It is not enough to say we are Christians. We must live the faith, not only with our words, but with our actions. Pope Francis

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING IS OUR TRADITION OF JUSTICE

It all began when God created the world and made us in his image – giving each of us human dignity. At the heart of Catholic social teaching is Christ’s command for us to love God and love our neighbour.

In 1891, at the height of the industrial revolution in Europe, there was a great and growing gap between rich and poor. At this time, Pope Leo XIII wrote a letter *Rerum Novarum* – On the condition of workers on labour conditions and just wages. He emphasised the importance of working for the common good and the role of the state to ensure the wellbeing of all, especially the poorest.

Since that time, Church leaders including Popes and Bishops have written encyclicals (letters) and messages to the Church and wider community. They have addressed different social challenges that face our communities, including:

- Human life, rights and responsibilities
- Poverty
- Refugees, asylum seekers and migrants
- Environmental justice
- Indigenous peoples
- International development and peace

This formal body of writing forms the basis of Catholic social teaching. It draws on the Scriptural traditions of the prophets who spoke out against injustice, the teachings and example of Christ, and the tradition of the early Church fathers and saints. It provides us with key ethical principles and a lens through which we can interpret social issues around us and take action to seek justice.

SEE LIVING EXAMPLES OF OUR TRADITION OF JUSTICE

All over Aotearoa New Zealand, people are putting Catholic social teaching into practice in their daily lives.

See real life examples of people living our faith in action through videos, and learn more about our tradition of justice through resources on our website.

Caritas has resources created for Catholic primary and secondary schools which help to grow understanding in this tradition of justice.

www.caritas.org.nz/resources/cst
Key principles of Catholic social teaching

HUMAN DIGNITY

MADE IN GOD’S IMAGE
Each of us is made in God’s image, which means every person has an innate human dignity – te mana i te tangata – no one can take away.

SOLIDARITY

WALKING TOGETHER
Being in solidarity is recognising others as our brothers and sisters and actively working for their good. In our connected humanity, we are invited to build relationships – whakawhanaunatanga – to understand what life is like for others who are different from us.

PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE

PROTECTING THOSE IN NEED
Having a preferential option for the poor – he whakaaro nui mō te hunga rawakore – compels us to think first of the needs of those who are most vulnerable.

COMMON GOOD

THE GOOD OF EACH AND ALL
Commitment to the common good means working for the good of all – he painga mā te katoa. This means respecting the rights and responsibilities of all people.

SUBSIDIARITY

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES
Taking account of subsidiarity – mana whakahaere – means ensuring decision making happens at the most appropriate level, so all those affected can contribute.

STEWARDSHIP

BEING RESPONSIBLE GUARDIANS
We are kaitiaki – guardians of the earth. Exercising stewardship is caring for the gifts God has given us, including the environment, our own personal talents and other resources.

PARTICIPATION

EVERYONE WITH A PART TO PLAY
Promoting participation – nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou – means recognising we each have something unique and important to contribute to society. We are called to be active members of our local and global communities.