



Catholic Social Teaching

Care for God's Creation – We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of God's creation. We should strive to live simply to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Fact - Although the United States has only 4.5% of the world's population, we consume 26% of the world's electricity; we consume 33% of the world's paper.

Personal Ripple Action – Change your shopping bags and change the amount of refuse left for future generations. Use reusable cloth bags instead of disposable plastic bags. Take the St. Francis Pledge to care for creation (<http://catholicclimatecovenant.org>).

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Dignity of the Human Person – Our belief in the sanctity of human life and the inherent dignity of the human person is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching. Every person is created in the image of God. Every person is precious.

Fact – Human trafficking is alive and thriving. This global offense impacts 27 million people who are kept in bondage through force, fraud, and coercion. UNICEF reports that 1 million of them are children and 80% are women and girls. It is the second largest and fastest growing criminal act. Trafficking groups have been arrested in DuPage and Kane counties.

Personal Ripple Action – Check out www.slaveryfootprint.org which explains how our purchases contribute to modern slavery, but also offers practical suggestions for what we can do to make it end. Practice seeing and respecting all people ... the clerk, the homeless man ... recognize their inherent dignity. Change how you see --- and we will change the world.

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Rights and Responsibility – As Catholics, we have a responsibility to protect our rights and the rights of our brothers and sisters around the world. These rights include the right to life, food, shelter, and clean water.

Fact – El Salvador is the smallest and most densely populated country in Central America. The income inequity between rural and urban areas is severe and competition for natural resources is intense. Catholic Relief Services supports water and sanitation projects in El Salvador.

Personal Ripple Action – Pay attention to the water you use this week and how easily you obtain it. If you do laundry more than once a week, cut back or do bigger loads. There are millions around the world that do not have easy access to water. Using our water resources responsibly helps assure that future generations will have water readily available.

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The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers – We are called upon to support the dignity of work and the rights of workers, including a fair wage and healthy and safe working conditions.

Fact – More than 100 million people in Africa, Asia, and Latin America depend on coffee for their livelihoods. Fair trade sets prices to allow producers to cover the costs of production and provide a decent wage.

Personal Ripple Action – Change your coffee and change the work conditions of coffee growers. Change your coffee to Fair Trade coffee. Americans spend \$20 billion a year to feed their coffee habit. If everyone changed, it would make a huge difference.

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Option for the Poor – We are called to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable of our society first. By providing means of nutrition to the hungry and vulnerable in our society, we are responding to this call.

Fact – UN statistics indicate that about 935 million people are hungry or undernourished and 98% live in developing countries. But there is also hunger in the US. According to the USDA, 14.5% of households in the US were food insecure some time during 2010. This means children lack access to nutrition.

Personal Ripple Action – Buy locally grown produce from area farmers this spring. By supporting local farmers and produce growers, we provide an incentive to local producers to sell fresh foods to poor people at a fair price, especially the urban poor who don't have access to large supermarkets.

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Call to Family, Community, and Participation – Our tradition proclaims that 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.

Fact – Communities are meant to be ones of inclusion, not exclusion. In communities today there are divisions caused by race, class, immigration, and economic inequality. Our challenge is to work for communities to overcome these divisions.

Personal Ripple Action – “Be the change you want to see in the world.” *Mahatma Gandhi*

Let us reflect on the following: Whom do we welcome to our communities? Whom do we exclude? Who sits down to meals and who goes hungry? Who is waiting to be reunited with a loved one? Pray for these people.

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