

1. The Life and Dignity of the Human Person

The human person is sacred. All people are created in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, all people –no matter their age, race, creed, abilities, or wealth are equal in the eyes of God. God commands us to treat all people with dignity and respect. This principle emphasizes that people are more important than things, relationships more important than possessions.

Question: Do we prejudice people based on their clothes, their athletic ability, what kind of house they live in, the color of their skin, how old they are?

2. Community and the Common Good

All people are not only sacred, they are social. We humans grow and thrive only by interacting with others in friendships, families, and community. People live in community with their family, their church, their school, their country, their world. The center of all relationships is family. It is our responsibility to act for the good of all communities and not just ourselves. This principle emphasizes peace among all peoples.

Questions: Are you a peacemaker? Do you contribute toward violence in your world by supporting violence in entertainment and music? Do you support your own family members? In the school lunchroom, do you include all students, or do you exclude some of your classmates? Do you solve problems among people or contribute to them?

3. Basic Human Rights and Responsibilities

All people have basic rights and responsibilities. Included in basic rights are the right to worship, the right to raise a family, the right to immigrate, the right to live without discrimination, and the right to adequate education, employment, a safe environment, food, shelter, and clothing. All people have the basic responsibility to respect others' rights and to work actively and live for the common good.

Questions: Are you aware of the injustices taking place in our world when people are denied any of these basic rights? Do you take time in your life to stay informed and suggest possible solutions? What are your school, church, and government currently doing regarding areas of injustice in your community? Is there adequate affordable housing? Is public transportation available?

4. The Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

The Church calls all of us to defend and promote the dignity of the least among us. We are called as Christians to respond to the needs of all our brothers and sisters, especially those with the greatest needs. We fulfill this obligation only by practicing both acts of charity and acts of social justice that encourage society to meet all people's basic needs.

Questions: Do you personally contribute to acts of charity to help those in need, or do you use all your family's resources for yourselves? Do you judge people based on what you have, instead of who they are? Do you contribute to thoughtful discussions in your community regarding injustices to the poor?

5. The Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers

Catholic teaching holds that every person has the right to work as a way of contributing with dignity to God's creation. Therefore, all workers should be treated with respect, receive fair wages, and have a chance for advancement. The Church supports workers' rights to join unions and associations. The economy exists to serve people, not the other way around.

Questions: Do you knowingly purchase items made by workers receiving substandard pay? What can be done in this situation? Are you aware of local layoffs that affect your community? Do you analyze the reasons behind these layoffs?

6. Solidarity

We are one human family regardless of race, nationality, or religion. We are called to look on all people as neighbors, not enemies. We are obligated to work for peace and justice globally.

Questions: What conflicts do we see in our world today? Are they based on nationality, race, or religion? What can be done to promote peace and justice in our own community?

7. Care for Creation

The goods of this world are meant to be shared by all. We are called to respect and take care of our Earth, including preserving the Earth for the future.

Questions: Do you do your part to recycle, or use goods that are recyclable? Do you respect public land? Do you help maintain your school, church, and private property for the good of all? Do you improve the land with trees and plants? Do you question how much energy and resources you use?