

Social Justice

Lesson 24 Summary

Lesson Learning Objectives

- The participants will explore the biblical roots of social justice.
- The participants will examine the four key concepts of Catholic social teaching.
- The participants will understand that both service and justice are integral to bringing about social justice.

Content Summary

1. When we say that we are made in the image and likeness of God, it means that we reflect what God is like. The Trinity tells us that God isn't just a lone individual; God is a community of persons, living in perfect love and charity.
2. Our love for God must translate into a love for all people and a commitment to treat them justly.
3. The moral principles God calls society to follow and the moral judgments God calls society to make in order to ensure the God-given rights of individuals and groups is called social justice.
4. Social justice has deep roots in the Bible, including such passages as Isaiah 58:6–7 (false and true worship), Amos 5:11–12 (injustice will be repaid), Luke 14:13–14 (welcoming the lowly), Luke 16:19–31 (the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus), and Matthew 25:31–46 (the Last Judgment).
5. Catholic social justice teachings are based on some key concepts: the common good, political responsibility, human dignity, and solidarity. By applying these concepts to different social issues, the Church makes judgments about the correct direction to follow.
6. We must try to alleviate immediate human needs by giving food to the hungry, clothing to the naked, comfort to the sick and the imprisoned, and so on. This is sometimes called the work of service, or charity.
7. We must also work to change the structures of society that keep people hungry or poor or cause them to commit crimes. This is called the work of justice.
8. Both service and justice are needed as part of our response to social injustice. Works of service are more immediate, and often the results are easier to see. Works of justice are more long term and more complex to deal with, and the results may never come. Together charity and justice are like two feet that walk together in our faith.

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