## Principals of our Catholic Social Teachings

The Church's social teaching is a rich treasure of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of modern society. Modern Catholic social teaching has been articulated through a tradition of papal, conciliar, and episcopal documents. Usually there are seven principles that comprise our Catholic Social teachings.

## 1. Life and Dignity of the Human Person

The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a mora vision for society. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching. The value of human life is being threatened by cloning, embryonic stem cell research, and the use of the death penalty. In our society, human life is under direct attack from abortion and euthanasia.

# 2. Call to Family, Community, and Participation

The person is not only sacred but also social. How we organize our society 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.

# 3. Rights and Responsibilities

The Catholic tradition teaches that human dignity fan be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights re protected and responsibilities are met. Therefore, every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities — to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.

## 4. Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. In a society marred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, our tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgment and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.

5. The dignity of work and the economy must serve people, not the other way around, Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected.

# 6. Solidarity

We are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. At the core of the virtue of solidarity is the pursuit of justice and peace. Pop Paul VI taught that if you want peace, work for justice. The Gospel calls us to be peacemakers.

#### 7. 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. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.