


Busy Christian's Guide to Catholic Social Teaching by U.S. Catholic

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<p><b>1760s-70s:</b> Inventions of the "spinning jenny," "water frame," and "spinning mule" replace handwoven textiles—and workers—in England. Invention of the steam engine and cotton gin.</p> <p><b>1800-25:</b> First "Factory Act" in England; trade unions legal in England.</p> <p><b>1815:</b> Industrial Revolution spreads to other European countries following French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars.</p> <p><b>1848:</b> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels issue The Communist Manifesto; socialism spreads.</p> <p><b>1880-1915:</b> Height of imperialism. (European control of Africa, parts of Asia, and India. U.S. involvement in Latin America.)</p> <p><b>1886:</b> Battle between workers, socialists, and anarchists and police ends in the</p>	<p><b><u>Rerum novarum</u></b> English title: The Condition of Labor</p> <p>Author: Pope Leo XIII</p> <p><i>Date: May 15, 1891</i></p>  <p><b>Main points:</b> Promotion of human dignity through just distribution of wealth. Present inequality creates a decline of morality as shown in alcohol consumption, prostitution, and divorce. Workers have basic human rights that adhere to Natural Law, which says all humans are equal. Rights include the right to work, to own private property, to receive a just wage, and to organize into workers' associations. Employers and employees each have rights and responsibilities: while the worker should not riot to create a situation of conflict with the employer, the employer should maintain an environment respecting worker's dignity.</p> <p>The church has the right to speak out on social issues. Its role is to teach social principles and bring social classes together. The state's role is to create a just society through laws that preserve rights.</p> <p><b>Context:</b> Much poverty. Because of the Industrial Revolution, workers are being exploited by profit-hungry employers. Public authorities are not protecting the rights of the poor.</p> <p><b>Innovation:</b> First comprehensive document of social justice; brings the subject of workers' rights to light.</p> <p><b>Trivia:</b> In 1841, while still a cardinal, Leo XIII started a savings bank for the poor. He was named a monsignor for his bravery during a cholera epidemic.</p>
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Haymarket Massacre in Chicago.  
American Federation of Labor founded.

**1889:**

Cardinal Henry Edward Manning of Westminster becomes famous for supporting strike of London dockers; Hull House founded in Chicago by Jane Addams.

**1890:**

Sherman Anti-Trust Act.

**1891:**

*Rerum novarum*

**1893:**

Panic of 1893 brings failure of 491 banks and over 15,000 commercial institutions.

**1894:**

Pullman strike smashed by federal troops.

**1900:**

Founding of Socialist Revolutionary Party of Russia.


**1902:**

Peasant revolt in Russia suppressed.

**1905:**

"Bloody Sunday" massacre in Russia. Moscow uprising crushed by government troops.

**1911:**

<p>Strikes and industrial unrest in Britain. Suffragette riots in Whitehall, London. Famine and revolution in China: Manchu dynasty overthrown.</p> <p><b>1913:</b> German Army Bill expands German army.</p> <p><b>1914-18:</b> World War I.</p> <p><b>1917:</b> Russian Revolution begins: Bolsheviks led by Lenin seize power.</p> <p><b>1920:</b> First full-time session of League of Nations.</p> <p><b>1925:</b> Adolf Hitler publishes <i>Mein Kampf</i>.</p> <p><b>1926:</b> General strike in Britain.</p> <p><b>1929:</b> Wall Street crash; Great Depression. Unemployment in Germany exceeds 3 million.</p> <p><b>1930:</b> German elections: 107 Nazis win seats in Reichstag. War breaks out between Paraguay and Bolivia. Revolutions in Brazil, Argentina.</p>	<p><b>Quadragesimo anno</b> English title: Reconstruction of the Social Order</p> <p>Author: Pope Pius XI</p> <p><i>Date: May 1931</i></p> <p><b>Main points:</b> After detailing the positive impact <a href="#">Rerum novarum</a> has had on the social order—through the church, civil authorities, and now-flourishing unions—stresses that a new situation warrants a new response. Charges that capitalism's free competition has destroyed itself, with the state having become a "slave" serving its greed. Also, while the lot of workers has improved in the Western World, it has deteriorated elsewhere. Warns against a communist solution, however, because communism condones violence and abolishes private property. Labor and capital need each other. A just wage is necessary so workers can acquire private property, too.</p> <p>The state has the responsibility to reform the social order, since economic affairs can't be left to free enterprise alone. Public intervention in labor-management disputes approved; international economic cooperation urged.</p> <p><b>Context:</b> A response to the Great Depression, which began in 1929 and rocked the world. In Europe, democracy has declined and dictators have emerged to take power. Fortieth anniversary of <a href="#">Rerum novarum</a>.</p> <p><b>Innovation:</b> Introduces the concept of "subsidiarity," saying social problems should be resolved on more local levels first.</p> <p><b>Trivia:</b> Expands <a href="#">Rerum novarum</a>'s focus on poor workers to include the structures that oppress them.</p> 
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**1931:**

National Government formed in Britain after severe financial crisis.  
Japan invades Manchuria.  
*Quadragesimo anno*

**1932:**

Hunger marches by unemployed in Britain.

**1933:**

Hitler becomes German Chancellor, Reichstag burned.  
Franklin Roosevelt enunciates "Good Neighbor" policy: aid sent to Central and South America, U.S. troops withdrawn from Nicaragua.  
Japan occupies China north of Great Wall and leaves League of Nations

**1935:**

Germany reinstates conscription, repudiates military clauses of Versailles Treaty.

**1936:**

German troops occupy Rhineland.

**1937:**

Japanese take Nanjing and Shanghai ("Rape of Nanjing").

**1938:**

Austria declared part of German Reich after German occupation.

**1939-45:**

<p>World War II</p> <p><b>1945:</b> U.N. established. U.S. deploys first atomic bomb, destroying Hiroshima and, later, Nagasaki.</p> <p><b>1947:</b> India and Pakistan become independent.</p> <p><b>1948:</b> U.N. Declaration of Human Rights.</p> <p><b>1949:</b> Feminist Simone de Beauvoir, <i>The Second Sex</i>.</p> <p><b>1950:</b> Korean War begins. World population at 2.5 billion. "Population explosion" begins.</p> <p><b>1952:</b> First atomic submarine; U.S. explodes first hydrogen bomb.</p> <p><b>1954:</b> Senator Joseph McCarthy's anticommunist witch-hunt condemned by U.S. Senate. Vietnam split at 17th parallel: North Vietnam under Communist control. Cambodia becomes independent from France.</p> <p><b>1955:</b> Bandung Conference: 29 Afro-Asian nonaligned states gather to condemn colonialism.</p>	<p><b>Mater et Magistra</b> English title: Christianity and Social Progress</p> <p>Author: Pope John XXIII</p> <p><i>Date: May 15, 1961</i></p> <p><b>Main points:</b> Enumerates the economic, scientific, social, and political developments that have taken place since <i>Rerum novarum</i> and <i>Quadragesimo anno</i>. Says there's not just a disparity between rich and poor classes anymore—there's a disparity between rich and poor nations. Decries arms race and the plight of the world's farmers. Arms spending contributes to poverty; peace would be possible if economic imbalances among nations were righted.</p> <p>It's the duty of wealthy, industrialized nations to help poor, nonindustrialized nations; but in giving aid, it is every country's duty to respect the latter's culture and to refrain from domination. Since technological advances have made nations interdependent as never before, cooperation and mutual assistance are necessary. Says all Catholics should be reared on Catholic social teaching.</p> <p><b>Context:</b> Advancements such as nuclear energy, automation, space exploration, and improved communication technologies pose complex, new problems for industrialized nations. Meanwhile, millions live in poverty in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.</p> <p><b>Innovation:</b> "Internationalizes" social teaching by addressing, for the first time, the plight of nonindustrialized nations.</p> <p><b>Trivia:</b> Stresses the popular Catholic Social Action motto "see, judge, act" as a model of effective lay involvement.</p>
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**1956:**

Martin Luther King, Jr. leads bus boycott in Alabama.  
Seven different governments in Haiti (to September 1957).

**1957:**

Sputnik I and II launched by U.S.S.R.  
Common Market founded.

**1957-67:**

Many African nations gain independence from colonial rule.

**1958:**

U.S. launches Vanguard and Explorer satellites.

**1959:**

Fidel Castro's guerrillas take Havana;  
Castro becomes prime minister.

**1960:**

Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) instituted.

**1961-73:**

U.S. involvement in Vietnam War.

**1961:**

Berlin Wall erected to separate East and West Berlin.  
The first human to travel in space around Earth.

*Mater et Magistra*

**Pacem in terris**

**English title:**  
**Peace on Earth**

**Author: Pope John XXIII**

*Date: April 11, 1963*

**Main points:** The only way to ensure peace is to ensure a foundation that consists of specific social rights and responsibilities. The bulk of the encyclical goes on to list these, detailing rights and responsibilities that ought to exist (1) between people, (2) between people and their public authorities, (3) between states, and (4) among people and nations at the level of the world community. Some specifics: cultural changes demand that women have more rights; justice, right reason, and human dignity demand that the arms race must cease; the United Nations needs to be strengthened.



**Context:** Follows two early Cold War events—the erection of the Berlin Wall (August 1961) and the Cuban Missile Crisis (October 1962).

**Innovation:** "Its optimistic tone and development of a philosophy of rights made a significant impression on Catholics and non-Catholics alike," say Henriot, DeBerri, and Schultheis in their book *Catholic Social Teaching: Our Best Kept Secret*.

**Trivia:** First encyclical addressed to Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

**1962:**

Second Vatican Council, attended by over 2,000.  
Cuban Missile Crisis.  
Algeria gains independence from France, Uganda independence from Britain.

**1963:**

Nuclear Test Ban Treaty by U.S., U.S.S.R., and Britain.  
John F. Kennedy assassinated.

*Pacem in terris*

**1964:**

Nelson Mandela and seven other black leaders sentenced to life imprisonment in South Africa.

**1965:**

Worldwide demonstrations against Vietnam War  
Civil-rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama  
Ku Klux Klan shootings in Selma  
Ian Smith unilaterally declares Rhodesia independent.

*Gaudium et spes*

**1966:**

Race riots in Chicago, Cleveland, and Brooklyn.

**Gaudium et spes**

**English title:**

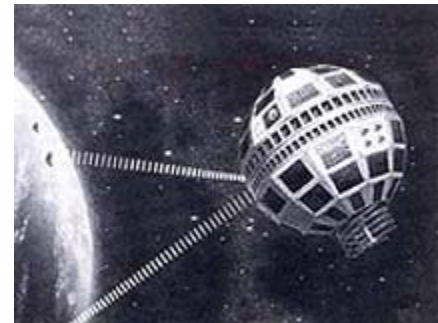
**The Church in the Modern World**

**Author: Vatican II**

*Date: December, 1965*

**Main points:** Up to all Catholics, as the "People of God," to scrutinize the great technological and social changes—good and bad—that have transformed the world. (Names some of these changes—industrialization and mass communication, e.g.—and lists many changes they've effected in turn: greater gaps between rich and poor, overpopulation, rapid growth of city life, questioning of traditional values by the younger generation, etc.)

Explores relationship between Catholic Church and humanity. (While the church isn't bound to any party or social system, its mission "begins in this world"; all people called to improve the world; Jesus is the lord of history; etc.)



Families, the foundation of society, are especially vulnerable to today's new trends; the Catholic Church should use culture more to spread the gospel; with new developments in weaponry, a new evaluation of war is needed.

**Context:** The Cold War and arms race still loom. Discussion of *Gaudium et spes* was slotted after Belgium's Cardinal Joseph Suenens spoke up after the first session of Vatican II asking that the council also address issues more "external" than liturgical change.

**Innovation:** First social teaching to represent opinions of the world's bishops.

**Trivia:** This and other Vatican II documents initiate frequent use of the phrases "People of God" and "signs of the times."

**1967-68:**

China and France join U.S., U.S.S.R., and Britain as thermonuclear powers.

**1967:**

Six-day War between Israel and neighboring Arab states.

**1968:**

Warsaw Pact troops occupy Czechoslovakia and halt "Prague Spring."  
Student protest movements in France, U.S., Germany, Japan.  
Riots in Londonderry by civil-rights demonstrators.  
"Flower power" in San Francisco.

*Populorum progressio*

**1969:**

Martial law proclaimed in Spain following riots.  
Neil Armstrong first person to walk on Moon.  
Woodstock music festival.

**Populorum progressio**

**English title:**

**The Development of Peoples**

**Author: Pope Paul VI**

*Date: March 26, 1967*

**Main points:** The church, in response to Jesus' teachings, must foster human progress—progress not understood solely in terms of economic and technological advances, but in terms of fostering full human potential (i.e., social, cultural, and spiritual). Traces world conflicts to the root cause of poverty, advocating proper development as a means to peace.

Wider disparity between rich and poor nations, exasperated by an inequity in trade relations that free trade is unable to correct: developing nations, exporters of cheap raw goods to industrialized nations, are unable to pay for expensive manufactured goods of industrialized nations.



There's an urgency to seeing to these problems, Paul VI says: growing disparity tempts the poor to violence and revolution as possible solutions.

Supports international development agencies, such as a World Fund and Food and Agriculture Organization. Since the goods of the earth belong to all, the right to private property is subordinate: "the superfluous wealth of rich countries should be placed at the service of poor nations" ( 49).

**Context:** The Vietnam War rages. African nations fighting wars of independence.

**Innovation:** First encyclical devoted specifically to the issues of international development.

**Trivia:** Coined the phrase, "development is a new word for

<p><b>1971:</b> <i>Octogesima adveniens</i>; "Justice in the World"</p> <p><b>1973-74:</b> Arab oil embargo.</p> <p><b>1974:</b> India sixth nuclear power. World economic recession.</p> <p><b>1975:</b> Vietnam War ends with South falling to communists. <i>Evangelii nuntiandi</i></p> <p><b>1978:</b> World's first "test-tube baby" born in England.</p> <p><b>1979:</b> Salt II Treaty signed by Carter and Brezhnev. Shah of Iran goes into exile. Ayatollah Khomeini returns to Iran from exile in Paris. Egypt and Israel sign peace treaty ending state of war existing since 1948. U.S. withdraws its support of Nicaragua's President Somoza; Somoza goes into exile; Sandinista government sworn in. Soviet troops in Afghanistan. Mother Teresa awarded</p>	<p>peace."</p> <p><b>Octogesima adveniens</b></p> <p><b>English title:</b> <b>A Call to Action</b></p> <p><b>Author: Pope Paul VI</b> <i>Date: May, 1971</i></p> <p><b>Main points:</b> Addresses urbanization and the new social problems it has created—such as a new loneliness and specific problems for youth, women, and the "new poor." ("New poor" includes the elderly, the handicapped, and the cities' marginalized—people disadvantaged because of urbanization.) Notes lingering discrimination because of race, origin, color, culture, sex, and religion. Stresses personal responsibility on the part of Christians in seeing that injustice is challenged. In combating injustice, need to focus on political action—not just economic action. Encourages individual Christians and local churches to apply gospel principles of justice to contemporary situations and take appropriate political action.</p> <p><b>Context:</b> The world is verging on a recession, so the "new poor" are especially vulnerable. In the U.S., follows a decade of action on behalf of civil rights, led by Martin Luther King, Jr.; coincides with the women's movement of the early 1970s and continuing student protests against the Vietnam War.</p> <p><b>Innovation:</b> The role of individual Christians in responding to injustice.</p> <p><b>Trivia:</b> This was an open apostolic letter to Cardinal Maurice Roy, president of the Pontifical Commission on Justice and Peace. Commemorates the 80th anniversary of <i>Rerum novarum</i>.</p> <p><b>"Justice In The World"</b></p> <p><b>Authors: Synod of Bishops</b></p> <p><i>Date: November 30, 1971</i></p> <p><b>Main points:</b> Dynamics of "oppression" and "liberation" discussed, as the synod remembers that God is a "liberator of the oppressed" and recognizes that structural injustices oppress</p>
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Nobel Peace Prize.

humanity. Justice is an essential ingredient to the liberation of human beings—not to mention a key expression of Christian love. Injustices catalogued: those against migrants and refugees, also human-rights violations, torture, political prisoners, etc. Since many who suffer injustice are voiceless, the church should speak on their behalf. Church must be a witness for justice—via education, international relations, and especially the way it treats its own members (particularly women and laypeople).



**Context:** Echoing not only the worldly political upheavals of the late '60s and early '70s, this document is strongly influenced by the insights of church leaders from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. "Liberation" was a strong theme of the 1968 Medellin conference of Latin American bishops, e.g.

**Innovation:** First major example of post-Vatican II episcopal collegiality.

**Trivia:** Responsible for the oft-quoted "justice . . . is a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel."

### **Evangelii nuntiandi**

#### **English title:**

**Evangelization in the Modern World**

**Author: Pope Paul VI**

*Date: October 26, 1975*

**Main points:** With a fundamental aim "to make the Church of the 20th century ever better fitted for proclaiming the Gospel to people of the 20th century," poses three "burning questions": (1) What has happened to the hidden energy of the Good News, noted for its ability to have a powerful effect on human conscience? (2) To what extent is that evangelizing force really able to transform the people of the 20th century? (3) What methods should be employed so that the power of the Gospel may realize its full effect? On evangelizers and evangelization: Jesus

<p><b>1980:</b> Solidarity union founded in Poland under Lech Walesa after two months of strikes. World Health Organization announces elimination of smallpox.</p> <p><b>1981:</b> Iran releases U.S. Embassy hostages after 444 days. <i>Laborem exercens</i></p> <p><b>1982:</b></p>	<p>proclaimed a salvation that includes liberation from all oppression, and it's the role of the church to continue that proclamation; redemption includes combating injustice; evangelization should affect human judgment, values, interests, thought, and lifestyle; evangelization important in an increasingly de-Christianized world, as important to nonpracticing Christians as to non-Christians; avenues of evangelization—homilies, personal witness, mass media, etc.—explored.</p> <p><b>Context:</b> Document itself notes cultural problems of atheistic secularism, indifference, consumerism, focus on pleasure, discrimination, and desire to dominate.</p> <p><b>Innovation:</b> Challenging injustice and preaching liberation are essential components of evangelization.</p> <p><b>Trivia:</b> Commemorates the tenth anniversary of the conclusion of Vatican II.</p> <p><b>Laborem exercens</b></p> <p><b>English title: On Human Work</b></p> <p><b>Author: Pope John Paul II</b></p> <p><i>Date: 1981</i></p> <p><b>Main points:</b> Work is at the center of the social question—the key to making life more human and the measure of human dignity. Nature of work is: (1) to fulfill the command in Genesis to "subdue the earth" and (2) to make family life possible. Criticizes both capitalism and Marxism: denounces tendency to treat humans as mere instruments of production; against collectivism; affirms right to private property yet subordinates it to the right of common use.</p> <p><b>Also:</b> work is a duty; employers need to provide for workers via good planning, unemployment benefits, and international collaboration righting imbalances in standards of living; resources must be used to create employment; wages must be sufficient to support a family, and working mothers should be afforded special consideration; workers deserve health care, right to leisure, pension, accident insurance, decent working environment; right to unionize strongly supported; disabled people should be given</p>
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<p>Solidarity outlawed by Polish government.</p> <p><b>1984:</b> AIDS virus discovered.</p> <p><b>1985:</b> Mikhail Gorbachev becomes general secretary of Communist Party of the Soviet Union.</p> <p><b>1986:</b> Haitians overthrow President "Baby Doc" Duvalier. "People Power" revolution in Philippines; Corazon Aquino becomes president. U.S. planes bomb five sites in Libya in retaliation for Berlin disco bombing. Gorbachev initiates policies of glasnost and perestroika. Andrei Sakharov, Russian physicist and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, released from exile. "Economic Justice For All"</p> <p><b>1987:</b> "Black Monday" on London Stock Market: worst day for shares this century. Iran-Contra hearings. U.S and U.S.S.R. sign historic Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces treaty to</p>	<p>opportunities to work; people have a right to leave native countries in search of a better livelihood.</p> <p><b>Context:</b> On the 90th anniversary of <i>Rerum novarum</i>, huge numbers of people are unemployed or underemployed. Migrant workers typically exploited.</p> <p><b>Innovation:</b> Concluding remarks contain a detailed "spirituality of work."</p> <p><b>Trivia:</b> 90 percent of its content is <a href="#"><i>Rerum novarum</i></a>.</p> <p><b>"Economic Justice For All"</b></p> <p><b>Authors:</b> U.S. Bishops</p> <p><i>Date: 1986</i></p> <p><b>Main points:</b> Reading the "signs of the times," many challenges to U.S. economy: central role of U.S. in a global economy; mobility of capital and technology affects jobs worldwide; depletion of natural resources; American Dream unrealized for millions because of high unemployment and harsh poverty; economic life doesn't support family life; investment of nation's resources into arms production contributes to hardship; values are a concern. A Christian vision of economic life says: inequalities of income, consumption, privilege, and power should be examined; poor should have the single most urgent claim on the conscience of the nation; the poor and excluded rate an investment of wealth, talent, and energy—should be allowed active participation in the economy. Right to employment; need to create new jobs, provide training, remove barriers to equal employment. Need to re-evaluate tax and welfare systems to provide services and human dignity. Family farms and farmworkers supported. U.S. should be fairer in trade with developing nations. Church must model good management, fair wages, and ethical investment.</p> <p><b>Context:</b>In 1986, 33 million are poor, 20 to 30 million are needy. Unemployment reaches 8 million.</p> <p><b>Innovation:</b> The church, as investor and employer, must practice what it preaches.</p>
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reduce nuclear arsenals.  
First intifada, Palestinian uprising against Israeli rule, begins and lasts until 1993

*Sollicitudo rei socialis*

**1988:**

Soviets begin withdrawal from Afghanistan.

**1989:**

Tiananmen Square Massacre in Beijing, China following demonstrations for democracy.

First noncommunist prime minister of Poland since World War II.

Opening of Hungarian border brings mass exodus of East Germans into West Germany.

Vietnamese troops complete withdrawal from Cambodia after 10 years of occupation.

East German Communist Party leader forced to resign.

Berlin Wall comes down after 28 years.

Czechoslovakia's

Communist Party leaders resign.

Romania's Communist dictator executed.

U.S. invasion of Panama.

Terrorists take down Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing 270. Libya claimed responsibility in 2003.

**1990:**

**Trivia:** As they have done with other pastoral letters, the bishops consulted widely with business leaders, experts, officials, etc.

**Sollicitudo rei socialis**

**English title:**

**On Social Concern**

**Author: Pope John Paul II**

*Date: December 30, 1987*



**Main points:** While praising the optimism and innovation of *Populorum progressio*—the document being commemorated—notes serious backsliding on issues of development. Twenty years' worth of

unfulfilled hopes include: obvious gap between northern and southern hemispheres, global debt (forcing nations to export capital), unemployment and underemployment. Should be a unity of the world—not a "First World," "Second World," "Third World," or "Fourth World." Outright underdevelopment abounds, a result of the ideological opposition existing between East-West blocs and their strong penchants to militarism ("wars by proxy"), imperialism, neo-colonialism, and exaggerated concerns for security. Their competition blocks cooperation and solidarity. Chastises the West for abandoning itself to a growing, selfish isolation. Chastises the East for ignoring its duty to alleviate human misery. In fueling the arms trade, both blocs contribute to refugee populations and increased terrorism. Emergence of "superdevelopment," an excessive availability of goods leading to consumerism and waste; existence of "structures of sin"; international trade discriminates against developing countries.

**Context:** World economy is in flux—debt, unemployment, and recession hitting affluent and poor nations alike.

**Innovation:** The "structures of sin" insight.

**Trivia:** 1987 is the International Year of The Homeless in the U.S.

South Africa's Nelson Mandela freed from prison after 26 years.  
Lithuania declares independence from U.S.S.R.  
Free elections in Romania, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria.  
Iraq invades Kuwait;  
U.S. and allies send troops to Persian Gulf region.  
Unification of East and West Germany.

**1991:**

Persian Gulf War;  
Kuwait liberated,  
civil war in Iraq.  
South African Parliament repeals apartheid laws.  
Cease-fire ends Persian Gulf war.  
Boris Yeltsin becomes the first freely elected president of Russia Republic;  
Soviet Russia breaks up after President Gorbachev's resignation.

**1992:**

Bush and Yeltsin proclaim a formal end to the Cold War.  
U.S. forces leave Philippines after almost a century of American military presence.  
North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is signed against warnings of its possible destruction of the Mexican economy.  
A text-based Web browser

**Centesimus annus**

**English title:**  
**The Hundredth Year**

**Author: Pope John Paul II**

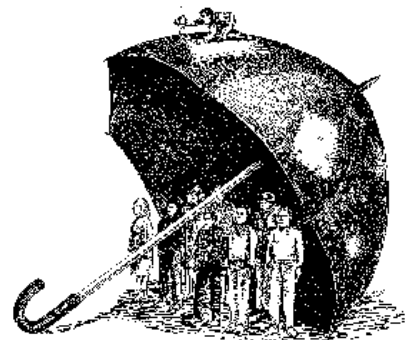
*Date: May 1, 1991*

**Main points:** Marking the 100th anniversary of Catholic social teaching—thus using Leo XIII's *Rerum novarum* as its frame of reference—looks to the 'new things' (*rerum novarum*) shaping the world today. While democracy and social conflict are each discussed, the fall of "real socialism" in the Eastern Bloc nations invites a lengthy discussion of communism and capitalism. The "fundamental error of socialism" is that it's based on an atheistic view of humanity instead of a transcendent one; leads to a "social order without reference to the person's dignity and responsibility." Distinguishing, on the one hand, between "unbridled," "radical," or "primitive" capitalism and, on the other hand, a "business economy" that serves and protects the human person, "it would appear that, on the level of individual nations and international relations, the free market is the most efficient instrument for utilizing resources and effectively responding to needs" (#34). Capitalism also recognizes the freedom of the human person. Warns, however, against: (1) The consumeristic tendency of modern capitalistic societies, saying it cheapens the person, harms society, and ultimately poisons the planet. (2) Elevating capitalism, as an economic tool, to the level of an all-encompassing ideology.

**Context:** The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe.

**Innovation:** While careful not to give a blanket endorsement, notes the benefits of capitalism as an economic system.

**Trivia:** Says modern times bring a new form of ownership—"the possession of know-how, technology, and skill" (#32).



is made available to the public; within a few years, millions of people become regular users of the World Wide Web.

*The Catechism of the Catholic Church, Second Edition*

**1993:**

European Union is created

**1994:**

More than 500,000 die in Rwanda massacre

Nelson Mandela elected president of South Africa

IRA declares ceasefire in Northern Ireland

FDA approves the first genetically-engineered food product, the Flavr Savr tomato.

**1995:**

Mexico's struggling economy receives a \$20 billion aid program from the U.S.

More than 8,000 Muslims are slaughtered by the Serbs in Bosnian Genocide

Oklahoma City federal building is bombed by terrorist Timothy McVeigh  
*Evangelium Vitae (Gospel of Life)*

**The Catechism of the Catholic Church, Second Edition**

**Author: The Vatican**

*Date: 1992*

**Main Points:** Using the traditional four pillars of catechism – the profession of faith (the Creed), the sacraments of faith, the life of faith (the Commandments), and the prayer of the faithful (the Lord's Prayer) – an organic, all-encompassing synthesis of the essential and fundamental contents of Catholic doctrine are presented with new insight and reflections gained from the Second Vatican Council. The church and her faithful are called to engage in the world and in the lives of the poor and defenseless. Solidarity with the poor is a condition for entering God's Kingdom; right to property does not supersede a universal destination of goods; and three forms of justice – commutative, legal, distributive – are defined. Elements of the Commandments and Lord's Prayer are broken down line by line and related to social sins of the modern world.

**Context:** Misinterpretations develop after the Second Vatican Council, so the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops calls for a renewal and update of Catholic doctrine in light of the Council. Pope John Paul II answers with the Second Edition of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

**Innovation:** The tenets of Catholic Social Teaching are now clearly located in Catholic Catechism and reinforced as ecclesial mission.

**Trivia:** Stephen M. Colecchi summarizes excerpts from the Catechism in his work titled *Catholic Social Teaching: The Catechism's Best Kept Secret*. The ecclesial mission of social justice is now fondly referred to as the Catholic Church's "best kept secret."

**Evangelium Vitae**

**English title:  
Gospel of Life**

**Author: Pope John Paul II**

*Date: 1995*

<p><b>1996:</b>  Outbreak of “mad cow” disease alarms Britain and world  Militant leaders seize Afghan capital of Kabul  The first sheep cloned from adult cells is born and named “Dolly”</p> <p><b>1997:</b>  Hong Kong returns to Chinese rule  Israeli government approves Jewish settlement in East Jerusalem only one month after giving up large portions of West Bank city of Hebron in <i>Hebron Agreement</i>  <i>Called to Global Solidarity: International Challenges for U.S. Parishes</i></p> <p><b>1998:</b>  Good Friday accord is reached in Northern Ireland  Europeans agree on a single currency—the euro</p> <p><b>1999:</b>  War erupts in Kosovo with Yugoslavia’s president Milosevic massacring and deporting ethnic Albanians. NATO responds in what is believed to be first humanitarian war.  The number of internet users worldwide reach 150</p>	<p><b>Main Points:</b> This document supports the respect life movement, and addresses other social issues that threaten life. The Gospel of Life is at the heart of Jesus’ message and the church mission. It is our call as church people to profess this gospel in all aspects that threaten life, particularly the lives of the poor, defenseless, marginalized, and oppressed. We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers and "our freedom has a relational dimension; ...[not] a notion of freedom which exalts the isolated individual in an absolute way, and gives no place to solidarity, to openness to others, and service of them." Warns that losing the sense of God in our lives leads to materialism, individualism, utilitarianism, and hedonism as we exchange the sense of awe in the mystery of "being" for the sense of power based on accumulation. We are called to examine not only our individual conscience, but the "moral conscience" of society that supports the "structures of sin." Life, and all that sustains it, is sacred and must be valued as such.</p> <p><b>Context:</b> Western developed nations exhibit a growing refusal to acknowledge the universal right to life through increasing numbers of abortions, euthanasia, death penalty, and torture. They also remain oblivious to their implications in genocide (Rwanda) and escalating wars in impoverished areas.</p> <p><b>Innovation:</b> Makes a clear statement that the death penalty is only allowable “when it would not be possible otherwise to defend society.”</p> <p><b>Trivia:</b> Coined the phrase “Culture of Death”</p> <p><b>Called to Global Solidarity: International Challenges for U.S. Parishes</b></p> <p><b>Author:</b> USCCB</p> <p><i>Date: 1997</i></p> <p><b>Main Points:</b> Intended for pastors, parish leaders, and other involved Catholics, this document challenges parishes that act as "islands of local religious activity rather than as parts of the mystical body of Christ." The signs of the times present an increasingly dire condition, internationally. Our nation’s tendency toward isolationism leads to either indifference toward global solidarity or dominion over the world as a global market for our</p>
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<p>million, 50% of whom are from the U.S.</p> <p><b>2000:</b>  Presidents of North and South Korea sign peace accord  <i>Second Intifada</i>, violent uprising of Palestinians against Israel, begins and last until 2005.  World leaders agree to <i>UN Millennium Development Goals</i>, to be met by 2015.</p> <p><b>2001:</b>  Al-Qaeda terrorists kill almost 3,000 people in September 11 attack  U.S. war in Afghanistan begins  <i>Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good</i></p>	<p>goods and services. Provides a firm and clear definition of solidarity, calls for parishes to be "more Catholic and less parochial" and to follow the lead of those parishes that include global solidarity in their ministry. Because of the world's increased communication and interdependent economy, we need to respond to more than just the victims of natural disasters, but to those "victimized by the less visible disasters caused by structural injustice, such as debt, ethnic conflict, and arms trade." Along with our individual responsibility toward solidarity, the parish is also reminded of its call to focus common prayer, religious resource, spirituality, and action toward the pursuit of global solidarity.</p> <p><b>Context:</b> Approaching the Jubilee Year, 2000, the bishops hoped to strengthen parishes' understanding of and commitment to global solidarity. World is becoming increasingly interconnected through communications technology and economic relationships.</p> <p><b>Innovation:</b> Offers a framework for anchoring, teaching, living, investing, practicing, and promoting solidarity.</p> <p><b>Trivia:</b> Clearly points the finger when stating: "The United States ranks first in the world in the weapons we sell to poor nations yet near last in the proportion of our resources we devote to development for the poor."</p> <p><b>Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good</b></p> <p><b>Author:</b> USCCB</p> <p><i>Date: 2001</i></p> <p><b>Main Points:</b> This letter is a call from the bishops for a new and genuine dialogue on environmental issues, utilizing the wisdom offered by science, while not neglecting the voices of the poor and those most vulnerable to climate change. "It is about the future of God's creation and the one human family." Our responsibility to the earth is made greater by our abundance and blessings. Addressing climate change and Catholic Social Teaching, the bishops expound on the universal common good, stewardship of God's creation, protecting the environment for future generations, population and authentic development, and care for the poor/issues of equity. "Action to mitigate global</p>
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<p><b>2002:</b>  U.S. and Russia agree to cut both countries' nuclear arsenals up to 2/3 over the next 10 years  North Korea admits to developing nuclear arms  Archbishop Cardinal Bernard Law resigns as a result of the Catholic Church's sexual abuse scandals and cover-up of priest-child molestation  <i>The Participation of Catholics in Political Life</i></p> <p><b>2003:</b>  U.S. and Britain launch war</p>	<p>climate change must be built upon a foundation of social and economic justice that does not put the poor at greater risk or place disproportionate and unfair burdens on developing nations."</p> <p><b>Context:</b> President Bush pulls the U.S. out of the Kyoto Protocol treaty of 2001, while 178 nations push ahead to rescue and agree upon a climate accord. Bush states concern over US economy as a reason for withdrawal since developing nations (China and India included) are not subjected to the same emissions control policies.</p> <p><b>Innovation:</b> Bishops acknowledge and endorse the development of international non-faith-based negotiations, listing the Earth Summit of 1992 which involved more than 160 nations and the Kyoto Protocol of 1997. States that "the United States should lead the developed nations in contributing to the sustainable economic development of poorer nations and to help build their capacity to ease climate change."</p> <p><b>Trivia:</b> A "sidebar" that appears after the conclusion delves into the "Science of Global Climate Change." Although often criticized for going "beyond their expertise" when examining issues of politics and economy, the bishops maintain their resolve by entering into discussions about the science of environment.</p> <p><b>The Participation of Catholics in Political Life</b></p> <p><b>Author:</b> Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith</p> <p><i>Date: 2002</i></p> <p><b>Main Points:</b> Challenges the tendency toward "relativism," the ethical pluralism that weaves around reason and natural moral law in pursuit of autonomous decision making. The church supports democracy as "the best expression of the direct participation of citizens in political choices." With it comes a responsibility to work toward the integral promotion of the human person and the common good. "A political commitment to a single isolated aspect of the church's social doctrine does not exhaust one's responsibility towards the common good." This document calls for Christians to engage in public and political life so that moral anarchy does not result, reminding us that in seeking a holy city which is to come we cannot evade our responsibility to our earthly city.</p>
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against Iraq; Saddam Hussein is later captured by American troops  
*Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility*  
*Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope*

**Context:** As challenges arise with Catholics involved in public and political life, this statement reminds us of our obligation to remain involved and also to remain true to our Catholic beliefs.

**Innovation:** Although one would expect it to focus solely on the most divisive political topics – abortion and homosexual unions – other topics are squarely centered in the same document: freedom from modern forms of slavery, religious freedom, economy, and peace as "the work of justice."

**Trivia:** 'Modern forms of slavery' is used as an expression of drug abuse and prostitution

### **Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility**

**Author:** USCCB

*Date:* 2003

**Main Points:** "The purpose of the statement is to communicate the church's teaching that every Catholic is called to an active and faith-filled citizenship, based upon a properly informed conscience, in which each disciple of Christ publicly witnesses to the church's commitment to human life and dignity with special preference for the poor and the vulnerable." The first Faithful Citizenship statement was printed in 1999 for the 2000 election; however it was actually a new form of an old tradition – Political Responsibility statements – issued every 4 years by the USCCB since 1976. Though relatively unknown in its earlier years of printing, this statement became instrumental in recent years as many Catholics questioned the morality of voting for one candidate over another. As in the earlier document from the CDF, this statement warns against ignoring other issues of human dignity in support of one single issue. "A fundamental measure of our society is how we care for and stand with the poor and vulnerable."

**Context:** As the political parties jockey for "the Catholic vote" – the largest denomination in the country – issues become increasingly polarizing in politics and churches.

**Innovation:** Utilizing the advanced technology for communication, the bishops create a website *Faithful Citizenship*

offering access to the statement, tools for teaching about the statement, prayer suggestions and media resources.

**Trivia:** The statement released for the 2008 election uses the word "evil" 16 times, an increase over previous statements. The term "intrinsic evil" is connected to five specific issues: abortion, human cloning, euthanasia, destruction to human embryos, and racism.

### **Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope**

**Author: USCCB & Conferencia del Episcopado Mexicano**

*Date: 2003*

**Main Point:** This landmark letter jointly composed by the U.S. and Mexican bishops confirms the migration between the two countries as both necessary and beneficial. Challenges the less than humane experiences the migrants encounter. Stories of migration are recalled from the Old and New Testament. Migration is analyzed in light of Catholic Social Teaching; that people have the right to find opportunities in their homeland; have the right to migrate to support themselves and their families; should be afforded protection and respect; and that sovereign nations have the right to control their borders. "The church recognizes the right of sovereign nations to control their territories but rejects such control when it is exerted merely for the purpose of acquiring additional wealth." As with all social justice actions, this letter addresses the root causes of migration. Suggestions are made for creating a just system of legalization and a more humane and compassionate border enforcement policy. The bishops call the faithful to be converted in mind and heart by recognizing Christ in the migrant; conversion leading to communion is expressed through hospitality and solidarity.

**Context:** Immigration policies move to the forefront of our national political scene as the numbers of undocumented immigrants continue to grow.

**Innovation:** USCCB works in conjunction with another ecclesial conference (Mexican bishops); offers concrete steps for action and advocacy rather than solely theological reflection and principles.

**2004:**

Terrorist attacks on trains in Spain kill more than 200  
Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon announces plan to unilaterally withdraw from Gaza strip

Enormous tsunami devastates Asia; 200,000 killed

U.S. troops hand over power to Iraqi interim government but stay in country. Abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib revealed.

*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*

**Trivia:** A notation in the middle of the letter offers special consideration to the ancestral homeland of Native American nations that stretch across the United States and Mexico without a border. "Tribal members rights to travel freely throughout the land they have inhabited for one thousand years should be respected."

**Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church**

**Author: Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace**

*Date: 2004*

**Main Points:** The family, peace, human rights, work, and politics are a major focus of this work. It was developed with the vision of the human person and society that reflects God's Kingdom. There are twelve chapters divided into three sections. The first section presents God's Plan of Love for Humanity. The second section focuses on the more specific issues of social justice, namely the Family, Human Work, Economic Life, The Political Community, the International Community, the Environment, and Peace. The final section delves into Social Doctrine and Ecclesial Action. The Analytical Index puts at one's fingertips statements or scripture in church history that support any and all social justice topics. Systematically presents the foundations of Catholic Social Teaching—"which are based on the natural law, are then seen to be confirmed and strengthened, in the faith of the Church, by the Gospel of Christ."

**Context:** The pace of global communication, experience, and economy increases exponentially. With it come newer forms of exploitation, instability, poverty, and even slavery. The Church calls upon the faithful "to do all they can to bring about an authentic civilization oriented ever more towards integral human development in solidarity."

**Innovation:** A unique, unprecedented document in the history of the church, serves as a tool to inspire and guide the faithful.

**Trivia:** With 255 pages of social doctrine and 191 pages of indexes, this work represents the largest body of information and resource developed by the Catholic Church.

<p><b>2005:</b>  The Sudanese government and Southern rebels sign a peace agreement to end a 20-year civil war that has killed 2 million people  Terrorist bombs in London kill 52 people and wound almost 700  Hurricane Katrina devastates New Orleans and gulf region  The Terry Schiavo case ends with her death after 15 years on life support.  <i>Deus Caritas Est (God is Love)</i></p>	<p><b>Deus Caritas Est</b></p> <p><b>English title:</b>  <b>God is Love</b></p> <p><b>Author: Pope Benedict XVI</b></p> <p><i>Date: 2005</i></p> <p><b>Main Points:</b> Benedict's first encyclical reveals the "teacher" and intellectual that he is as he devotes the majority of it to explaining the true meaning of the words Eros (love of attraction – ascending love) and Agape (self-sacrificing love of the other – descending love). Eros has been misinterpreted over the years and Benedict works to realign it as a reflection of divine love. When following Christ, Eros is transformed into Agape – love for one's neighbor – and love of God and neighbor are truly united; "the essence of the love of God and of one's neighbor described in the Bible is the center of Christian life, it is the fruit of faith." Since this is also the mission of the Church, ecclesial charity is clarified while endorsing the separation of Church and State. However, the lay faithful have the "direct duty to work for a just ordering of society." Details are given in regards to the "multiple structures of," "distinctiveness of," and "those responsible" for the church's charitable activity. With this illumination of the true meaning of love – Agape – the faithful are reminded that our work for justice offers us humility, must come from a place of love, and is impossible to accomplish without God's hand.</p> <p><b>Context:</b> Less than a year into office, this encyclical is Pope Benedict's capstone to a year which witnessed continued worldwide aid to the victims of the Tsunami, Hurricane Katrina, and Pakistani earthquake, the Sudanese government signing a peace agreement, Iran's newly elected president pursuing development of nuclear weapons, and Israeli forces evacuating 8,000 Israeli settlers from the Gaza.</p> <p><b>Innovation:</b> In an attempt to transcend time and cultural boundaries, Benedict's first 16 citations are not from scripture or doctrine, but from authors that reflect all of humanity and human culture: Nietzsche, Virgil, Descartes, Gregory the Great, Aristotle, Plato, and Sallust are just a few of them.</p> <p><b>Trivia:</b> Love is service. Our relationship with God (our Love of God) is only as good as our relationship (or love) of those around us.</p>
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## Catholic Coalition on Climate Change

**Author:** USCCB

*Date:* 2006

### **2006:**

Iran president confirms that is has successfully enriched uranium

North Korea fires missiles over the Sea of Japan; India launches a missile with a range of 1,800 miles

Catholic Coalition on Climate Change

### **2007:**

Worst financial crisis since the Great Depression begins in U.S. and affects entire world economy.

Violence breaks out between rival tribes in Kenya following election, leaving more than 800 dead  
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change releases study finding that climate change is very likely caused by human activity and can be curtailed with quick action. U.N. panel agrees.

### **2008:**

Cuban president Fidel Castro permanently steps down after 49 years in power due to physical illness

Senator Barack Obama elected first African

**Main Points:** Launched in partnership with the National Religious Partnership for the Environment, this website aims at aiding the U.S. Conference of Bishops and the Catholic community as they address issues of climate change and its impact. Catholic Principles and Social Teachings are utilized, in particular: Prudence – thoughtful, deliberate, and reasoned action; Poverty – concern for those least able to bear the burden; and the Common Good – promotion of solidarity over self-interest. Although it is a website and not an actual document or encyclical, regular release of statements and action alerts continue to reflect the church position on care for the earth through the USCCB’s Office of Social Development and World Peace and the bishops’ Environmental Justice Program.

**Context:** The United States has a carbon footprint five times that of China, and over 15 times that of India. The 23 million residents of the U.S. state of Texas alone emit more carbon dioxide than the entire population of sub-Saharan Africa, which is 720 million people. [infoplease.com](http://infoplease.com)

**Innovation:** Utilizing web technology to make information, organizing and advocacy as easy as possible. [Catholics and Climate Change](#)

**Trivia: A [Catholic Climate Covenant](#):** The St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor is introduced with the tag line: “Who’s under your carbon footprint?”

<p>American president of the U.S.  Earthquake in China kills an estimated 68,000</p> <p><b>2009:</b>  H1N1 (swine flu) has killed at least 150 people in Mexico, sending fear around world  Massive protests and arrests follow Iranian president Ahmadinejad election, thought to be rigged.  Obama orders ban of coercive interrogation methods and closing of all secret prisons and detention camps run by the CIA, including Guantanamo Bay prison in Cuba.</p> <p><i>Caritas in Veritate (In Charity and Truth)</i></p>	<p><b>Caritas in Veritate</b></p> <p><b>English title:</b>  <b>In Charity and Truth</b></p> <p><b>Author: Pope Benedict XVI</b></p> <p><i>Date: 2009</i></p> <p><b>Main Points:</b> Support for major structural reform of the global economy is stated throughout—the economic sphere "must be structured and governed in ethical manners." As in his first encyclical (<i>Deus Caritas Est</i>), Pope Benedict XVI is our teacher again; there is substantial misinterpretation of the word charity among the faithful and his aim is to teach the correct meaning of the word – hence, the title. True charity is more than giving away from one’s excess. It is living in relationship and solidarity with the marginalized. He quotes from <i>Populorum Progressio</i> often as he challenges "social action [that] ends up serving private interests and the logic of power, resulting in social fragmentation." He suggests market structures that would put integral human development as a central objective of economic activity and calls for building relationships of "gratuitousness, mercy, and communion," not just rights and duties. Care for the earth is included in the call to live in relationship.</p> <p><b>Context:</b> Economic crisis in the United States that eventually affects the entire world economy.</p> <p><b>Innovation:</b> Reminds the faithful that purchasing is a moral – not simply economic – act: "in commercial relationships the principle of gratuitousness and the logic of gift as an expression of fraternity can and must find their place within normal economic activity."</p> <p><b>Trivia:</b> Pope Benedict XVI delayed the publication of this encyclical so that the repercussions of the economic crisis could be included in his analysis and proposals. This encyclical stifled any doubt of Benedict's commitment to the ecclesial mission of social justice.</p>
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