



The Principle of Subsidiarity: This means that *All power and decision-making in society should be at the most local level compatible with the common good. The principle of subsidiarity states that larger entities should not assume the roles and functions of smaller entities unless it is absolutely necessary* - cf Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church: Numbers 185-187

The principle of subsidiarity places responsibility as close as possible to the grassroots. The people or groups most directly affected by a decision

or policy should have a key decision-making role. Intervention from above should only take place in order to provide needed support, or to help coordinate their activities with the activities of the rest of society with a view to achieving the common good.

cf Quadragesimo Anno: Numbers 79, 80, Mater et Magistra: Numbers 51, 52, 54 55, 57, 58; Pacem in Terris: Numbers 140, 141: Laborem Exercens: Number 17.

The Principle of the Care for Creation: Care for the earth is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation. *"The environment is God's gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole.....".* Caritas in Veritate 48



Climate Change is *"one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day."* Laudato Si 25.

cf Mater et Magestra: Number 196, 199; Octogesima Adveniens: Numbers 21; Redemptor Hominis: Numbers 8 and 15; Laborem Exercens: 4; Sollicitudo Rei Socialis: 26, 29, 34; Centesimus Annus: Numbers 37, 38; John Paul II's Message for the World Day of Peace (1990): The Catechism of the Catholic Church: Numbers 299, 301, 307, 339, 341, 344, 2415, 2418. Laudato Si: *"On the care of our common home,"* Pope Francis, 2015

Society of African Missions (SMA)



Living Faith Means Living Justly

Session 3: Key Themes
In Catholic Social Teaching

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

Our task, as Christians is to make the Kingdom of God present wherever we live and work . An essential part of this commission is the work of establishing justice and peace in the world.

Church Teaching about Justice and Peace has its foundation in the Bible (see previous hand-outs). In addition, the Church has the role of interpreting the “**signs of the times**,” to provide direction and guidance to the faithful and to all people of good will, in a changing world.

This guidance or Social Teaching, is expressed in many Church documents; for example, the documents of the Second Vatican Council and the Encyclicals and Instructions issued by the Popes down through the years. These documents also contain the **Core Principles of Catholic Social Teaching** that help us to SEE, JUDGE, and ACT in a Christian Way. - These principles are briefly described below.



The Principle of Human Dignity: *Human beings, created in the image and likeness of God have an inalienable, transcendent God-given dignity (Genesis 1:26-27). This is the foundation principle of Catholic Social Teaching from which all other principles flow.*

The life and dignity of every person must be respected and protected at every stage and in every condition. The right to life is the first and most fundamental principle of human rights. This leads Catholics to actively work for a world of greater respect for human life and greater commitment to justice and peace.

By virtue of this dignity each member of the human family is equal in dignity, equal in rights and united in one human family.



The Principle of the Common Good: This is: “*The sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily*”. Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church (2006) number 164. Each social group must take account of the rights and aspirations of other groups, and of the well-being of the whole human family.

Every individual has a duty to share in promoting the welfare of the community and a right to benefit from that welfare. This applies at every level: local, national and international.

Public authorities exist mainly to promote the common good and to ensure that no section of the population is excluded. Society as a whole has a duty to give preferential care to those who are disadvantaged - care for widows and orphans – the poor.

cf Mater et Magistra: Numbers 65, 71, 78 81; Pacem in Terris: Numbers 53 66, 136, Gaudium et Spes: Numbers 26, 74; Populorum Progressio: Numbers 54: Octogesima Adveniens (1971): Number 46, Redemptor Hominis (1979) Number 17; Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (1987) Numbers 26, 33 34, Centesimus Annus (1991) Numbers 9, 37 38, 47; The Catechism of the Catholic Church Numbers 1897, 1912 and Caritas in Veritate: Numbers 6, 7.

The Principle of Participation: People have both a right and a duty to participate in those decisions that most directly affect them. They are actively to shape their own destiny rather than simply accept the decisions of others.



“It is necessary that all participate, each according to his position and role, in promoting the common good. This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person. . . . As far as possible citizens should take an active part in public life.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church nos. 1913-1915).

cf Mater et Magistra: Numbers 91, 92; Gaudium et Spes: Numbers 31, 55, 59, 63, 68, Octogesima Adveniens (1971) Numbers 22,24, 46,47; Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation (1986) Numbers 86, 95, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis: Numbers 45, Centesimus Annus: Number 33.

The Principle of Solidarity: This means “*The firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good ... to the good of all and the human rights of all - because we are all really responsible for all*” (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis 8). Solidarity recognises the fundamental bond of unity with our fellow human beings and the resulting interdependence. All are responsible for all; In particular the rich have responsibilities towards the poor. National and international structures must reflect this.



cf Pacem in Terris: Number 98; Sollicitudo Rei Socialis: Numbers 38, 40; Centesimus Annus: Numbers 10c, 33, 41d, 51 Populorum Progressio: Numbers 17,41,48,64,67, 84. Gaudium et Spes: e.g. Numbers 3,4,32,39,48, 57, 75.