Exploring Catholic Social Teaching

“Catholic Social Teaching is a modern attempt to systematize and explicate church teaching in new social situations, and plays an essential role in helping us to better live out some of the most important requirements of the gospel.” Thomas M. Landy, Catholic Social Teaching in the Catholic Intellectual Tradition

Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching taken from A Vision of Justice: Engaging Catholic Social Teaching on the College Campus, Crawford Sullivan, Susan and Ron Pagnucco, eds. (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2014.)

- **Life and Dignity of the Human Person**: the foundation of a moral vision for society. Every person is precious, people are more important than things, and the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.
- **Call to Family, Community, and Participation**: the human person is not only sacred, but social. Marriage and the family are the central social institutions in society and must be supported. People have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking the common good and well-being of all, especially the poorest.
- **Rights and Responsibilities**: Human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Every person has the right to life and the right to those things required to live in dignity. Corresponding to rights are responsibilities - to one another, our families, and the larger society.
- **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable**: A basic moral test is how the poorest and the most vulnerable are faring. In a world characterized by growing prosperity for some and pervasive poverty for many, we must put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.
- **The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers**: The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Work is not just a way to make a living but is a form of participating in God’s creation. The basic rights of workers must be respected - the right to productive work, decent and fair wages, the organization of unions, private property, and economic initiative.
- **Solidarity**: We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. We are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers, and loving our neighbor has global implications in today’s world. Love for our brothers and sisters demands that we work to promote peace and justice.
- **Care for God’s Creation**: Care and stewardship of the earth shows our respect for the Creator. We are called to protect people and the planet. We cannot ignore the environmental challenge and its moral and ethical dimensions.
Small Group Instructions

Read over the description of your theme

- What words capture your interest/attention/heart?
- Who do you associate with this theme/these words?
  - People you actually know who exemplify this theme - friends, relatives, neighbors, community members, people from your school or church communities
- How have you lived in a way that brings this theme to life?
- What would it mean to more fully live out this theme
  - In class?
  - In your res hall?
  - In friendships?
  - In co-curriculars?
  - In service at and beyond SNC?

On the newsprint the group should represent (in words or images)

- Key words
- Role models
- Living it out