Catholic Social Teaching

As a joint Church School, our school community is built on the teachings of Christ and the Gospel values. Our responsibility as a Christian school is to educate our students in these teachings and values. But these are more than just theoretical beliefs. Catholic Social Teaching is how we should live out our lives … it is a life-style. You do not need to be a Catholic / Christian to live in this manner. Anyone can do this. But the key teachings are rooted in Scripture.

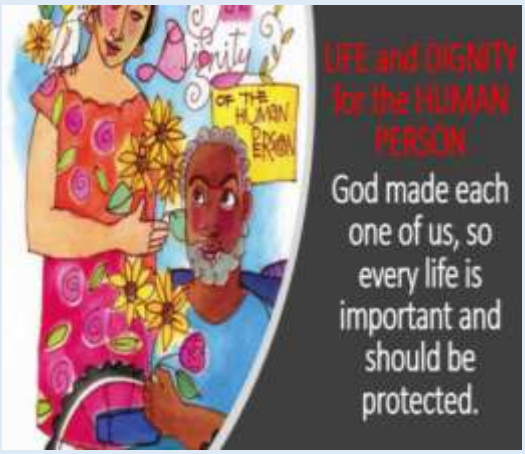
All students participate in Form Time workshops that encourage them to explore the issues surrounding Catholic Social Teaching. Our focus will be …

2023 – 2024: **Community & Participation and Creation**
2024 – 2025: **Dignity and Rights & Responsibilities**
2025 – 2026: **Solidarity and Preferential Option for the Poor**



CARDINAL VINCENT NICHOLS

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The underlying insight is that everyone has the right and responsibility to live in our world constructively, not destructively, and to ensure that we leave it in a better state than when we entered it. At the core of Catholic Social Teaching are a number of key concepts and principles. Chief among these are justice, human dignity, the common good, the principles of participation, solidarity, and subsidiarity, the universal destination of the world's goods, and the option for the poor. **HUMAN DIGNITY**

'Catholic social teaching believes that human beings, created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26-27), have by their very existence an inherent value, worth, and distinction.' (Daniel Groody, Globalization, Spirituality and Justice) This means that God is present in each and every one of us, regardless of race, origin, sex, orientation, culture, or economic standing. Catholic Social Teaching emphasises that we must see within each other a reflection of God and we must honour and respect this dignity as a divine gift.

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What makes each of us special?
How should we treat each other?

COMMUNITY AND PARTICIPATION



We are not created by God to live alone. Living in community is an essential expression of who we are. But Community does not just happen – it is something that all of us must work together to develop.

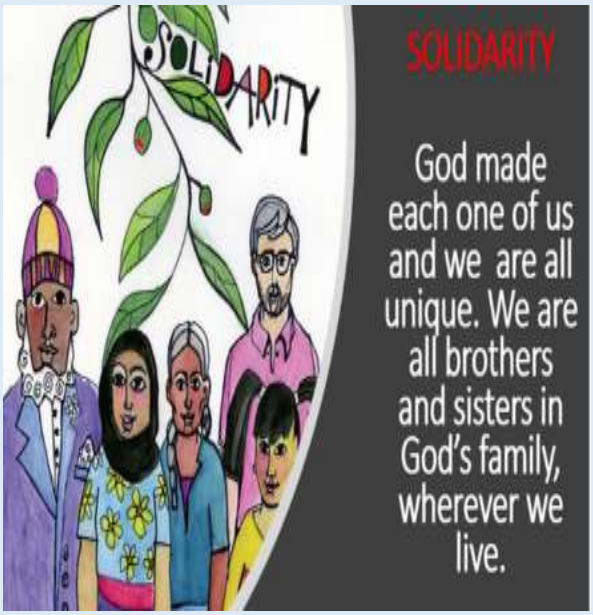
'…A community needs a soul if it is to become a true home for human beings. You, the people must give it this soul.' John Paul II

'Participation is a duty to be fulfilled consciously by all, with responsibility and with a view to the common good.' Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church.

THE COMMON GOOD: In the UK, this is perhaps one of the best-known principles of Catholic Social Teaching, thanks to two excellent teaching documents produced by the Bishops Conference of England and Wales: The Common Good (1996) and Choosing the Common Good (2010). Vatican II defines it as 'the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily'. (Gaudium et Spes – 'The Joys and Hopes' paragraph 26 – 1965). Pursuit of the common good is one of the ways in which Catholics practice solidarity: the common good is not just shared with those nearest to us, or even with all those in our own society; it is a universal principle, which fosters the unity of the whole human family. (CCC, paragraph 1911) In practising it, Catholics are called to have particular care for the weak and vulnerable, because they are our neighbours in a pre-eminent way (Luke 10: 25-37).

What is 'true community'?

SOLIDARITY



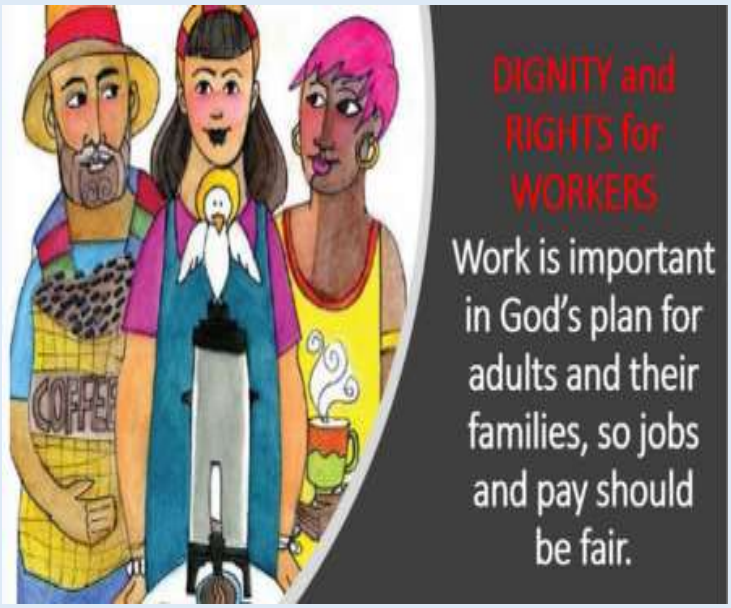
Solidarity is about valuing our fellow human beings and respecting who they are as individuals.

'The many situations of inequality, poverty and injustice, are signs not only of a profound lack of fraternity, but also of the absence of a culture of solidarity. New ideologies, characterized by rampant individualism, egocentrism and materialistic consumerism, weaken social bonds, fuelling that "throw away" mentality which leads to contempt for, and the abandonment of, the weakest and those considered "useless". In this way human coexistence increasingly tends to resemble a mere 'do ut des' which is both pragmatic and selfish.' Pope Francis

'We are all one family in the world. Building a community that empowers everyone to attain their full potential through each of us respecting each other's dignity, rights and responsibilities makes the world a better place to live.' Sollicitudo rei socialis – 'On Social Concern' (1987)

Who are our leaders?
How do we stand with others?
How did Jesus show service and justice?

DIGNITY & RIGHTS FOR WORKERS



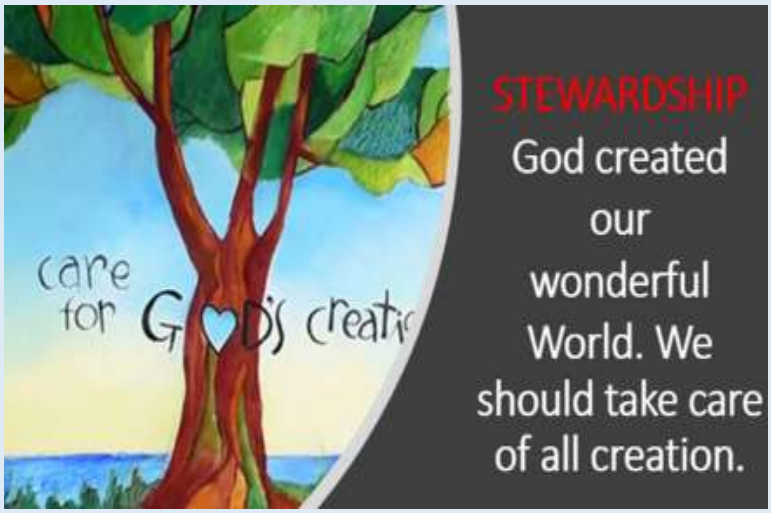
Catholic Social Teaching holds that work is dignified and an intrinsic good, and workers must always be respected and valued.

Jesus became 'like us in all things, devoted most of the years of his life on earth to manual work at the carpenter's bench.' Saint John Paul II – Laborem Exercens, On Human Work

(The state) 'has also the duty to protect the rights of all its people, and particularly of its weaker members, the workers, women and children. It can never be right for the State to shirk its obligation of working actively for the betterment of the condition of the workingman.' John XXIII – Mater et Magistra

Work must be undertaken responsibly, and labour treated well, this includes how we approach the work we do, what it is we do with our work and how employers treat their employees. Jesus speaks a lot about work, while much of this is in parables, we shouldn't restrict interpretations of these parables to be only spiritual ones.

CARE FOR CREATION



Respect for human life means respecting all of God's creation. We must re-engage with our environment and take responsibility for it; live sustainably, live so that there are enough resources for everyone.

The relationship between human activity and global warming must be constantly monitored for 'the climate is a good that must be protected.' Vatican's Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, para 470

'Creation is not a property, which we can rule over at will; or, even less, is the property of only a few: Creation is a gift, it is a wonderful gift that God has given us, so that we care for it and we use it for the benefit of all, always with great respect and gratitude.' Pope Francis

How do we show respect for Creation?

PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR

'The spirit of the Lord is on me, for he has anointed me to bring the good news to the afflicted. He has sent me… to let the oppressed go free.' Luke 4:18

The option for the poor reminds us of God's preferential love for the poorest and most vulnerable people. God's love is universal; he does not side with oppressors but loves the humble.

More recently, some Catholic theologians have spoken about an 'option for the earth'. Pope Francis writes, 'the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor' Laudato Si' #2.



RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

The Catholic traditions 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 dignity. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities to one another, to our families and to the wider society.

