

LIVING AS A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST IN SOCIETY

Theology for Teachers
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Key Terms

- Disciples?
- Christ?
- Society?



Jesus' Third Way: Matthew 5:38-39

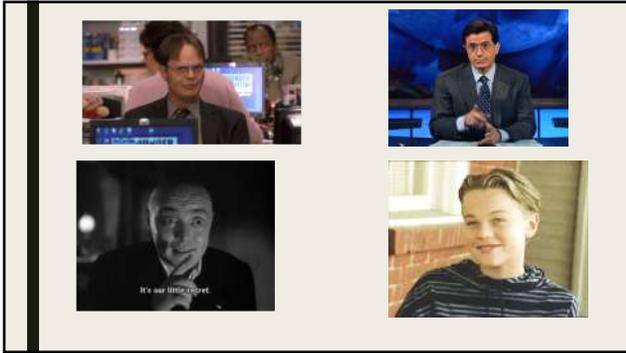
- "You have heard it said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth' / But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn the other one to him (or her) as well."

Active Discipleship	The Great Commissioning
<p>Jesus calls and names his disciples:</p> <p>Matthew 10:1-4 Mark 3:13-19 Luke 6:12-16</p>	<p>Matthew 28:15-20: "The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them / When they saw him, they worshipped, but they doubted. / Then Jesus approached and said to them, 'All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. / Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, / teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."</p>

Living as a Disciple of Christ in Society

- "The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the Church's social teaching. In this course, students are to learn how Christ's concern for others, especially the poor and needy, is present today in the Church's social teaching and mission" (Doctrinal Elements of a Curriculum Framework, 40).

1. God's Plan for God's People	2. Social Teaching of the Church	3. Major Themes of Catholic Social Teaching	4. Sin and Its Social Dimensions	5. Challenges
Church as "sign and instrument of communion with God and the unity of the whole human race." *Salvation and truth *Happiness in this life *Unity of humanity *Church as Mystical Body of Christ	*Focus on charity and justice *Different types of justice *Social teachings in the modern era *Principles of CST from the magisterium *USCCB	*Dignity of Human Life *Call to family, community, participation *Rights and responsibilities *Preferential option for the poor *Dignity of work and rights of workers *Solidarity *Stewardship	*Social vs. Individual Sin *Foundations of social sin *Social dimensions of the Commandments *Social dimensions of the Beatitudes *Two Great Commandments (Love of God and Love of Neighbor)	*But why shouldn't we consider ourselves first? *Isn't human success measured in terms of money? *Doesn't not fighting back = WEAKNESS? *Is it more important to work for justice instead of charity?



Catholic Social Teaching

"While there is much firmness and substance in the content of Catholic social thought, this body of teachings exhibits great sensitivity to the shades of gray in our complex world and to the ways that even universal principles require careful and sensitive application to specific circumstances in various places."

-Thomas Massaro, SJ, *Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching In Action*

1. The Life and Dignity of the Human Person

- "Then God said: Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness ... God created humankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."

- Genesis 1:26-27

Things have a price and can be for sale, but people have a dignity that is priceless and worth far more than things

Pope Francis

Life and Dignity of the Human Person: Class Discussions

- Each person possesses a basic dignity that comes from God, not from race, gender, age, religion, or economic status.
- Where do they see human dignity compromised – in their own lives, in their communities, in the world at large?
- How do the institutions they belong to promote (or not) dignity? (School, Church, Government, Criminal Justice System, Economy)
- "Right to Life" – more than just abortion: euthanasia, capital punishment, consumerism, racism, war, immigration
- Sources:
 - Serial, Season 3: A year inside Cleveland courthouses.
 - Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*
 - Case Study: "A Life for a Life?" in *Christian Ethics: A Case Method Approach*.
 - US and Mexican Catholic Bishops: "Strangers No Longer: Together on a Journey of Hope"
 - USCCB: "Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective"

2. Call to Family, Community, and the Common Good

- We realize our dignity in relationship with others in the community. (We are inherently social!).
- Crucial importance of the family.
- "We are one body; when one suffers, we all suffer.
- Our participation in the building up of society is both a right and obligation.



Call to Family, Community, and the Common Good: Class Discussions

- Sources
 - [A Greater Cleveland](#)
 - [The Open Table](#)
 - *This American Life* Podcast: "The Problem We All Live With" (education segregation)
- Think about the groups you belong to (family, sports team, choir, youth group, theater group, etc.). Why do you like being a part of them? Why do they make you feel good?
- What does it mean to say "We are one body; when one suffers, we all suffer?" Ask them: what happens if your star player, or lead actor, or soloist is missing?
- Think about these connections on a larger scale! How does society suffer if even just a few people are suffering?

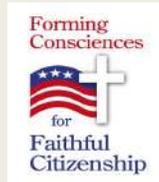
3. Rights and Responsibilities

- Fundamental right to life, food, shelter, education, health care, and employment.
- Right to participate in decisions affecting our lives.
- Responsibility to respect the rights of others, to work for the common good, and to promote a society where everyone's rights are respected and protected.



Rights and Responsibilities: Class Discussion

- Would students add or take away anything from this list of rights?
- What rights are debated in our society (e.g., healthcare, education)?
- Faithful Citizenship: "We urge our pastors, lay and religious faithful, and all people of good will to use this statement to help form their consciences; to teach those entrusted to their care; to contribute to civil and respectful public dialogue; and to shape political choices in the coming election in light of Catholic teaching."
- Read selections of FC, explore the Church's teachings in light of politics, mock debates and elections.
- Is there a "perfect" candidate who fits within all of the Church's teachings? If not, what do we do then?



4. Option for the Poor and the Vulnerable



- God's preferential option for the poor.
- Many different types of poverty.
- The moral test of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable members (think back to theme 1. – if one person suffers, we all suffer)
- We are called to look at public policy decisions in light of how they effect the poor and the vulnerable.

Option for the Poor and the Vulnerable: Class Discussion

- What does it mean to say God prefers the poor??!
- Sibling Example
- Think about types of poverty other than economic poverty (cultural, political, educational, etc.).
- Mt. 25:35-36: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me a drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you care for me, in prison and you visited me"
- Except... When do we as a society fail to live up to these standards (cuts to food stamps, polluted drinking water, skyrocketing healthcare costs, disproportionate incarceration of people of color, deportation of immigrants)
- Sources:
 - Case Studies: "Homelessness: The How and Why of Caring" and "Who Cares About Haiti Anyway?" in *Christian Ethics: A Case Method Approach*.
 - Class Activity: Go to <http://nlavspent.org/> and take the poverty simulation.
 - Children's Defense Fund's [Each Day in America](#).

5. The Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers

- People of the right to decent and productive work, fair wages, to form and join unions, private property, and economic initiative.
- The economy exists to serve the people, not the other way around.
- Work is more than way to make a living; it is a vocation, a participation in creation.



The Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers: Class Discussion

- Ask: What do you want to be when you grow up and why? (But really, why?)
- Explore the idea of what it means to be a "co-creator" with God.
- Who succeeds in our economy? Who doesn't? Why?
- What is the American Dream? Can everyone "pull themselves up by their bootstraps?"
- Sources:
 - [Food Chains](#).
 - [TED Talk: How to Combat Modern Slavery](#).
 - Case Study: "Executive Pay: Reward or Excess?" in *Christian Ethics: A Case Method Approach*.
 - USCCB: "A Catholic Framework for Economic Life"
 - Have students take of one shoe and see where it's made to connect to the global economy.

6. Solidarity

- ▶ "If from the beginning of the gospel, God appears in Jesus as a God *with us*, if ... God shows himself as a God *for us*, on the cross he appears as a God *at our mercy* and, above all, God who fights against human suffering wanted with human beings who suffer"
- ▶ From Jon Sobrino, *Jesus the Liberator*, 245.



Solidarity: Classroom Discussion

- "If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together" (Lia Watson, Australian Aboriginal Activist).
 - How might this quote tie into students' community service? How is our human liberation tied together (again think back to CST Theme #1).
- What separates communities and keeps us from understanding those who are different from us?
- With whom can we stand in solidarity (the poor, the persecuted).
- Sources:
 - [Racial Dot Map](#)
 - Create a Hunger Banquet.
 - Pope John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei Socialis*

7. Care for God's Creation / Stewardship

- Remember the Genesis creation story!
- We show our respect for God by protecting God's creation.
- God looked at God's creation and said, "It is good." ALL of creation is good and is a gift from God.



Care for God's Creation: Classroom Discussion

- "Integral Ecology": Environmental Conservation vs. Environmental Justice
- How are environmental concerns tied to theological, social, and cultural concerns?
- Why is the environment a justice issue at all?
- Sources:
 - Pope Francis: *Laudato Si'*
 - USCCB: *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good*
 - Case Study: "Whose Water?" in *Christian Ethics: A Case Study Approach*
 - Cleveland's [Environmental Health Watch](#)
 - Documentary: *Blue Gold: World Water Wars*
