

The Seven Principles of Catholic Social Justice

00:00 S?: If you like having Bible study in your pocket, and you have an iPhone or iPad, why not leave a review? Search Bible Study Evangelista in iTunes and tell everyone how you're loving and lifting all you've been given. Here's Sonja.

00:14 Sonja Corbitt: Let's get social, connect with me at Bible Study Evangelista on Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and now you can also find me on the number one Catholic app for iPhone and Android, Laudate. Let's connect. And now, let's get some Bible study in your pocket.

[music]

00:51 SC: It's the Bible Study Evangelista show, Bible study spinach that tastes like cake. I'm Sonja Corbitt, and I'm gonna love and lift you today so that you can love and lift all you've been given. We're beginning today our series on Catholic social justice, the seven principles of Catholic social justice. And of course, you can just look around in the world today and discern why we're doing this series, and I'll share a little bit more about that as we go through this introductory show, in which I'm going to give you the principles and outline where they come from.

01:22 SC: In the coming weeks, it'll be about an eight-week series. In the coming weeks, we're going to break each of those principles down and explain those because the Catholic bishops back in '95, 1995, Archbishop Roach of Saint Paul Minneapolis, he's retired, of course. But he convened a task force on Catholic social justice, and they put together some social principles, it was actually motivated by the fact that Catholic social teaching is undercommunicated and it's not sufficiently understood.

02:00 SC: They said specifically that far too many Catholics are not familiar with the Catholic social principles, and many Catholics don't adequately understand that the social teaching of the church is an essential part of Catholic faith. And those are pretty strong words, and so they put this task force together to condense the social teaching into a convenient catechetical package, somewhat like the 10 Commandments and the seven sacraments, and maybe even the eight beatitudes, those are pretty well known because they are conveniently packaged and therefore, they are easily understood and easily communicated, at least in a concise way.

02:39 SC: So that's how we're going to approach it. And we're going to do a lot of emphasis on the Bible study portion of it. These principles are rooted in Scripture and tradition, as is all of Catholic teaching. And so, because it's the Bible Study Evangelista, we're gonna do a heavy emphasis on that Bible study part so that we can see clearly where Jesus does talk about social justice and even politics, people say that Jesus didn't talk about politics, but he did, he just did it in a very interesting way that would apply to all people in all times of history. And as a non-Catholic exploring Catholic teaching and Catholic doctrine, one of the things that actually drew me to the sanity of the Catholic church is how clearly the church communicates social justice, it's not just clearly communicated. It's clearly understood and it's clearly outlined for us. The problem so far though is that it's not widely taught.

03:37 SC: And so, as I was trying to discern what is my role in what's happening right now, how can I contribute? How can I help? And so I sat with the Holy Spirit with that, and that's why we're doing this series. So the question is then, what are the Catholic social principles that are supposed to be accepted as the essential part of our faith? And the next question then looks at how we can personally appropriate those, how we can internalize them so that they can lead to action.

04:07 SC: Faith is not a matter of what you know with your head. The Bible says that even the demons believe and tremble. So the demons know it, but they don't love what they know. And in the same way, we can have all the knowledge in the world about what the Catholic Church teaches about any particular subject, but until we put it into practice, it's not really part of our faith, our individual living faith. And so, it's important then to know what the church teaches, and then to put it into practice so that our faith is alive and not dead.

04:37 SC: So, if the social teaching of the church is an essential part of the Catholic faith, then what does it mean to be Catholic? What do these social justice principles, how do they inform our Catholic faith and our life, our faith life? Well, first of all, they proceed from the principles of the kingdom of God himself. God established a kingdom on earth, and Jesus had a lot to say about that kingdom. First of all, he taught that we must love our neighbor as ourselves, and of course, he gave us that beautiful parable of the good Samaritan, when the Pharisee asked, Who is my neighbor? And in essence, Jesus's answer was everyone. Everyone is your neighbor, and if you think about the neighbors that you live among in your backyard, we'll say, some of them can be pretty insufferable.

05:28 SC: But Catholic social teaching teaches us that they are still made in the image of God, and that gives them a fundamental worth that cannot be erased by anything that they do or they don't do. And just as God exists as a Trinity, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit relating to one another, humans are made also to be communal and social. So we're not complete without each other, even the insufferable ones.

05:50 SC: Saint Paul put this beautifully in Corinthians, he was writing a pastoral letter to the Corinthians who were somewhat carnal actually, they were in a little trouble, and he was writing to them to explain in this particular passage the unity and the diversity in his body, the body of Christ, which is the church, we each are part of the church, and he says in verse 12 of chapter 12, For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many are one body, so also is Christ. For by one spirit, we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and have all been made to drink into one spirit. For in fact, the body is not one member, but many. If the foot should say, Because I am not a hand, I'm not worthy of the body. Is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, Because I'm not an eye, I am not of the body. Is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? And if the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling?

06:56 SC: But now God has set the members, each one of them in the body as he pleased. And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now indeed there are many members yet one body, and the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you. Nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. No, much rather, those members of the body which seemed to be weaker are necessary, and those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, on those we bestow, greater honor. And our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, but our presentable parts have no need of modesty. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part,

The Seven Principles of Catholic Social Justice

which lacks it. That there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.

07:41 SC: And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it. Or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ and members individually, and God has appointed these in the church. And then he goes through those with the spiritual gifts and then he, in the next chapter, he goes into what those gifts are, and the greatest gift being charity. And that is the ruling principle behind all of Catholic social justice, charity as the greatest gift.

08:13 SC: But it's interesting that he talks about how if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it. Now, this is, it seems sort of esoteric sort of an idea out in space somewhere. But this is a very practical reality that in the body of Christ, where one goes, they all go. And so, if one is suffering, then the whole body is suffering, and that's a reality, it's not just an idea out somewhere; it's a reality of the interconnectedness of the communion that we have in the church. And I'll get to that later on in the show, but I just wanna throw it out there in the context of this body, one body of Christ idea, we are one body. And so each of us has a different role, but every role is important, every member teaches the rest something important about God and his kingdom, and so every member is valuable. And that's actually one of our very first principles of Catholic social teaching, the life and dignity of the human person.

09:19 SC: All Christians recognize the reality of sin. People do bad things, but sin isn't only individual stuff like kicking a puppy. We're social, and since we're social, sin can take root in cultures and nations and social groups. That's just the reality of how it is. Injustice and sin can be part of social structures and systems, because those structures and systems and institutions are made up of sinful individuals. But, so can the grace of God. We're made in the image of God and called to bring gospel values to society. And so, the Catholic Church has identified seven major tenets of Catholic social teaching. We are imperfect and we're leaving them out, but these are the ideal, these are the goals for the body of Christ: First, every human life has value and dignity. Catholics are called to protect life from its beginning in the womb, all the way until natural death. And those who have disabilities or illness or who are poor or persecuted, those are those least members that Paul was talking about. Those are also, and in fact, more so important in Jesus's teaching on the kingdom. Those are even more important than the ones who are more visible and seemingly more important. Because each life is precious, Christians are called to work for peaceful resolution of conflicts and preservation of human rights, that's the very first as Catholic social justice principle, life and dignity.

11:00 SC: The second is, the Catholics believe that the most basic building block for society to flourish is family, that unique bond that is shared by spouses and parents and children and siblings, and then the extended family. Families form groups like parishes and trade unions and social clubs and charitable organizations, and so people have a right and a duty to participate in their community. Because if these relationships are not healthy then society as a whole, suffers. Now, more on that when we get back from the break. I'm Sonja Corbitt, your Bible Study Evangelista.

[music]

11:52 S?: You're listening to the Bible Study Evangelista Show, Bible Study spinach that tastes like cake.

12:01 S?: Sonja created the Love the Word Bible Study method just for you, based on Mary's personal practice and formulated for your personality and temperament. Get your Love the Word meditations every Monday morning by signing up at biblestudyevangelista.com. Now, here's Sonja.

[music]

12:39 SC: The first principle of Catholic social justice is life and dignity. The second is the call to family and community. The third, in every society, there are rights and responsibilities. A just society comes from striking the right balance between our rights about how other people treat us, and then the responsibility that we have to those around us. Rights without responsibilities is not community, it's just everybody out for themselves. So, we have to ask ourselves, Whose responsibility is this issue? And that leads to subsidiarity, it leads to how we view government, whether the government or a business, a corporation, an individual, whatever, Whose responsibility is this issue? And so, the church then is organized in this kind of way too, in which no higher level of an organization should perform any function that cannot be handled efficiently and effectively at a lower level of organization by people who, individually or in groups, are closer to the problems and closer to the ground. That is the principle of subsidiarity, and it is included in that third Catholic social justice principle, rights and responsibilities. We'll talk about that in detail as we get to that.

13:54 SC: But in a nutshell, this is why a pastor is not responsible for doing all of the ministry in his parish. Yes, you heard me correctly. Saint Paul actually teaches this explicitly. Again, he's talking about spiritual gifts in Ephesians chapter 4, and he says in verse 11, He himself, Christ, gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. Why? For the equipping of the saints, for the work in ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. And so, we see there the principle that it is the saints themselves, me and you, who are to be doing the work of ministry. And the pastor's role then, he is ultimately responsible for it, but his role is to equip us to be able to do that ministry, it's not his job to do it, it's our job.

14:46 SC: And so that's a principle of subsidiarity where the smallest possible cell should be doing that work of ministry, it's everyone's responsibility. And just as rights without responsibilities is not community, and it just ends up being a free-for-all, responsibility without rights is tyranny. So, telling people they're responsible for it without giving them the right to do it, is tyranny.

15:14 SC: Number four, the fourth principle of Catholic social justice is an option for the poor and the vulnerable. It says a basic moral test for a society is how it treats its most vulnerable members. So, Catholic social teaching then instructs us that putting the needs of the poor and the vulnerable first is the key to the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven. Not just in eternity, but here and now, it's how we can bring about a just society. And that's why Jesus said, Whatever you did for the least of mine, you did for me. And then he says, Now, enter into eternal life.

15:49 SC: The fifth principle is that Catholics believe in the dignity of work and the rights of workers, and that's part of why Saint Joseph is the patron saint of workers. And of course, that involves where tax money goes, and is there a fair ratio between the taxes that the worker is taxed and entitlements? And so, work then is more than just a way to make a living, it's a form of continuing participation in God's creation. We talked about that in our very first series of the year, the New Year series when we looked at work and how work is actually at the bottom of the priorities. The priorities go: God, worship and rest, then your family and those relationships, and then work. And so, work is actually the last on that totem pole, and of course in that work is

The Seven Principles of Catholic Social Justice

included ministry, whatever yours is. But the dignity of work is to be protected, and so that means that the basic rights of workers must also be respected and protected.

16:48 SC: The sixth principle is solidarity, where Catholics are called to empathize and stand with people who suffer. Pope John Paul VI taught that If you want peace, then you work for justice, even if it doesn't personally affect you. So that is, again, everyone's responsibility.

17:05 SC: The seventh principle is that humans are stewards of God's creation. And so care for the environment is a requirement of the Catholic faith. Now, if you're an outdoorsman, I have to just be honest. One of my biggest pet peeves is driving anywhere and seeing the trash that is thrown out of people's cars, it drives me nuts. It is such a basic principle to just keep your trash in your car and throw it away when you get some place with a trash receptacle. How hard is that? And it's such a dead giveaway that if you can't even do something so simple, that you're not thinking about the environment at all, I'm not talking about politics here, I'm just talking about basic stewardship of caring for the earth and the world that God gave us. We are not the ultimate owners of creation, God entrusted creation to us, so we're called to treat the world around us with care and reverence. It means preserving the world's resources, it means living in a healthy relationship with creation.

18:10 SC: So, what do we do then? Those are the seven principles but what do we do? And I always remember Mother Teresa, somebody asked her, of course Saint Teresa of Calcutta, they asked her what they could do to promote world peace? And she said, "Go home and love your family." And then another said, "Well, I wanna go and join your work in Calcutta." And she said, "Find your own Calcutta." And that's why, we should all, in the circumstances that we find ourselves in the world right now, and with everything being so volatile, we need to go to the Holy Spirit and ask him what our role is, both in our responsibility for how the world is, and also our responsibility for working toward a more just society. Both of those things are our responsibility under God.

19:00 SC: And it really can get overwhelming because the problems are so big and so far-reaching, that to really contemplate our role and our responsibility in the messes that we see around us, it really can be very overwhelming. And that's part of why we're doing this series, because as we work through all the seven principles, there will be something that rises to the surface for you that indicates a stronger role and a stronger responsibility in a particular area for you. What do I mean? Well, a lot of times, social justice for the individual as far as working toward a more just system or a more just society, it comes from personal experience. Mothers Against Drunk Driving arose out of a need of parents, mothers specifically, for more to be done in society against drunk driving that had killed their own children. And because of that need and because of that wound that they incurred at the hands of one who was drunk and killed one of their children, they banded together and they worked on an issue.

20:05 SC: And so that's what I mean when I say a lot of times, this arises from your personal experience. I know someone who lost a child to suicide, and she has undergone this... Well, first of all, this huge healing. But also sort of a renaissance of social justice. She's working on that issue because it has affected her specifically and individually in her family, and she sees a need in our society to address that more fully.

20:38 SC: Again, this is explicitly in Scripture where Saint Paul, again, to the Corinthian church, writes in chapter 1 of 2 Corinthians, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us

The Seven Principles of Catholic Social Justice

in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. And if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer, or if we are comforted it is for your consolation and your salvation. And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so you will also partake of the consolation.

21:28 SC: And so Saint Paul's principle there is that when you suffer, after you have gone through the process of grief, which is sometimes extended. But once you have gone through that process, then you're able to comfort other people who suffer in the same ways. A perfect example is my series, Healing the Father Wound. And people came from everywhere when I did that series, and they still come to it because I suffered deeply at the hands of my father. And of course, after you have healed from something like that, you're able to not only understand another person's suffering who has undergone it, but also you're able to offer some sort of hope that there is healing and the concrete steps that you can take to be healed, first of all, in the Holy Spirit, but then also offer that comfort and consolation and healing to other people. And that's really part of why, according to Saint Bridget, which I just read last night, that's part of why God allows suffering. So that we can comfort one another, so that when we see someone who is suffering, those members of the body who are suffering in the same ways that we suffered, we can offer them consolation and we can offer them hope. And we can offer them concrete steps to be able to proceed out of that grief into something constructive.

22:48 SC: Because we all know that whatever suffering is not redeemed will be reproduced. And so we have to go to the Holy Spirit, we have to go to Christ and allow him to heal and redeem our suffering so that it is not reproduced out of knee-jerk reactions and out of our own pain, so that we don't do it to other people, and then we can offer that healing and that hope to those around us who are suffering something similar. It's very important. These are the ways that we are connected as the body of Christ, and when I say that, I mean specifically the church, but we also, we'll see in a moment, have to expand our thinking in a more universal way. We'll talk about that when we get back.

[music]

23:52 S?: You're listening to the Bible Study Evangelista Show, Bible study spinach that tastes like cake.

24:00 S?: Did you know you can get Bible Study Evangelista radio notes and podcast delivered to your inbox every Monday morning? Redeem your Mondays. Join thousands of your fellow listeners by subscribing at biblestudyevangelista.com. Now, here's Sonja.

[music]

24:37 SC: As Mother Teresa said, "Find your own Calcutta." What is your Calcutta? Well, maybe it's speaking out about an injustice or an unjust law, maybe it's volunteering for a charity, maybe it's talking to a friend who's lonely. It can be really anything, but we have to really concentrate on learning all we can about the world; we need to watch documentaries online, we need to read about disasters in far-off places we never hear about. We should make friends from different walks of life, we can all do this to better understand the ways that we can help, and especially taking a personal

The Seven Principles of Catholic Social Justice

inventory of the places where you have suffered and how that suffering can be leveraged to minister to other people, because that's what we're all called and responsible to do.

25:23 SC: Now, as we go through each of these seven principles in detail, we're gonna look at specific ways that other people are doing it so that you can get an idea of how this will work out in your everyday life. And above all things, whenever we see injustice, the least we can do, which is actually one of the most powerful, is offer our prayers and our sufferings for those issues. And don't do anything, I beg of you, don't do anything until you have spoken to the Holy Spirit about it, because a lot of times we act out of our flesh and we do it with our own thoughts, in our own ways, and God's ways and thoughts are not our ways and thoughts. And so, He can direct our efforts, and our sympathies, and our compassion, and our energy to the place where we can be most effective, and He will do that if we will ask Him, and pause long enough in the fray to allow Him to speak. And that's, again, why it's so important that we're in the Scriptures on a daily basis so that He can speak to us individually about our relationships and our circumstances.

26:28 SC: But in the end, the tenets of Catholic social teaching give us guidance on what kind of society we're working to create, and that's the whole point. Because at its best, the church focuses on these seven areas: The dignity and value of human life, the essential role of strong families and community, recognition of rights and responsibilities, the option for the poor and the vulnerable, the dignity of work and the rights of workers, solidarity with those who suffer, and care for God's creation. All of these are part of the kingdom of God, and all of these were taught by Christ himself, and we're gonna look at that probably in the last segment. But again, what does it mean to be Catholic? And most of the time when we ask that question, we're thinking liturgically, we're thinking about the mass, we're thinking about the Eucharist because those are the two things that set Catholics apart from denominationalism or even faiths that are not Christian.

27:23 SC: And so when we talk about being Catholic, those are usually the terms that we're thinking, we're thinking about our liturgy and the way that we practice our faith through the liturgical year, those are mostly liturgical ideas. But Catholic social teaching then, it urges us to operate on two levels, both the individual and the global or the universal. The word Catholic means universal. And so we should be thinking in universal terms, and when I say that, I don't mean that everything is from global down to individual, I don't mean that, that's actually backward from what the church teaches. The church teaches we start at the individual and work our way up, but it is very important that we at least keep our eye on the global picture because that will inform our actions on an individual level.

28:12 SC: So as we're doing this overview, we need to be thinking about the individual who's in immediate need around us, think the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. But at the same time, we need to be aware of global and societal violations of justice, where there is systemic violence, systemic injustice, those things have to be addressed too. And it's not just the lawmakers, but institutions, corporations. We all have this obligation to affirm the principle of the right to life and dignity, and then decide how the corporations and the institutions and the legal framework can go about realizing this.

28:52 SC: So on an a personal level, it means figuring out how you... And this is often the most effective level, the one-on-one level, the small group level, can make a difference. And that's what we're gonna look at throughout the series. For each week, we're gonna look at each of the principles and consider how can I make a difference in this area? And where am I being called to do

something more than just be aware of it, or pray about it, or offer my sacrifices or masses or adoration hours, anything like that? Where am I being called to do something more?

29:25 SC: And here's the idea to keep in mind. All of the church's social teaching is understanding of family, of community life, of justice, of good governance. All of it comes back to the same question: What will build life for every human being as God intended it? That's the major overarching question. And it comes from Jesus's teaching on the kingdom of God, he says, The kingdom of God is like... And then he goes through the Beatitudes. Now we're gonna look at many, many passages of Scripture, we're gonna look at a particular passage for each of these principles of Catholic social justice. And the first one that we're gonna look at next week will be the Beatitudes and how it corresponds to the principle of life and dignity, and we'll do a little bit of an overview today because the Beatitudes sort of encompass quite a few of those actually.

30:17 SC: But this kingdom idea begins with the dominion of God over everything that is created. Everything is under God's dominion. And yet in Genesis 1:26, the Lord God said, Let us make man in our own image according to our likeness. Let them have dominion. So God gave dominion of all of his creation to man who was created in his own image and with his own dignity, says Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion. So we too are called to have dominion. The problem is that we, like Adam and Eve, have turned that dominion over to the enemy. We have done so individually, we've done so in our families, we've done so in our parishes, in our towns, in our nation, and in the world collectively. We have turned that dominion over to the enemy.

31:22 SC: How do we get it back? Well, Jesus teaches us how. We have surrendered our dominion to the enemy, but Jesus has bought it back, and he teaches us how to do the same for ourselves. First of all, we have to get rid of the sin. But we also have to understand that the enemy has a psychology of stealing human dominion in you yourself, in your family and your marriage, in your town, and your parish, in our church as a whole, in our nation and in the world the enemy has a psychology of stealing human dominion. Why? Because God is establishing his kingdom on earth, and the enemy always mimics what God is doing. He wants to set himself up with his own kingdom and usurp God's position.

32:11 SC: So anytime we see a business or a family, or a marriage, or a corporation, or a government, or a cause usurp this proper dominion, which we see in the principles of Catholic social justice, whenever we see this usurpation happen, and it does. It always does. When we see it, we have to know that the enemy is seeking to steal our dominion from us. Catholic social justice principles show us how to rule our dominion properly. And so, the social justice teachings then come, they proceed out of three ideas: The first is covenant, the second is Eucharist, and the third is Trinity.

32:52 SC: So, covenant first, let's talk about that. The principles of Catholic social justice follow the same structure as the covenants in the Scriptures do. The first covenant was between Adam and Eve as individuals, and then them together in their marriage. That's the smallest unit, an individual and then a marriage. Then the second covenant was made with Noah and his family. The third was with Abraham and his tribe. The fourth was with Moses and a nation. And notice then how none of the covenants is set aside for the next covenant, each covenant is embraced by the next one. And so, the covenants then expand each time with another unit. We start with the individual, then the family, then the tribe, then the nation, then the kingdom under David, and then the universe under Christ. Christ has dominion over the whole universe.

33:47 SC: And we, by virtue of our baptism and that by virtue of our being Christian, part of Christ, part of Christ's body, we also have that dominion. And so, he teaches us through the teachings of the kingdom how that dominion should look. First, we look inward at ourselves individually. This is very, very important, because if we don't have the individual right, then the family can't be right, the tribe can't be right, the nation can't be right, the kingdom can't be right, the universe can't be right. It all begins with the individual, and that's why Mother Teresa said, "Go home and love your family." We must be healed first before we can offer healing to someone else.

34:27 SC: So that is why we are doing this study on Catholic social justice because we want to see it ourselves as individuals first. We wanna see where we are in error, where we have participated in sin, we want to get our own hearts right, we want to be submissive to the Holy Spirit in those areas where we have failed individually. So we begin with the individual, and then we do the same with our own families, those with whom we share that smallest cell of kingdom organization. Then we can look to our tribe, then we can look to the nation, then we can look to the kingdom, then we can look globally, then we can concentrate on what can be done globally, but it all has to start with the individual. And so the covenant structure is the same structure that Catholic social teaching takes. We start with the individual, we move to family, then we work towards workers, the poor and vulnerable, then we look towards solidarity with our brothers and sisters throughout the world, and then of course creation.

[music]

35:52 S?: You're listening to the Bible Study Evangelista Show, Bible Study spinach that tastes like cake.

36:01 S?: If you love having Bible study in your pocket, you can become a friend of the show. Click on the yellow friend of the show button on biblestudyevangelista.com and become a supporter of any amount and any frequency. Now, here's Sonja.

[music]

36:33 SC: The three principles on which Catholic social teaching rest are covenant, Eucharist and Trinity. So, Catholic social justice teaching is a central and essential element of our faith, we've already talked about that, and its roots are in the Hebrew prophets who announced God's special love for the poor, and he called his people to a covenant of love and justice. So it is part of our covenant with God through Christ, that we are called to that charity and that justice that builds the kingdom on earth. And these teachings are foundational, they're founded on the words and the life of Christ himself who came, Luke says, to bring glad tidings to the poor, liberty to captives, and recovery of sight to the blind. And he also identified himself with the least of these, the hungry and the stranger, those who were poor, in prison.

37:27 SC: And so Catholic social justice teaching is built on a commitment to the poor, and that commitment arises from our experience of Christ in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is communion, that means that we are one with every human being, first of all, as part of humanity. But secondly, especially in the church, those with whom we receive communion, we are one body with them. It is a participation in the body of Christ, and so our commitment to social justice as individuals arises from our own experience of Christ in the Eucharist and that communion that arises out of that.

The Seven Principles of Catholic Social Justice

Remember, first of all, we don't take communion, we receive it, that is a pet-peeve of mine. We don't take it, we receive communion. And in doing so, Jesus is not split up into little pieces and given to each of us, instead, we are the little pieces that are all gathered into one body, one bread, one cup. Jesus gathers us into communion. He's not separating himself and dividing himself amongst all of us. Instead, he is drawing us all together into that one body.

38:42 SC: So Catholic social teaching is, again, I'm gonna stress it over and over, a central and essential element of our faith. It is very, very important that we know the principles and that we can articulate them clearly, especially right now. It is so important that we be able to share these principles with other people in this time of history. And so the Catechism says, to receive in truth the body and blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognize Christ in the poorest, in his brethren, in 1397. Then the teaching emerges from the truth of what God has revealed to us about Himself, this is the second principle, the trinitarian principle. We believe in the Triune God whose very nature is communal and social. So Father, Son, Holy Spirit, and the communion of the Father and the Son together is so rich and so deep and so profound, a communion and a social unit, that it produces the third, the Holy Spirit, the life-giver.

39:49 SC: God the Father sends his only Son, Jesus, and he shares the Holy Spirit as his gift of love. He shares him with us, each of them. And so God reveals himself to us as one who is not solitary or alone, but rather as one who is relational, He is Trinity. Therefore, we who are also made in God's image share this communal social nature. We're called to reach out and to build relationships of love and justice. Now, it's a matter of spiritual development, that there are times and seasons in our life and in our spiritual lives, and in our prayer lives, that we must really concentrate specifically on ourselves as the individual. But that is done so that we can then move outward in apostolate or in ministry to other people. That's a pretty basic thing that we all understand, it's just applying it, how do we apply it, right? How do we reach out and build relationships of love and justice?

40:47 SC: I know that there was a time in my own spiritual life that I got so aggravated with other people and the people that I was supposed to be working with, and I speak specifically in a church context because they wouldn't do things right, I'll just say. And of course, that's a matter of pride then, for me, but God used them to teach me something about relationships, and it was this principle of being a member of a body, and when I was determined to stay focused on myself as an individual, then he would push me into relationship with other people, and likewise then when I got clingy and wanted to depend on other people, he pulled those relationships back and forced me to depend on Him alone.

41:38 SC: My point of saying that is that there are seasons in which we'll be doing this dance where we're concentrating on ourselves individually, but then we'll be moving out in relationship with other people. And then we'll come back to that relationship or that individual concentration as we learn new things and we acclimate them into our own faith understanding. But ultimately, the Trinity shows us that we are communal and that social nature, and so that's why these social justice teachings, this is part of the foundation on which they proceed. And it's also based and inseparable from our understanding of human life and human dignity, we read that actually in Genesis chapter 1, and we'll look at it next week in detail so I'm not gonna spend much time on it.

42:25 SC: But every human being is created in the image of God and redeemed by Christ. And so everyone is invaluable and worthy of respect solely because he or she is a member of the human

family. So every person from the moment of conception to natural death has an inherent dignity and a right to life consistent with that dignity. When I say a right to life, I really mean that abundant life that Jesus talks about, we have a right to that abundant life. And each of us has a responsibility to build a society that enables everyone to achieve that abundant life for himself and his family, and his nation. And so our commitment to Catholic social missions should be rooted and strengthened by our own spiritual lives, so we start with the individual first and then we work up, but we must always keep this universal idea in mind because that's what we're working toward.

43:26 SC: In our relationship with God, we experience personally the conversion of our hearts that is necessary to love other people the way that God has loved us. And that's why we start with the smallest and work toward the largest. So the question again is, What will build life for every single person as God intended it, that abundant life? Well, one of the ways Jesus talks about is in the Beatitudes. People will always say Jesus wasn't political. Well, he kinda was, because the Beatitudes were given to the people of Jesus's day who were hungering and thirsting for political justice. We all know that the disciples and the Pharisees and all the Jews were looking for a political Messiah, and Jesus was not a political Messiah in the way that they expected, but he did teach about how to change society in terms that would imitate the kingdom of God in heaven. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And so when Jesus gave the people the teachings of the Beatitudes, he's teaching us how to bring the kingdom of God, the dominion of God to earth, as it is in heaven.

44:52 SC: Now, the first four Beatitudes, the way in which we're gonna look at these... Now, next week, it'll be a little bit different, but I wanna present them first in pairs, where we're looking at the condition of oppressed people. The first four beatitudes represent those who are oppressed. The second four beatitudes represent the powerful or the influential people of society who are the means by which God intends to bring blessing and justice to the oppressed. Those who are means of blessing in others then in turn receive the same or a similar blessing. Abraham is our example there. God told Abraham, I will bless you and you will be a blessing. And He includes that for all of the earth. And so the first oppressed is, blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of God. The powerful are, blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of justice, because they champion the poor.

45:51 SC: In the past, the prophets were persecuted because they championed righteousness. And those then are to whom the kingdom of heaven belongs. The second pair, the oppressed are, blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted. The powerful are, blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. The oppressed in the third pair are the meek, blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the land, that actually means the promised land. The powerful are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. The one, two, three, fourth pair, the oppressed are the hungry, and those who are thirsty for justice and righteousness, they shall be filled with justice. According to Amos 5, let justice roll on like a river, and then the powerful there in that beatitude are blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.

46:39 SC: Now, we'll look at this in detail next week when we look at our very first principle of Catholic social justice, life and dignity of the human person. But I hope that this gives you a good overview of those principles, the seven principles. We know that they're rooted in covenant, in Eucharist, in Trinity. We know and have looked at all seven of them. I'm gonna just reiterate them quickly, the dignity and value of human life, the essential role of strong families and community, recognition of rights and responsibilities, the option for the poor and the vulnerable, the dignity of

The Seven Principles of Catholic Social Justice

work and the rights of workers, solidarity with those who suffer and care for God's creation.

47:18 SC: The point is that we're looking more globally, at least with our mind's eye, so that we can focus down to the individual on ourselves where we have failed and where the Holy Spirit is calling us to be more involved. Until next week, I'm Sonja Corbitt, your Bible Study Evangelista.

[music]

47:50 S?: Thank you for listening to the Bible Study Evangelista Show. Find out more at biblestudyevangelista.com.



Thank You for choosing Scribie.com

Cross-check this transcript against the audio quickly and efficiently using our online Integrated Editor. Please visit the following link and click the Check & Download button to start.

