What is CST? Catholic Social Teaching.

Teaching: Writings by Popes and other Catholic leaders.

Catholic: Often these writings are ‘encyclicals’ (long ‘letters’ written by Popes to the Church and the world).

Social: About ISSUES (poverty, hunger, conflict, workers’ rights, environment, migration, trade…) that affect society.

Catholic Social Teaching – Boring? NO! It’s RADICAL! If everyone put CST into action it would transform the world.

CST reads the signs of the times in the light of scripture.

For example:

In the 1960s, on his travels around the world, Pope Paul saw for himself the impacts of poverty.

Jesus said, “YOU give them something to eat” (Matthew 14:16)

In 1967, Pope Paul VI’s encyclical quoted St Ambrose: “The earth belongs to everyone, not to the rich." (*Populorum Progressio*, 23)

CST has been around a long time. Since the Bible! But you could say modern CST began in 1891.

As oppressed factory workers demanded justice and rich employers objected, Pope Leo XIII said, “The State should watch over these societies of citizens banded together in accordance with their rights” (*Rerum Novarum*, 55).

Today CST still challenges the world:

“Money must serve, not rule!” (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium,* 58)

Key ‘principles’ underpin Catholic Social Teaching. Let’s look at three of these.

DIGNITY:

This is BASIC! We all have dignity because we were created in God’s image. So every person is due respect.

OPTION FOR THE POOR:

We should ‘opt’ (choose) to put the poorest and most vulnerable people first. This turns society on its head.

COMMON GOOD:

‘Common’ means everyone’s included, with a right and responsibility to promote the community’s good and to benefit from it. Here’s an example…

CAFOD works to CST principles, so our partners don’t just give out food (unless it’s an emergency). They help communities produce enough food for themselves so that everyone benefits!

This is ‘CST in 3 minutes’. So, to find out about other CST principles (for example, solidarity, rights and responsibilities, stewardship, participation, subsidiarity), you’ll have to go and investigate!

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