

How the nine principles of catholic social teaching relates to the book of john r...

[Sociology](#), [Poverty](#)



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The Catholic Church declares that human dignity is the basis upon which societal moral vision originates and that human life is sacred. The catholic religion centers its social teachings upon the two aforementioned concepts. In contemporary societies, the life of humans is under considerable threats such as euthanasia and abortion. Accordingly, the religion recognizes that the value of human life is under constant threat from processes such as the continued implementation of death penalty, cloning, and studies relating to embryonic stem cell.

Further, Catholics consider the continued targeting of civilians in international warfare and terrorist attacks to be immoral. The catholic teachings also call for avoidance of war hence nations must find ways to resolve issues peaceably to prevent conflicts. Catholics further believe that all people are precious and that they are more important than other things. As such, the measure of all regimes and organizations is whether they

enhance or threaten the dignity and life of the human being. As such, the principles of the Catholic Social Teaching include the respect of human dignity, respect of human life, association, participation, preferential option for the needy and the weak, solidarity, stewardship, subsidiarity, human equality, and common good. All the foregoing principles are traceable from the life, teachings, and the work of Jesus Christ with specific focus from the gospel of John. This paper will focus on six principles of Catholic Social Teaching and the way they relate to the book of John

The principle of human dignity

This principle bases its origin on the contention that God created every person in his own image and redemption by Jesus Christ. As such, every individual is worthy of respect by virtue of their status as human beings. Consequently, people do not lose that status because of poverty, race, disability, or other adversities (Mckenna, 19). According to catholic teachings, people cannot forfeit their right to be accorded respect since it is God who assigns this right.

Jesus demonstrates this principle in the book of John 4: 1-42 when he breaks the religious and societal customs in order to honor the dignity of the Samaritan woman. Jesus gave the Samaritan woman living water. Jesus also washed his disciples' feet to show them how. In John 13: 16 Jesus teaches his disciples to uphold human dignity where Jesus says that " I am telling you the truth: no slaves are greater than their master, and no messengers are greater than the one who sent them."

Respect of human life

The effect of this principle is that from conception to death by natural causes, every individual has a right to life and possesses natural dignity. The right to life is in accordance with a person's dignity by virtue of existing as a human being. The perception of Catholics that human life is sacred is an essential moral vision towards a just and noble society.

John 6: 35 emphasizes the respect for human life when Jesus stated thus, " I am the bread of life". This means that God is the giver of life as such no person should take away or demean the life of another. Jesus demonstrates this in John 11: 42-44 when he raised Lazarus who had been dead for four days. Consequently, John 1: 3 provides that " All things were made through him."

Principle of association

According to the catholic social teachings, human life is not merely sacred but social as well. The fact that God creates every person in his own image and likeness emphasizes on the importance of community. Catholics believe that there exists three persons in God: Father, Son, and Spirit. However, God is one. As such, people represent a varied community of the Father, Son, and Spirit. This means that in God, people find diversity, an aspect that guarantees liveliness instead of division. This principle provides insight that people are their true selves when their relationship with others is well, but not when they live in isolation.

This is demonstrated in 1 John 3: 1-2 " see what the father has for us, that we should be called Children of God". In John chapter 4: 1-34 Jesus

associated with the Samaritan woman despite the fact that he was a Jew. The Jewish customs prohibited Jews from associating with the Samaritans. Following Jesus's association with the Samaritan woman, many Samaritans believed in him due to the testimony of the woman.

Principle of Solidarity

This principle teaches that individuals are their sisters' and brothers' keepers. To learn the virtue of solidarity, people must endeavor to dedicate themselves towards achieving the common good for every person. The fact that people live in an interdependent world means that one is responsible for every individual and for all.

1 John 4: 7-12 appeals to people to love one another because love is from God. Verse 12 provides thus, " No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in union with us, and his love is made perfect in us". This means that without love for one another it would be impossible to live peacefully. This verse further acknowledges that without love people would not care about each other hence it will be impossible to work towards the common good.

Option for the Poor

Deepening divisions between the poor and the rich taint contemporary societies. In order to ensure that society does not disintegrate, people should ensure that the needs of the poor and the vulnerable take priority. This principle calls for standing up for humanity and dignity of the marginalized people because just like any other person, they are in the image of God and are deserving of help and respect.

In 1 John 3: 17-18 the bible likens helping the poor to love for God. As such, the verses provide that helping the poor is true love in action. Verse 17 provides thus, “ If we are rich and see others in need, yet close our hearts against them, how can we claim that we love God?” consequently, if people do not help the poor then they do not love God. Lazarus was a symbolic illustration of a poor and vulnerable person.

Principle of Stewardship

The principle of stewardship goes to the core of respect for God as the creator. It postulates that people should show respect to God by exercising stewardship over his creation. This principle perceives people as trustees and stewards who should concern themselves with caring for the creations and not just consuming them. Every person is therefore responsible for safeguarding nature to enhance sustainability.

Jesus taught his disciples the importance of being a servant. John 17: 15-18 demonstrates that people should preserve God’s creation. Verse 15 states thus, “ I do not ask you to take them out of the world, but I do ask you to keep them safe from the Evil One”.

Work Cited

Mckenna, Kevin. A Concise Guide to Catholic Social Teaching (Concise Guide Series). Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, Inc. 2002.