

## WHAT IS CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING?

**How do we bring about a revolution of love and justice in a world often marked by brokenness, injustice and a lack of mercy?** The radical vision of Jesus in the Gospel challenges us to see all of reality from the perspective of the Reign of God.

**Here are 9 points of Catholic social teaching that can serve as guideposts for thriving border communities where all people can flourish and everyone can contribute to creating a more just society.**

- **The Dignity of the Human Person**

Created in the image and likeness of God, every human life is sacred. Each person possesses an inherent dignity, worth and value that must be respected and protected. The standards, practices, policies and laws of our border communities should be judged on whether they promote human dignity or whether they diminish and cheapen the value of all human life.

- **The Common Good**

The common good is the full set of social conditions that enable each one of us and all of us to live dignified and truly human lives. This is the true meaning of "quality of life" or *buen vivir*. We all have a role in promoting the common good, including our faith communities and community organizations. Government has a unique responsibility to promote human life and human dignity by ensuring that public policies serve the common good and respect human rights.

- **Solidarity**

Solidarity recognizes that our destiny as individuals is bound up with that of our neighbors. We in the borderlands have great cultural and spiritual traditions of recognizing ourselves as sisters and brothers. In seeing the image of God in our neighbor, regardless of race, gender, nationality, religion, or sexual orientation, we are called to stand together in defense of our human rights.

- **Subsidiarity and Participation**

Border communities are often excluded from the decision-making table. Subsidiarity recognizes that decisions that affect our communities should normally be taken at the lowest level possible, and that smaller associations should be empowered in becoming artisans of their own destiny. Participation recognizes that these decisions should be made in broad consultation, respecting the freedom of individuals, the family and smaller community groups in determining the direction of their lives as well as their need for the information they need in order to do so.

- **The Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers**

The economy is meant to serve the person, not the other way around. Many in the borderland have endured stagnant or declining wages for decades. Farmworkers, maquila laborers, and other low wage workers continue to struggle against unfair working conditions and, in Pope Francis' words, an

economy that kills. Workers have the right to dignified work, just working conditions and a salary that enables them to raise a family and provide for basic necessities.

- **The Right to Migrate**

The dignity of the human person is greater than any passport or immigration status. Catholic social teaching recognizes the right of persons not to migrate, but to stay in their community of origin. But when that becomes impossible, Catholic social teaching also recognizes the right to migrate. While countries have a duty to ensure that immigration is orderly and safe, this responsibility can never serve as an excuse to build walls and shut the door to migrants and refugees.

- **The Sacredness of Creation**

Creation reflects the wonder of God and is entrusted to us as our common home. We in the borderland take great pride in the stark beauty of the Mexico-US border and the diversity of our high desert landscape and wildlife. We also see how our disregard of the environment affects the vulnerable; for example, in the commercial traffic along the border bridges that poisons our air. Pope Francis notes that same attitude behind our lack of gratitude and wonder at creation is at the root of our indifference towards the poor.

- **The Option for the Poor**

God's concern goes out first to those on who live on the margins. We, too, should put the suffering, dreams, aspiration and hopes of the poor at the center of our concern, our action in favor of the common good and in our approach to public policy. We ought to judge economic and political decisions based first on the impacts they have on those who live on the borders of immigration status, race, the economy and society.

- **The Promotion of Peace**

Our borderland has a complicated history of colonialism and oppression, the legacy of which impacts us even today. We are called to reweave the fabric of justice even in the midst of continuing practices of dehumanization and structural sin. Work to promote peace includes work to demilitarize our borders and community and restore dignity to those who have been divided by economic, physical and social walls and checkpoints.