



A Summary of Pertinent Catholic Social Justice Teachings on Economic Justice  
Sources: Encyclicals and Other Documents

1. Leo XIII -- Rerum Novarum – On the Condition of Labor (1891) is the first of the social justice encyclicals. Its main holdings are: as many working people and their families are destitute, workers' have the right to organize to seek just wages and working conditions; the concentration of wealth hurts society; governments have an obligation to protect families and provide for the poor.
2. Pius XI -- Quadragesimo Anno – On Reconstructing the Social Order (1931) addresses the abuses of capitalism. Solutions are: government must regulate competition so goods are distributed equitably; wages must be adequate to support the family; government must promote the common good.
3. John XXIII -- Mater et Magistra – Christianity and Social Progress (1961) Seventy years after Rerum Novarum , this encyclical spoke to the widening gap between rich and poor; the inadequate return workers receive for their labor; the diversion of money for military to the detriment of citizenry.
4. John XXIII -- Pacem in Terris – Peace on Earth (1963) Human rights must be the basis for peace; calls for a world wide public authority to promote the common good.
5. Vatican Council Gaudium Et Spes – The Church in the Modern World (1965) Christians must work for a just and peaceful world; laments growing economic inequalities
6. Paul VI -- Populorum Progressio – On the Development of Peoples (1967) Economic justice is the basis for peace; nationalism, racism, economic systems foster the economic gap between peoples

7. Paul VI -- Octogesima Adveniens – A Call to Action (1971) calls for political action for economic justice; individual Christians and local churches have a role in responding to injustice
8. Synod of Bishops – Justice in the World (1971) states that action for justice is a sine qua non of being a Christian; injustices are building a network of domination, oppression, and abuse around the world; the situation call for the church to speak out.
9. Paul VI -- Evangelii Nuntiandi – Evangelization in the Modern world (1975) calls for the Gospel to be proclaimed as the liberation from all oppression; the proclamation of the Gospel should not be limited to one section of humanity or one class of people; since social justice is integral to faith, it must be translated into action.
10. John Paul II -- Redemptor Hominis – Redeemer of Mankind (1979) pollution, armed conflicts, lack of respect for the unborn are threats to human dignity; human rights must be the fundamental principle for all nations.
11. John Paul II -- Laborem Excerens – On human work (1981) currently human labor is valued solely on its economic purpose; the value of work must be based on worker dignity, persons over things, and human labor over capital.
12. National Conference of Catholic Bishops –Economic Justice for All: Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy (1986) applies the major principles of Catholic social teaching to the structure of the U.S. economy; assesses the economy’s impact on those who are poor.