Creating a Country: Part 2

OPENING PRAYER
Reader 1: In all holiness we are called to share in creation.
All: We are called to solidarity, to build a new creation.

Reader 2: In all holiness we are called to create a just society which allows for the human dignity of all; that provides life, food, and freedom for people to walk in their own land.
All: We are called to solidarity, to build a new creation.

Reader 3: We are called to reject the false gods of economic and political systems that destroy rather than lift up your children.
All: We are called to solidarity, to build a new creation.

Reader 4: We are called to study and understand our role as citizens of our country and of the world.
All: We are called to solidarity, to build a new creation.

Reader 6: Jesus, you call us to build anew our systems and structures to reflect your justice and peace. Inspire us to live as you lived, to comfort as you comforted, to challenge as you challenged. Guide us and keep us faithful in our work to create a more just world.
All: Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER
For the times when we have taken people’s rights for granted,

Lord, have mercy.

For the times when we have not recognized nor acted for the common good,

Christ, have mercy.

For the times when we have not recognized our own dignity as responsible citizens,

Lord, have mercy.

Have mercy on us and grant us wisdom to discern the important values we want to actualize in our local and our global communities. Grant us all an awareness of our, and our neighbors’, human dignity. Guide us in being responsible, creative, and committed citizens who work for the common good of all God’s children. Amen

REFLECTION
Solidarity is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.

Pope John Paul II, Sollicituo Rei Socialis, #38
Activity: Creating a Country, Part 2  Policies

Aim: To increase awareness of the values of Catholic Social Teaching and of Human Rights, and to discern how these values and rights are articulated and supported in society.

Material Needed: Photocopies of pages 5 (Developing Policy) and 5 (Examples of Social Policies of Various Countries)

Background: This process goes through several sessions, looking at values and priorities in both the domestic realm and especially in the global context. The group representing their newly created country will make decisions on whether or not to join the UN and/or the WTO, to take a loan from the World Bank and/or IMF, etc.

Participants will work in small groups (from 4 to 6 people) that will remain the same throughout the process. Their country will be in the Global South, the developing part of the world. Like most developing countries, it will have been formerly a colony of a developed Northern country.

After completing Part I and determining what values that will be the basis for the country’s systems, structures and processes, values they want mentioned in their constitution and the rights they want in their Bill of Rights, your groups will be ready for the second part of the process, below.

Procedure for Part II:
1. Begin with the opening prayer and reflection on page 1.

2. Tell participants they will be continuing a process of creating and developing a country, a process that began (see Part I) with deciding what basic values and rights the small groups involved want to include in their countries. Have the members of the small groups to briefly review what decisions were made last time and why.

3. Have the small group members read the information on policy formation and the questions on page 5. These will lead them to examine both social issues and the importance of policy development. Encourage them to review the values of Catholic Social Teaching (page 3) and the rights promoted by CST (page 4) to guide them. Encourage them to develop at least one domestic policy and one policy on aid to countries in need and/or in poverty. Allow adequate time for discussions and discernment. (You may have to allow two sessions for this activity if you have limited time.)

4. Have the groups report on the policies they have adopted.
   a. Briefly, discuss where there are similarities among the groups’ choices.
   b. Ask if some participants can articulate what they have learned from this exercise.
   c. Tell them that at the next session they will draft a budget for their country.

6. End with the closing prayer on page 1.
GLOBAL SOLIDARITY: GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Values in Catholic Social Teaching

• The dignity of every human person, whatever her/his race, class, gender, age, status, etc.

• Authentic human development, which is greater than economic development and embraces the social, cultural, political and spiritual dimensions of human life. It supports the development of everyone’s skills and talents for service to the common good, not simply for profit.

• The dignity of work: work is essential for the development of the human person. “Work must be organized to serve the worker’s humanity, support their family life, and increase the common good of the human community. Workers have the right to organize and form unions to achieve these goals.” (On Human Work)

• People should always take priority over products, profits and production systems. (On Human Work)

• The common good, a challenge to the pursuit of the individual good; the common good supports all of the conditions of social living through which each and every person can be enabled to achieve the authentic human development God intends for them.

• Participation in decision making, through democratic processes, in all levels of government (local, state, national) and in international bodies.

• Sharing in the responsibilities of creating the common good and of government.

• Human Rights, both political and civil rights, and also economic, social and cultural rights.

• Subsidiarity, which places a proper limit on government by insisting that no higher level of organization should perform any function that can be handled efficiently and effectively at a lower level of organization by human persons who, individually or in groups, are closer to the problems and closer to the ground.

• Special concern for those in poverty.

• Solidarity, which means promoting the rights and development of all people across communities, nations and the world.

• Peacemaking and supporting cooperation rather than conflict.

• Care for creation, respecting and sharing the resources of the earth and promoting environmentally and socially sustainable patterns of consumption.

Source: Catholic Social Teaching, Our Best Kept Secret, Orbis Press
**Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

1. Are born free and should all be treated in the same way
2. Are equal despite difference in race, sex, language, etc.
3. Have the right to life and to live in freedom and safety
4. Should be free from slavery
5. Should not be subjected to torture
6. Have the right to be recognized before the law
7. Have the right to be treated equally before the law
8. Have the right to ask for legal help when their rights are not respected
9. Have the right to not be imprisoned unjustly
10. Have the right to a fair trial
11. Have the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty
12. Have the right to privacy
13. Have the right to travel within, and to and from, their own country
14. Have the right to political asylum
15. Have the right to a nationality
16. Have the right to marry
17. Have the right to own property
18. Have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion
19. Have the right to freedom of opinion and expression
20. Have the right to meet with others
21. Have the right to take part in government matters and to vote
22. Have the right to social security (i.e., to have basic needs met)
23. Have the right to work and to join a trade union
24. Have the right to rest and leisure
25. Have the right to an adequate standard of living and medical help
26. Have the right to an education
27. Have the right to take part in their community’s cultural life
28. Are entitled to a social and international order that can provide these rights
29. Must respect the rights of others

Note: in 1966, the United Nations developed the “International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights”, emphasizing the right to work, to adequate food and shelter, to health care and to education. The UN has also developed covenants on the rights of women, of children, and the right to a healthy environment.

**Rights Set Forth in Catholic Social Teaching**

In his encyclical *On the Condition of Labor* (1891), Pope Leo XIII affirms that the human person has “the rights to food, clothing, shelter and a living wage.”

In his encyclicals in the 1930s, Pius XI focuses on the right to live, the right to the economic means to live with dignity, the right to follow one’s path marked out by God, the right to free association and the right to possess and use property.

Pope Pius XII, in 1942, emphasized the right to maintain and develop one’s life in all ways, the right to work and freely choose one’s path in life, the right to marry and have a family.

In 1963, in *Peace on Earth*, Pope John XXIII calls for civil, political, social and cultural rights for every human person, including the right to life and bodily integrity; the right to food, clothing, shelter, rest, medical care, education and social services; the right to respect; the right to freedom in searching for the truth, expressing one’s opinion and worshipping freely; the right to work for a just wage in a safe environment.


In 1975, The Vatican publishes *The Church and Human Rights*, supporting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and calling attention to the rights of women and of minorities.

In 1991, Pope John Paul, in his encyclical marking 100 years of Catholic Social Teaching, declares the right to ownership must be balanced with the common good of all and affirms the right to share in work than makes wise use of the earth’s resources.

In 2000, Pope John Paul II reminds us that food, health care, education and work are “fundamental rights,” and calls for support of the UN in promoting human rights.
Developing Policies

What is policy? Policy is a clear statement of specific principles and objectives of a government or group designed to guide present and future actions.

Example: Because the U.S. believes democracy and economic development depends on well-educated citizens, the U.S. policy on education includes providing free PK-12 education and some support to colleges and universities.

How is policy formed? Policy formation is the process of considering alternative policy options and then choosing to implement one or a combination of them. In the process of policy formation,

1) Policy analysts identify issues and options, investigate the merits of each, and try to understand to what consequences the policies would lead.

2) Policy makers receive the information, research, and suggestions of the policy analysts and create policies based on the information, their particular intentions, and the feedback of their constituents.

What will be your policy regarding these issues:

1) Health care?, 2) Education?, 3) Poverty?, 4) Housing?, 5) Aid to other countries?

Go through the following steps to answer these questions.

I. Review of existing policies: See page 6 and 7 for some examples.
   a) Do you how know how any of these policies have worked? What positive or negative unexpected consequences have resulted from these policies?

II. Policy analysis:
   a) For one or more of the issues numbered above, consider options based on the values and rights you founded your country on and you hold important.
   b) Discuss the positive merits of each option and the advantages and disadvantages of each option, especially for the various demographic populations in your country (i.e., women, children, minority groups, those in poverty, the elderly, those with serious illnesses, etc.).

III. Policy making:
   a) Decide what policy you think is best on each issue.
   b) Before you officially adopt it, decide how you will get feedback from the general public about the policy: how will you ensure that all interest groups have equal access to information about the policy and adequate ways of giving their feedback? Will you regulate lobbying by special interest groups? How will you do this?
   c) How will you make a final decision if you have both positive and negative feedback on the policy?

What is your final policy/policies?
Examples of Social Policies of Various Countries

**United States**
Education—free PreK-12 through public schools
Health Care—No universal health care. Medicaid provides medical assistance for families in poverty. Medicare is the federal health insurance for people over 65.

Poverty—Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) provides monthly cash assistance for poor families with children under the age of 18. A family of three (a mother and two children) may qualify for TANF if their gross income is below $784 a month and assets are worth less than $1,000.

Housing—Under Section 8 housing, people in poverty may qualify for reduced rent in limited units available.

**United Kingdom**
Education—Education is free for all children 5 to 19. Universities are subsidized; an undergraduate degree costs about $5000 total.
Health Care—The National Health Service provides free health care for all.

Percent of GNI spent on international aid: .32%

**Canada**
Education—free primary and secondary education; subsidized, low-tuition university system.
Health Care—free health care for all.

Poverty—provide social assistance programs and funds to families in poverty.

**Poland**
Education—free primary and secondary schools; low-cost university system
Health Care—free health care for all.

Poverty—Welfare and “social transfer” system.

**France**
Education—free primary and secondary schools. Public universities have free tuition.
Health Care—free health care for all.

Poverty—Welfare and social protection systems.

**South Africa**
Health Care—Very basic health care is provided free by the state.

Developed nations agreed to use .7% of their annual Gross National Products (GNPs) for Official Development Assistance (ODA) to other countries. This chart shows that almost all of these nations fall short of the target level.

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<th>Country</th>
<th>ODA as GNP Percentage</th>
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<td>Norway</td>
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Examples of Social Policies of Various Countries (continued)

GDP = Gross Domestic Product

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<th>Country</th>
<th>Total GDP (in millions of dollars)</th>
<th>Total Debt</th>
<th>% GDP used to service the debt</th>
<th>% GDP used for military spending</th>
<th>% GDP used for development</th>
<th>% GDP used for education</th>
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Source: http://www.alboan.org