



# Catholic Social Teaching *for Everyone*

SESSION FOUR:

Call to Family, Community, and Participation

# Opening Prayer:

HEAVENLY FATHER,  
when you created humankind in  
your image and likeness, you  
created them as a community of  
persons, male and female, saying it  
was not good for the human being  
to be alone. And you blessed them  
and told them to be fertile,  
multiply, and fill the earth.

*(Genesis 1:26-28, 2:18)*

Lord Jesus, when you began your  
earthly ministry, you called together  
disciples, from whom you selected  
twelve to form a special community  
with you and the women who  
accompanied you on your way. And  
you commissioned them to  
participate in your work of  
proclaiming the kingdom and  
healing the sick.

*(Luke 6:13, 8:2-3, 9:1-2)*

# Opening Prayer *cont'd*:

## **HOLY SPIRIT,**

when you filled the disciples at Pentecost, you formed them into a closeknit community devoted to prayer and serving the common good. And you inspired them to spread the gospel far and wide, establishing faith communities throughout the Mediterranean world.

*(Acts 2:42-45, 15:40-18:11)*

We thank you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for the gifts of family and community and for calling us to participate in the building up of your kingdom. Amen.

# 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.”*

*(USCCB)*



Art by Bro. Mickey McGrath, OSFS

CST 101

# Call to Family, Community, and Participation



# Key Principle — the Common Good

“The principle of the common good, to which every aspect of social life must be related if it is to attain its fullest meaning, stems from the dignity, unity and equality of all people. . . . The common good indicates ‘the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily.’”

(CSDC 164)

**WISDOM**  
insure domestic Tranquillity  
and our Posterity, do ordain  
These

Section 1. All legislative Powers herein granted shall be a  
Representatives.  
m. 2. The House of Representatives shall be a  
shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electo  
shall be a Representative who shall  
elected, be an Inhabitant of the  
direct Taxes shall be app  
by adding to the  
years, in such  
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Island and  
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# Key Principle — the Common Good *cont'd*

It consists of three essential elements:

“First, the common good presupposes respect for the person as such. In the name of the common good, public authorities are bound to respect the fundamental and inalienable rights of the human person.”

(CCC 1906-1907)

# Key Principle — the Common Good *cont'd*

“Second, the common good requires the social well-being and development of the group itself. . . .

Certainly, it is the proper function of authority to arbitrate, in the name of the common good, between various particular interests; but it should make accessible to each what is needed to lead a truly human life: food, clothing, health, work, education and culture, suitable information, the right to establish a family, and so on.”

(CCC 1908)

# Key Principle — the Common Good *cont'd*

“Finally, the common good requires peace, that is, the stability and security of a just order. It presupposes that authority should ensure by morally acceptable means the security of society and its members.”

(CCC 1909)

# Key Principle — Subsidiarity

“The principle of subsidiarity reminds us that larger institutions in society should not overwhelm or interfere with smaller or local institutions, yet larger institutions have essential responsibilities when the more local institutions cannot adequately protect human dignity, meet human needs, and advance the common good.”

*(USCCB)*



# Key Principle — Subsidiarity

“Subsidiarity is among the most constant and characteristic directives of the Church’s social doctrine . . . . It is impossible to promote the dignity of the person without showing concern for the family, groups, associations, local territorial realities; in short, for that aggregate of economic, social, cultural, sports-oriented, recreational, professional and political expressions to which people spontaneously give life and which make it possible for them to achieve effective social growth. . . . This network of relationships strengthens the social fabric and constitutes the basis of a true community of persons, making possible the recognition of higher forms of social activity.” (CSDC 185)

# Key Principle — Subsidiarity *cont'd*

“The principle of subsidiarity applies especially in the context of the digital revolution. Here, the highest level is not the State, but rather major economic and technological actors that exercise de facto power over the conditions of everyday life. . . . The principle of subsidiarity requires that such processes not be imposed from above in an opaque and unilateral manner, but instead be directed toward the common good with transparency, accountability and meaningful forms of participation . . . .”

*(Magnifica Humanitas 71)*

# FAMILY

“The family— based on marriage between a man and a woman — is the first and fundamental unit of society and is a sanctuary for the creation and nurturing of children. It should be defended and strengthened, not redefined, undermined, or further distorted. Respect for the family should be reflected in every policy and program. It is important to uphold parents’ rights and responsibilities to care for their children, including the right to choose their children’s education.” (USCCB)



# FAMILY *cont'd*



“In most places, this text uses ‘family’ to designate the community, founded on marriage, of father, mother, and children. However, family may also include the extended members such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc., as dictated by the many cultural realities present in the United States. This document seeks to address the many but also culturally rich,

marital and family situations that are present in contemporary society such as interreligious marriages, single-parent families, and intercultural families.” (USCCB)

# FAMILY *cont'd*

“In their relationship to the family, society and the State are seriously obligated to observe the principle of subsidiarity. In virtue of this principle, public authorities may not take away from the family tasks which it can accomplish well by itself or in free association with other families. On the other hand, these same authorities have the duty to sustain the family, ensuring that it has all the assistance that it needs to fulfill properly its responsibilities.” (CSDC 214)



# COMMUNITY



“For the human person, a naturally social and political being, ‘social life is not something added on’ but is part of an essential and indelible dimension. . . . The political community, a reality inherent in [humankind], exists to achieve an end otherwise unobtainable: the full growth of each of its members, called to cooperate steadfastly for the attainment of the common good . . . .” (CSDC 384)

# COMMUNITY *cont'd*

- “Every human community needs an authority to govern it. . . . Its role is to ensure as far as possible the common good of the society.” (CCC 1898)
- “Each person ‘rightly owes loyalty to the communities of which he [or she] is part and respect to those in authority who have charge of the common good.’” (CCC 1880)

# COMMUNITY *cont'd*

- “The choice of the political regime and the appointment of rulers are left to the free decision of the citizens.’ The diversity of political regimes is morally acceptable, provided they serve the legitimate good of the communities that adopt them.” (CCC 1901)
- “Authority is exercised legitimately only when it seeks the common good of the group concerned and if it employs morally licit means to attain it.” (CCC 1903)

# PARTICIPATION

- “Every person and association has a right and a duty to participate actively in shaping society and to promote the well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.” (USCCB)



- “Responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation.” (USCCB)

# PARTICIPATION *cont'd*



“To promote the participation of the greatest number in the life of a society, the creation of voluntary associations and institutions must be encouraged ‘on both national and international levels, which relate to economic and social goals, to cultural and recreational activities, to sport, to various professions, and to political affairs.’”

(CCC 1882)

# PARTICIPATION *cont'd*

“Participation is a duty to be fulfilled consciously by all, with responsibility and with a view to the common good. . . .

Moreover, strong moral pressure is needed, so that the administration of public life will be the result of the shared responsibility of each individual with regard to the common good.” (CSDC 189)



# Questions for Reflection *and Discussion*

# Community and the Common Good

“The human person cannot find fulfilment in himself, that is, apart from the fact that he exists ‘with’ others and ‘for’ others. . . . No expression of social life — from the family to intermediate social groups, associations, enterprises of an economic nature, cities, regions, states, up to the community of peoples and nations — can escape the issue of its own common good, in that this is a constitutive element of its significance and the authentic reason for its very existence.” (CSDC 165)

*How do governments and other social entities determine what will promote the common good?*

# Government and the Principle of Subsidiarity

“The primary norm for determining the scope and limits of governmental intervention is the principle of subsidiarity. . . . 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. This does 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.’”

(USCCB, “Economic Justice for All,” 124)

*What are some examples of subsidiarity in practice?*

# Take Action



# Examination of Conscience (USCCB)



- Do I try to make positive contributions in my family and in my community?
- Are my beliefs, attitudes, and choices such that they strengthen or undermine the institution of the family?
- Am I aware of problems facing my local community and involved in efforts to find solutions? Do I stay informed and make my voice heard when needed?
- Do I support the efforts of poor persons to work for change in their neighborhoods and communities? Do my attitudes and interactions empower or disempower others?

# Taking Action — Separated and Divorce Ministry

- The St. John Neumann Separated-Divorced Ministry reaches out to those who find themselves struggling with the difficulties, loneliness, and/or isolation that often come with the journey through separation and divorce.
- In addition to offering a safe place to share, the ministry provides support, information on what the Church teaches about divorce, and hope for the future.



**A monthly “drop-in” group meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month, an 8-week program is offered starting each April.**

# Taking Action — Always Our Children


- SJN's ministry for LGBTQI+ families and friends.
- We warmly welcome all who wish to attend, and all conversations and comments are respectfully received.
- Join us for fellowship and conversation on the third Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. in the Social Room.



# Closing Prayer:

## *Prayer for Service to the Community*

Heavenly Father, we come before you with hearts filled with a desire to serve and uplift our community. You have called us to love our neighbors as ourselves and to be instruments of your peace and compassion in the world. Grant us wisdom and discernment as we seek to serve others. Help us to see beyond outward appearances and to recognize the dignity and worth of every person we encounter. Fill us with your Holy Spirit, empowering us to be your hands and feet in the world, bringing hope and healing wherever we go.



We lift up our community into your loving hands, praying for its well-being and prosperity. Help us to be agents of positive change, working together to build a community where all are valued, respected, and cared for.

Lord, we ask for your blessing upon our efforts to serve others. May our actions be guided by your love and motivated by a genuine desire to make a difference in the lives of those around us.

May our hands be your hands, our feet be your feet, and our hearts be your hearts as we seek to serve others in your name. Amen.

Adapted from *5 Prayers for Your Community*  
<https://commongoodmag.com/prayers-for-your-community>.