



## Major Catholic Social Teaching Documents

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**Catholic Social Teaching sums up the Church's teaching on issues of social justice. This teaching may take place at the international level or at the local level. Often it is communicated through official teaching documents. Here are links to the full text of the major international Catholic Church documents on social justice from the modern era.**

**Rerum Novarum** Issued by Pope Leo XIII in 1891, this encyclical letter explores the conditions of the working classes in the wake of the industrial revolution. He sets out the rights and duties of workers, employers and governments.  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/leo\\_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_l-xiii\\_enc\\_15051891\\_rerum-novarum\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum_en.html)

**Quadragesimo Anno** Pope Pius XI issued this encyclical in 1931 to mark the fortieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*. He rejected both unfettered liberalism, and the totalitarian forms of government that were emerging in the Post War period, introducing the principle of subsidiarity into Catholic teaching.  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/pius\\_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-xi\\_enc\\_19310515\\_quadragesimo-anno\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19310515_quadragesimo-anno_en.html)

**Mater et Magistra** Pope John XXIII issued this encyclical letter on Christianity and social progress in 1961. He saw poverty and inequality as international questions requiring the solidarity of the whole human family.  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_xxiii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_j-xxiii\\_enc\\_15051961\\_mater\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_15051961_mater_en.html)

**Pacem in Terris** This 1963 encyclical letter from Pope John XXIII focuses on issues of peace in a nuclear age. Addressed to all people of good will, it reflects in detail on human rights.  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_xxiii/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_j-xxiii\\_enc\\_11041963\\_pacem\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_11041963_pacem_en.html)

**Gaudium et Spes** The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World was issued by the Second Vatican Council in 1965. Its presentation of the role of the Church in the world marked a major development in the understanding of the place of work for justice in the mission of the Church.  
[http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_cons\\_19651207\\_gaudium-et-spes\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html)

**Populorum Progressio** Pope Paul VI's 1967 encyclical introduced the idea of integral human development. Noting the disparities in wealth between countries as the process of decolonization progressed, it declared development to be the 'new name for peace'.  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_enc\\_26031967\\_populorum\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum_en.html)

**Octogesima Adveniens** In this 1971 Apostolic Letter Pope Paul VI reflects on the challenges of post-industrial society and the inadequacy of ideologies to address them.  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/apost\\_letters/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_apl\\_19710514\\_octogesima-adveniens\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_letters/documents/hf_p-vi_apl_19710514_octogesima-adveniens_en.html)

**Justitia in Mundo** The 1971 Synod of Bishops issued this statement on justice in the world. They proclaim work for the promotion of justice to be an essential part of the mission of the Church.  
<http://www.osjspm.org/cst/jw.htm>

**Evangelii Nuntiandi** Pope Paul VI's 1974 Apostolic Exhortation on evangelization in the modern world remains a landmark document in the understanding of the dimensions of the mission of the Church. It affirms the witness of life as the first means of evangelization.  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/paul\\_vi/apost\\_exhortation/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_exh\\_19751208\\_evangelii-nuntiandi\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortation/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi_en.html)

**Laborem Exercens** Pope John Paul II issued this encyclical on human labour to mark the ninetieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*. It is notable for its well developed spirituality and philosophy of work.  
[http://www.vatican.va/edocs/ENG0217/\\_INDEX.HTM](http://www.vatican.va/edocs/ENG0217/_INDEX.HTM)

**Sollicitudo rei Socialis** Pope John Paul II's 1987 encyclical on social concerns marks the twentieth anniversary of *Populorum Progressio*. It examines the nature of development and economic progress and emphasizes the virtue of solidarity.  
[http://www.vatican.va/edocs/ENG0223/\\_INDEX.HTM](http://www.vatican.va/edocs/ENG0223/_INDEX.HTM)

**Centesimus Annus** Pope John Paul II's last major social encyclical was issued in 1991 to mark the one hundredth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*. It reflects on the collapse of the Soviet Union and the role of culture in authentic human development.  
[http://www.vatican.va/edocs/ENG0214/\\_INDEX.HTM](http://www.vatican.va/edocs/ENG0214/_INDEX.HTM)