



## What's What

*A weekly communication that provides an opportunity for our faith community to grow together in faith.*

### CST: Rights & Responsibilities

The third in a seven part series on Catholic Social Teaching

Issue 44

Catholic Social Teaching:  
Rights & Responsibilities

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Modern Catholic social teaching is the body of social principles and moral teaching that is articulated in the papal, conciliar, and other official documents issued since the late nineteenth century and dealing with the economic, political, and social order. This teaching is rooted in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures as well as in traditional philosophical and theological teachings of the Church.

Human dignity is respected and the common good is fostered only if human rights are protected and basic responsibilities are met. Every human being has a right to life, the fundamental right that makes all other rights possible, and a right to access to those things required for human decency—food and shelter, education and employment, health care and housing, freedom of religion and family life. The right to exercise religious freedom publicly and privately by individuals and institutions along with freedom of conscience need to be constantly defended. In a fundamental way, the right to free expression of religious beliefs protects all other rights. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities—to one another, to

our families, and to the larger society. Rights should be understood and exercised in a moral framework rooted in the dignity of the human person.

#### Scriptural Foundations

- Deuteronomy 5:17
- Deuteronomy 30:19
- Sirach 34:22 (rights of workers)
- Psalm 146:5-8 (freedom from oppression)
- Isaiah 10:1-2 (against unjust laws)

#### Quotes from Official Church Documents

“It is not right...for either the citizen or the family to be absorbed by the state; it is proper that the individual and the family should be permitted to retain their freedom of action, so far as this is possible without jeopardizing the common good and without injuring anyone,”

-Pope Leo XIII, *On the Condition of Workers (Rerum Novarum)*, no.52

“[The State] has also the duty to protect the rights of all its people, and particularly of its weaker members, the workers, women and children. It can never be right for the State to shirk its obligation to work actively for the betterment of the condition of [workers].”

-Pope John XXIII, *On Christianity and Social Progress (Mater et Magistra)*, no.20

Beginning our discussion of the rights of man, we see that every man has the right to life, to bodily integrity, and to the means which are suitable for the proper development of life; these are primarily food, clothing, shelter, rest, medical care, and finally the necessary social services. Therefore a human also has the right to security in cases of sickness, inability to work, widowhood, old age, unemployment, or in any other case in which he is deprived of the means of subsistence through no fault of his own.”

-Pope John XXII, *Peace on Earth (Pacem in Terris)*, no.11

“[The Catholic tradition calls for] a society of free work, of enterprise and of participation. Such a society is not directed against the market, but demands that the market be appropriately controlled by the forces of society and by the State, so as to guarantee that the basic needs of the whole

of society are satisfied.”

-Pope John Paul II, *On the Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum (Centesimus Annus)*, no.35

#### References from the Catechism

2459 - Man is himself the author, center, and goal of all economic and social life. The decisive point of the social question is that goods created by God for everyone should in fact reach everyone in accordance with justice and with the help of charity.

2461 - True development concerns the whole man. It is concerned with increasing each person's ability to respond to his vocation and hence to God's call .

### Prayer for Basic Rights

Lord of Wisdom,  
awaken us to our duty  
to care for the basic needs of all people.  
Strengthen with hope  
people denied their human rights and freedoms.  
Provide us all with the voice to cry out for justice  
for the poor and the oppressed.  
Amen.

*From Being Neighbor: The Catechism and Social Justice, USCCB, April, 1998*



## Saint in the Spotlight — Saint Thérèse of Lisieux (1873-1897)

On Wednesday this week, October 1, we celebrate the memorial of St. Thérèse of Lisieux.

"I prefer the monotony of obscure sacrifice to all ecstasies. To pick up a pin for love can convert a soul." These are the words of Theresa of the Child Jesus, a Carmelite nun called the "Little Flower," who lived a cloistered life of obscurity in the convent of Lisieux, France. [In French-speaking areas, she is known as Thérèse of Lisieux.] And her preference for hidden sacrifice did indeed convert souls. Few saints of God are more popular than this young nun. Her autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*, is read and loved throughout the world. Thérèse Martin entered the convent at the age of 15 and died in 1897 at the age of 24.

Life in a Carmelite convent is indeed uneventful and consists mainly of prayer and hard domestic work. But Thérèse possessed that holy insight that redeems the time, however dull that time may be. She saw in quiet suffering redemptive suffering, suffering that was indeed her apostolate. Thérèse said she came to the Carmel convent "to save souls and pray for priests." And shortly before she died, she wrote: "I want to spend my heaven doing good on earth."

[On October 19, 1997, Pope John Paul II proclaimed her a Doctor of the Church, the third woman to be so recognized in light of her holiness and the influence of her teaching on spirituality in the Church.]

**Comment:**

Thérèse has much to teach our age of the image, the appearance, the "sell." We have become a dangerously self-conscious people, painfully aware of the need to be fulfilled, yet knowing we are not. Thérèse, like so many saints, sought to serve others, to do something outside herself, to forget herself in quiet acts of love. She is one of the great examples of the gospel paradox that we gain our life by losing it, and that the seed that falls to the ground must die in order to live (see John 12).

Preoccupation with self separates modern men and women from God, from their fellow human beings and ultimately from themselves. We must relearn to forget ourselves, to contemplate a God who draws us out of ourselves and to serve others as the ultimate expression of selfhood. These are the insights of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, and they are more

valid today than ever.

**Quote:**

All her life St. Thérèse suffered from illness. As a young girl she underwent a three-month malady characterized by violent crises, extended delirium and prolonged fainting spells. Afterwards she was ever frail and yet she worked hard in the laundry and refectory of the convent. Psychologically, she endured prolonged periods of darkness when the light of faith seemed all but extinguished. The last year of her life she slowly wasted away from tuberculosis. And yet shortly before her death on September 30 she murmured, "I would not suffer less."

Truly she was a valiant woman who did not whimper about her illnesses and anxieties. Here was a person who saw the power of love, that divine alchemy which can change everything, including weakness and illness, into service and redemptive power for others. Is it any wonder that she is patroness of the missions? Who else but those who embrace suffering with their love really convert the world?

[www.americancatholic.org/Features/SaintOfDay](http://www.americancatholic.org/Features/SaintOfDay)

### Want to know more about CST Rights & Responsibilities?

**Health Care for the Uninsured**

<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/national/uninsured0406.shtml>

**Food and Nutrition Programs**

<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/national/food03.shtml>

**Housing and Community Development**

<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/national/200510housing.shtml>

**Minimum Wage**

<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/national/minwageback.shtml>

**Social Security**

<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/national/socialsecurity.shtml>

**Welfare Policy: TANF Reauthorization**

<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/national/tanf206.shtml>

"What's What" is a publication of the Youth Ministry Department of St Mary, Canandaigua, and St Bridget, Bloomfield.

Our Youth Ministry Mission Statement:

Building on the mission of our parishes to follow the way of Christ in our thoughts, words, and deeds, and to make Christ more fully present in all who live within our community, the Youth Ministry mission is to empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in the world today; to affirm the gifts of our youth and provide opportunities for young people to share their gifts with the larger community; and to meet the religious, spiritual and social needs of all youth with the committed leadership, guidance and support of our parish family, providing an opportunity for our entire faith community to grow together in Christian faith.