

# Catholic Social Teaching & Nuclear Weapons



**Disarmament Week 2017**

**Newman Center**

*Catholic Campus Ministry at the University of Hawai'i—Mānoa*

# What is Catholic Social Teaching?

Catholic Social Teaching is a collection of doctrine that sums up the teaching of the Church on social justice issues. It promotes a vision of a just society that is grounded in the Bible and in the wisdom gathered from experience by the Christian community as it has responded to social justice issues through history.

Modern Catholic Social Teaching has been articulated through a tradition of papal, conciliar, and episcopal documents that explore and express the social demands of our faith. The depth and richness of this tradition can be understood best through a direct reading of these documents.

What possibilities can come from Catholic Social Teaching? It is the legacy of our faith tradition. It has the possibility of finding a new sense of hope through knowledge of the Church's social teaching. It can open up a new path of light and hope for those who have endured darkness.

The official Catholic doctrine on social issues can be found in the book *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, published in 2004 and updated in 2006 by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.

In summary, Catholic Social Teaching is:

- ◆ An authoritative Church teaching on social, political and economic issues
- ◆ It is informed by Gospel values and the lived experience of Christian reflection
- ◆ It analyses that lived experience of Christian reflection from different historical, political and social contexts
- ◆ It provides principles for reflection, a criteria for judgment and guidelines for action
- ◆ Thus, it enables us in our struggle to live our faith in justice and peace

# Themes of Catholic Social Teaching

The lay movements of Pax Romana—International Movement of Catholic Students & International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs identify the following themes of Catholic Social Teaching:

- ◆ Dignity of the Human Person
- ◆ Community, Participation, and Pursuit of the Common Good
- ◆ Rights and Responsibilities
- ◆ Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
- ◆ Subsidiarity
- ◆ Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers
- ◆ Stewardship of Creation
- ◆ Solidarity
- ◆ Promotion of Peace

## What Catholic Social Teaching is not

- ◆ A ‘third way’ between liberal capitalism and Marxist collectivism. It constitutes a category of its own. (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, paragraph 41).
- ◆ It is not an ideology, but rather the result of a careful reflection on the complex realities of human existence, in society and in the international order, in the light of faith and the Church’s tradition... It therefore belongs to the field of moral theology and not of ideology. (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, paragraph 41).
- ◆ It is not a model: the Church has no models to present; models that are real and effective can only arise within the framework of different historical situations, through the efforts of all those who responsibly confront concrete problems in their social, political and cultural aspects, as these interact with each other. (*Centesimus Annus*, paragraph 43).

# Key CST Documents

With the exception of a Council Pastoral Constitution and a Synod statement, the following are all papal texts, but there are also documents from regional conferences of bishops, like those of CELAM (Latin America) – particularly that of Medellin (1968) and Puebla (1979), or FABC (Asia) – which applied CST to their own context and reflected on such ideas as conscientization, basic communities and option for the poor. Many of these themes have been picked up by the wider Church. There have also been contributions from the Pontifical Council for Justice & Peace: on Debt (1986), Homelessness (1987), Racism (1988), Refugees (1992) and Land Reform (1997).

The titles are in the original Latin, its literal translation in English, and often times mentioned are the titles by which it is more commonly known.

## 1891 – *Rerum Novarum* – “Of New Things” – Leo XIII

Also known as the *Condition of Labor*. It examines working conditions in industrialized countries and insists on workers’ rights. The Church, employers & workers should work together to build a just society.

## 1931 – *Quadragesimo Anno* – “On the Fortieth Year” – Pius XI

Also known as the *Reconstruction of the Social Order*. At the time of major economic depression, QA criticizes abuses of capitalism & communism, focusing on the unity between capital & labor. Ownership brings social responsibilities; subsidiarity.

## 1961 – *Mater et Magistra* – “Mother & Teacher” – John XXIII

*Christianity & Social Progress* updates earlier teaching and applies to agriculture and aid to developing countries, thus ‘internationalizing’ Catholic Social Teaching. Role of laity in applying social teaching as an integral part of Christian life.

### 1963 – *Pacem in Terris* – “Peace on Earth” – John XXIII

With the immanent threat of nuclear war, this is a plea for peace based on the social order from a framework of rights and duties applying to individuals, public authorities and the world community.

### 1965 – *Gaudium et Spes* – “The Joys and Hopes” – Vatican II

Also known as *The Church in the Modern World*. Church’s duty is discernment of the signs of the times in the light of the Gospel. Principles of cultural development and justice, enhancing human dignity and the common good. Work for peace.

### 1967 – *Populorum Progressio* – “The Development of Peoples” – Paul VI

It is a charter for development – ‘the new name for peace’. Deals with structural poverty, aid and trade. Limits put on profit motive and the right to private property. Christians to strive for international justice.

### 1971 – *Octogesima Adveniens* – “On the Eightieth Year” – Paul VI

Also known as *A Call to Action*. Rome doesn’t necessarily have the answer: need for local church to respond to specific situations. Urbanization has brought new injustices. We are called to political action.

### 1971 – *Iustitia in Mundo* – “Justice in the World” – Synod of Bishops

‘Justice is a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel...’ The Church must examine its conscience about its lifestyle and so witness to the Gospel. Importance of Education for Justice.

### 1975 – *Evangelii Nuntiandi* – “Evangelization in the Modern World” – Paul VI

Profound links between evangelization and development and liberation. Only the kingdom is absolute; everything else is relative. All levels of society are to be transformed by the power of the good news.

**1981 – *Laborem Exercens* – “On Human Work” – John Paul II**

For John Paul II work is the central social issue. Work increases human dignity. Priority of labor over capital. Rights of workers (especially women) and unions. Critique of capitalism as well as Marxism.

**1987 – *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* – “The Social Concern of the Church” – John Paul II**

*The Social Concern of the Church* updates *Populorum Progressio* with analysis of global development: North/South divide blamed on confrontation between capitalism and Marxism. Conversion from ‘Structures of sin’ towards solidarity and option for the poor.

**1991 – *Centesimus Annus* – “The One Hundredth Year” – John Paul II**

Review of CST and major events of the last century, constantly affirming human dignity and human rights, justice and peace. The fall of Marxism does not signify a victory for capitalism.

**2009 – *Caritas in Veritate* – “Charity in Truth” – Benedict XVI**

*Charity in Truth* updates *Populorum Progressio* with a comprehensive review of development and some reflection on the economic crisis and business ethics. Provides a theological framework for CST.

**2013 – *Evangelii Gaudium* – “The Joy of the Gospel” – Pope Francis**

While not a papal encyclical, this apostolic exhortation gives particular attention to the ‘social dimension of Evangelization’.

**2015 – *Laudato Si’* – “Praise Be” – Pope Francis**

Also known as *On Care for our Common Home*. It is a passionate call to all people of the world to take “swift and unified global action”, particularly in relation to the destruction of the environment.

# Call for Nuclear Disarmament Not New in Church History

*The following is an excerpt from an article by Dennis Sadowski of Catholic News Service, dated September 18, 2015. For the full article, go to [www.catholicnews.com](http://www.catholicnews.com)*

WASHINGTON – Repeated calls from Pope Francis for the world to empty its nuclear weapons arsenals are little known and often overlooked, but carry the moral weight of Catholic social teaching, a panel of experts concurred during a panel discussion at the Council on Foreign Relations.

His pleas should come as no surprise because they reflect a view that has existed within the Holy See since the papacy of St. John XXIII and the days of the Second Vatican Council, said Bishop Oscar Cantu of Las Cruces, New Mexico, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on International Justice and Peace, during a program in advance of the pope's visit to the United States Sept. 22-27.

Citing statements from Vatican II, Francis and his predecessors and pastoral letters by the U.S. bishops, Cantu said Thursday that the church has offered consistent messages that question the morality of the use of nuclear weapons.

More recently, the Vatican and Francis have moved away from accepting the concept of nuclear deterrence, saying that such acceptance implies that it is acceptable to use such weapons. The Vatican has always maintained that using nuclear weapons is immoral.

Acknowledging that new perception, Maryann Cusimano Love, associate pro-

fessor of international relations at The Catholic University of America, said the Holy See is working to reframe the way the world views nuclear weapons and “to put people first.”

Such statements are hardly political in nature, but rather reflect the moral and ethical dimensions of weapon production and stockpiling in the face of great human need in much of the world, she said.

“If we think of the four Ps, the letter P, that is in the hallmark of Francis' papacy ~ concern for people and the poor, concern for planet and concern for peace ~ he sees these not as separate tracks or separate portions of a platform, but he sees them as deeply connected. These are all part of his common concerns,” Cusimano Love said.

While agreements such as the New START treaty between the U.S. and Russia, signed in 2010, call for both countries to reduce their strategic nuclear arsenals to 1,550 each from 2,200 each, Francis has said that the mere possession of such weapons represents a “theft from the poor.”

“He's trying to poke our consciences, poke our indifference,” Cusimano Love said.

Francis is saying it is time to counter the “logic of fear” with a “logic of solidarity” with the marginalized people of the world, she explained, while discerning “the signs of the times, to seize the opportunity and look far ahead,” when he says that nuclear deterrence and the threat of mutually assured destruction must no longer be the basis for a secured peace.

“He is ... identifying himself as a son of Vatican II and saying we need to look

at the signs of the times, interpreting the Gospel in light of these times and coming up with answers that make better sense for our age and our century,” she said.

Each panelist echoed Francis' call for continued conversation, especially when deep disagreements exist.

“I think this is what Francis is saying when he says that his plan for peace is dialogue, dialogue, dialogue,” Cusimano Love said. “There is no person with whom we can't have dialogue no matter how diametrically opposed their viewpoints are. He's trying to spread that message anywhere he can. He's trying to mirror that in with his own actions.”

“In a global era, isolation is not an option,” Cusimano Love added. “From a religious perspective, it's not an option because we are all part of a common human family.”

The event was sponsored by the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame; the U.S. bishops' Office of International Justice and Peace; the Berkley Center for Religion Peace and World Affairs at Georgetown University; the Jesuit Institute at Boston College; the Institute for Policy Research and Catholic Studies at The Catholic University of America; and the Nuclear Threat Initiative.

# Actions Taken by the US Catholic Bishops on Nuclear Disarmament

This list is a sampling of actions taken by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops regarding nuclear weapons. For a full list, visit the USCCB's website:

<http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/war-and-peace/nuclear-weapons/index.cfm>

Nuclear Disarmament: Seeking Human Security  
*Archbishop Jean-Claude Hollerich, Conference of European Justice and Peace Commissions (Justice & Peace Europe) and Bishop Oscar Cantú, July 6, 2017*

Faith and Science Leaders Agree: Reduce the Threat of Nuclear Catastrophe Now  
*Signed by Bishop Oscar Cantú for USCCB, May 6, 2016*

The Pope and the Bomb: New Nuclear Dangers and Moral Dilemmas  
*Bishop Oscar Cantú, September 17, 2015*

Nuclear Disarmament: Time for Abolition  
*Bishop Oscar Cantú, April 9, 2015*

Letter to President Obama on Nuclear Disarmament and on Israeli-Palestinian Peace  
*Timothy Cardinal Dolan and Bishop Richard E. Pates, June 25, 2013*

Catholic-Evangelical Press Conference Supporting New START Treaty  
*Bishop Howard J. Hubbard, December 7, 2010*

Letter Urging Senate to Ratify the New START Treaty  
*Bishop Howard J. Hubbard, November 29, 2010*

Nuclear Weapons and Moral Questions: The Path to Zero  
*Archbishop Edwin O'Brien, July 29, 2009*

Statement from Religious Leaders on Denuclearization Agreement with North Korea  
*Bishop Thomas G. Wenski, July 17, 2007*

Letter to Bishop Nagoya on 60th Anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki  
*Bishop William S. Skylstad, August 2, 2005*

Blessed Are the Peacemakers: Reflections on Two Anniversaries  
*Most Reverend Wilton D. Gregory, August 4, 2003*

USCCB Statement: The Harvest of Justice is Sown in Peace  
*United States Catholic Conference, 1993*

Statement on the START II Treaty  
*Archbishop John R. Roach, January 5, 1992*

Missile Defense: Excerpts from *A Report on The Challenge of Peace and Policy Developments 1983-1988*  
*Ad Hoc Committee on the Moral Evaluation of Deterrence—National Conference of Catholic Bishops, June 1988*

The Strategic Defense Initiative: Moral Question, Public Choices  
*National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1988*

The Challenge of Peace, God's Promise and Our Response  
*National Conference of Catholic Bishops, May 3, 1983*

# The Pontificate of Pope Francis & Nuclear Disarmament

This is a selection of the role of the Holy See on different occasions

- 2014 Pope Francis addresses three conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons: Oslo, Norway; Nayarit, Mexico, and Vienna, Austria.
- April 2015 Pope Francis praises the progress of nuclear weapons negotiations in his traditional message and “Urbi et Orbi” blessing on Easter Sunday.
- May 2015 Promulgation of social encyclical, *Laudato Si’*, by Pope Francis. The encyclical to all of humankind opens within the context of the nuclear crisis to which his predecessor, Pope John XXIII addressed in *Pacem in Terris*.
- September 2015 Pope Francis addressed the United Nations General Assembly: “There is an urgent need to work for a world free of nuclear weapons, in full application of the NPT, in letter and spirit, with the goal of complete prohibition of these weapons.”
- April 2016 Vatican holds conference on “Nonviolence and Just Peace: Contributing to the Catholic Understanding of and Commitment to Nonviolence.”
- September 2016 Holy See to the UN on International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons: “Nuclear weapons offer a false sense of security, and that the uneasy peace promised by nuclear deterrence is a tragic illusion.”
- October 2016 Cardinal Turkson, President for the Promotion of Integral Human Development addresses conference “The Catholic Church Moves Toward Nonviolence? Just Peace, Just War in Dialogue.”
- October 2016 Holy See to UN General Assembly’s First Committee: “The Holy See has called for a ban on nuclear weapons since the dawn of the nuclear age.”
- January 2017 Pope Francis issues first substantive pontifical teaching on nonviolence on

the occasion of the 50th World Day of Peace, “Nonviolence: A style of politics for peace”

March 2017 Pope Francis message to the United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards Their Total Elimination

April 2017 Nonviolence and Just Peace Conference, Rome  
Outcome:

July 2017 Though the Holy See maintains “permanent observer status” as a member of the United Nations, it exercised its right to vote the Holy See by casting its first-ever vote, which was in favor of nuclear disarmament.

September 2017 Holy See first state to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons: “The Holy See signed and ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons during the 20 September signing ceremony, because it gives hope to those now living and those still to be born that one day our world will be free from nuclear weapons, which, for more than seventy years, have dimmed humanity’s aspirations for peace.”

October 2017 Holy See to the UN GA First Committee: “The adoption of the Treaty shows that an overwhelming majority of States and many other stakeholders want swifter progress toward a world free of the threat of nuclear destruction. But while the Treaty constitutes a landmark in the field of global security, much work remains to be done if it is truly to make a difference and achieve its full promise, particularly in engaging the nuclear-weapon-possessing States and States under extended nuclear deterrence, and in establishing a competent international authority to oversee the dismantling of nuclear weapon systems. We must continue to pursue these objectives, and move toward general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.”

November 2017 The Vatican to host a nuclear disarmament conference on November 10-11 “to create a public opinion convinced that the world is safer without nuclear weapons, rather than with them.”

# Solidarity Messages



## International Movement of Catholic Students Mouvement International des Étudiants Catholiques Movimiento Internacional de Estudiantes Católicos

*(original French)*

*(English translation)*

Paris, 26 Octobre 2017

Paris, 26 October 2017

Chers amis,

C'est avec grande consternation que nous avons appris la menace sous laquelle vous ployez et la psychose régnant sur les îles d'Hawaï.

Tout en vous envoyant cette note de solidarité, nous vous portons dans nos prières quotidiennes.

Nous prions aussi que la paix règne dans le cœur de nos dirigeants politique afin que les décisions dans la diplomatie et la géopolitique aillent de plus en plus dans le sens d'une recherche de paix durable pour notre société.

Que la solidarité fraternelle et la prière soient votre force dans ces moments difficile.

La communauté Internationale des Etudiants Catholiques (MIEC Pax Romana) vous exprime par notre voix sa proximité.

Dieu vous bénisse,

Edouard Pihèwa KAROUE  
*International President*  
*de la part d'équipe internationale*

Dear friends,

It is with great consternation that we have heard about the threat you suffer from and the reigning psychosis in the islands of Hawaii.

While sending you this note of solidarity, we keep you in our daily prayers.

We also pray that peace reigns in the hearts of our political leaders so that the decisions in diplomacy and geopolitics go more and more in the direction of a search for lasting peace for our society.

May fraternal solidarity and prayer be your strength in these difficult times.

The International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS Pax Romana), through our voice, express its closeness.

God bless you,

Edouard Pihèwa KAROUE  
*International President*  
*on behalf of the International Team*



## International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs

### Mouvement International des Intellectuels Catholiques

### Movimiento Internacional de Intelectuales Católicos

#### Organizing for Peace: A Vocation

Dear friends at the Newman Center at the University of Hawai‘i,

The theme of your meeting on peace and nonviolence is timely. It is no exaggeration to say that our planet is at a critical crossroads. The human family faces a number of threats including climate change, economic inequality, and violent extremism. Tragically, despite decades of condemnation by both religious leaders and United Nations documents, the human community remains threatened by nuclear weapons and escalating conflicts. As Catholics, we know that nuclear warfare constitutes an evil, something that stands directly against the truths revealed to us by God in the Gospel and in the Catholic tradition.

So what can we do? How can we respond? Since taking office, Pope Francis has called upon Catholics, and all people, to take action. **We cannot be passive**; we cannot be indifferent in the face of injustice, violence, suffering and threats to the common good. “The future of humanity,” as Francis told Popular Movements in 2015, “does not lie solely in the hands of great leaders, the great powers and the elites. **It is fundamentally in the hands of peoples and in their ability to organize.**”

In other words, if we want change we must organize. This is a central feature of the Catholic social tradition. We are called to work together for the common good locally (in groups like Newman), nationally, and globally. Movements like the International Movement of Catholic Students ([www.imcs-miic.org](http://www.imcs-miic.org)) for college students and the International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs ([www.icmica-miic.org](http://www.icmica-miic.org)) for professionals and intellectuals are two global movements working for peace, justice and social change.

As Catholics, inspired by the Gospel and the church’s social tradition, we have much to offer the present the crisis facing people and planet today. We are called to be peacemakers (Mt. 5:9) and to transform the world to be more in line with God’s Kingdom. This is not a task any of us can do alone. It’s time to organize for a more just and peaceful world!

In the Peace of Christ,

Kevin Ahern, PhD

*Director of Peace Studies, Manhattan College*

*International President, International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs (ICMICA-Pax Romana)*



October 26, 2017

Newman Center  
University of Hawaii  
Honolulu, Hawaii

Dear Chris,

I take this opportunity to congratulate you and your colleagues for the program that you are sponsoring on October 26, 2017 urging our government leader to choose the path of peace and nonviolence that is firmly based on Gospel values and our Catholic Social Teaching.

The option to destroy, kill and annihilate other human beings by the ruthless use of nuclear weapons is a travesty that cannot be tolerated. In addition the creation of a further toxic climate that is already compromised is not in keeping with the stewardship demanded of us as co-journeymen on this planet.

May all who attend the program not be paralyzed by fear but empowered by the hope that together we will turn the tide of hate and retaliation and help create the Beloved Community where life is lived in its fullness.

May you all be blessed with a profound Peace.

*Sr. Patricia Chappell, SNDdeN*

Patricia Chappell, SNDdeN  
*Executive Director*

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