

Select Quotes from

120 Years of Catholic Social Teaching

Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum* (On the Condition of Workers), 1891

The great mistake made in regard to the matter now under consideration is to take up with the notion that class is naturally hostile to class, and that the wealthy and the working men are intended by nature to live in mutual conflict. So irrational and so false is this view that the direct contrary is the truth. . . . Each needs the other: capital cannot do without labor, nor labor without capital. (#19)

The following duties . . . concern rich men and employers: Workers are not to be treated as slaves; justice demands that the dignity of human personality be respected in them... gainful occupations are not a mark of shame to man, but rather of respect, as they provide him with an honorable means of supporting life. No one, certainly, is obliged to assist others out of what is required for his own necessary use or for that of his family... But when the demands of necessity and propriety have been met, it is a duty to give to the poor out of that which remains. (#36)

Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno* (On the Reconstruction of the Social Order), 1931

The riches that economic-social developments constantly increase ought to be so distributed among individual persons and classes that the common advantage of all will be safeguarded. (#57)
...the right ordering of economic life cannot be left to a free competition of forces. For from this source, as from a poisoned spring, have originated and spread all the errors of individualist economic teaching. (#88)

John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra* (Mother and Teacher), 1961

The remuneration of work is not something that can be left to the laws of the marketplace; nor should it be a decision left to the will of the more powerful. It must be determined in accordance with justice and equity; which means that workers must be paid a wage which allows them to live a truly human life and to fulfill their family obligations in a worthy manner. (#71)

The solidarity which binds all people together as members of a common family makes it impossible for wealthy nations to look with indifference upon the hunger, misery and poverty of other nations whose citizens are unable to enjoy even elementary human rights. The nations of the world are becoming more and more dependent on one another and it will not be possible to preserve a lasting peace so long as glaring economic and social imbalances persist. (#157)

Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes* (The Church in the Modern World), 1965

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. (#1)

They are mistaken who, knowing that we have here no abiding city but seek one which is to come, think that they may therefore shirk their earthly responsibilities.... Nor are they any less wide of the mark who think that religion consists in acts of worship alone and in the discharge of certain moral obligations.... This split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age. (#43)

Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio* (On the Development of Peoples), 1968

The superfluous wealth of rich countries should be placed at the service of poor nations. The rule which up to now held good for the benefit of those nearest to us, must today be applied to all the needy of this world. Besides, the rich will be the first to benefit as a result. Otherwise their continued greed will certainly call down upon them the judgement of God and the wrath of the poor, with consequences no one can foretell. (#49)

John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (The Social Concerns of the Church), 1987

How can one justify the fact that huge sums of money, which could and should be used for increasing the development of peoples, are instead utilized for the enrichment of individuals or groups, or assigned to the increase of stockpiles of weapons? War and military preparations are the major enemy of the development of peoples. (#10)

***Centisimus Annus* (On the 100th Anniversary of Rerum Novarum), 1991**

To overcome today's individualistic mentality, a concrete commitment to solidarity and charity is needed, beginning in the family. (#49)

After the fall of "real socialism" capitalism is not the only economic alternative left. Individuals and nations need the basic things to enable them to share in development. The stronger ones must assist the weaker ones, and the weaker ones must use the opportunities offered. (#35)

Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (Charity in Truth), 2009

It is necessary to cultivate a public conscience that considers food and access to water as universal rights of all human beings, without distinction or discrimination. (#27)

The poor are not to be considered a "burden," but a resource... it is erroneous to hold that the market economy has an inbuilt need for a quota of poverty in order to function at its best. (#35)

Francis I, *Laudato Si'* (On Care for Our Common Home), 2015

A very solid scientific consensus indicates that we are presently witnessing a disturbing warming of the climatic system.... Once more, we need to reject a magical conception of the market, which would suggest that problems can be solved simply by an increase in the profits of companies or individuals. Is it realistic to hope that those who are obsessed with maximizing profits will stop to reflect on the environmental damage which they will leave behind for future generations? (#23, 190)

The ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion. Some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits and thus become inconsistent...they need an "ecological conversion" whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience. (#217)