caritas in Veritate*), no. 50



Photo courtesy of Brother Mickey McGrath, OSFS

“A true ecological approach *always* becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. . . . Everything is connected. Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society.”

—Pope Francis, *On Care for Our Common Home (Laudato Si')*, nos. 49, 91

DISCUSS:

- How is the call to care for God’s creation connected with our concern for the life and dignity of every person—both at home and around the world, now and in future generations?
- In your own community or globally, what examples have you encountered of environmental contamination or climate change affecting vulnerable persons?

ACT:

Read about one parish’s efforts to form “green teams” in response to Pope Francis’ call. What lifestyle changes or economic choices can you, your family or community make to better care for God’s creation?

SEND:

Creator God, help us become better stewards of creation in our families, parishes, neighborhoods, nation and world. Help us remember the stories and faces of those victimized by climate change, that we may change our lifestyles to benefit those who are vulnerable today, and those not yet born. Amen

Visit crs.org/CST-101 or usccb.org/cst for all CST 101 resources, including the prayers, stories and videos linked to in these discussion guides.



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OPENING PRAYER

Prayer to Care for Our Common Home (Prayer inspired by Laudato Si')

Father of all,
Creator and ruler of the universe,
You entrusted your world to us as a gift.
Help us to care for it and all people,
that we may live in right relationship--
 with You,
 with ourselves,
 with one another,
 and with creation.

Christ our Lord,
both divine and human,
You lived among us and died for our sins.
Help us to imitate your love for the human family
by recognizing that we are all connected—
 to our brothers and sisters around the world,
 to those in poverty impacted by environmental devastation,
 and to future generations.

Holy Spirit,
giver of wisdom and love,
You breathe life in us and guide us.
Help us to live according to your vision,
stirring to action the hearts of all—
 individuals and families,
 communities of faith,
 and civil and political leaders.

Triune God, help us to hear the cry of those in poverty,
and the cry of the earth,
so that we may together care for our common home.

Amen.

Parish forms green teams in response to Laudato Si'

When our parishes, Ascension and St. Edmund, in Oak Park, IL, were merged into one in 2023, we were animated by common inspiration by Pope Francis' call to care for God's creation in his encyclical, Laudato Si'. Responding to the "Cry of the Poor," community gardeners at both churches donate over 2,000 pounds of produce to local food pantries every year. Zero waste is the hallmark of all parish events, including school lunches. Our parish is home to a garden of native plants and a "Dandelion Brigade" of school parents and supporters who keep pesticides off school grounds with our sweat equity. Every week our bulletin features a Creation Care item. By advocating for fossil fuel disinvestment, and investment in solar and geothermal parish infrastructure, we remind all Catholics—leaders and lay--that there are pressing needs they must address. Imaginative ecological educational activities delight our children after Mass on designated Sundays throughout our warmer months. We are long-time members of a local Interfaith Green Network and work to collaborate in activities that embrace our ecological ethos.

Found at <https://www.usccb.org/resources/parish-forms-green-teams-response-laudato-si>

