



**PEACE & SOCIAL JUSTICE**  
*Faithful Citizenship &  
Catholic Social Teaching*

***The Catholic approach to faithful citizenship begins with moral principles, not party platforms. The directions for our public witness are found in Scripture and Catholic social teaching.”***

*(U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops)*

Elections are right around the corner...

As Catholics we need to share our values, raise our voices, and use our votes to shape a society that pursues, first and foremost, justice. Here are some key themes of our Catholic social tradition:

- **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable**

The Gospel calls Christians to put the needs of the poor first. A common moral test of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable members. Wherever there is structural injustice, Christians are called to oppose it. Those with the greatest need require the greatest response.

- **Life & Dignity of the Human Person**

All people are a reflection of God and thus all human life, at all stages from conception through death is sacred. People take precedence over things and structures. Systems serve people not vice versa.

- **Call to Family, Community & Participation**

The human person is both sacred and fundamentally social. In community, we realize the fulfillment of our dignity and rights in relationship with and to others. It is important that we learn to live in true Christian community.

- **Rights & Responsibilities**

Catholic teaching emphasizes the right to life but also the basic necessities that provide quality to life: food, shelter, health care, education, employment, etc. When our brothers and sisters are lacking in basic rights, the common good of all suffers.

- **Dignity of Work & the Rights of Workers**

Catholic tradition holds that work is an expression of our dignity and an expression of our involvement in God's creation. People have a right to decent work, fair wages, and private property. The economy exists to serve people, not vice versa.

- **Solidarity**

Given that we are fundamentally social and called to community, we are called to continue to build our communities so that all people may attain their full human potential. By working for justice, we fulfill our mandate to build the Body of Christ.

- **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. The environmental challenge has both moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.

Lastly, as we assess how well candidate records follow Catholic Social Teaching, we must remember that the teaching is holistic. One or two principles were not meant to be upheld at the detriment to the remainder. Christ lived all these principles...in justice.

*Next Social Justice Mtg.: Thurs.10/26/06; 7:30-9:30, Rm. 227*

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