



CATHOLIC SOCIAL
TEACHING SERIES



Guest Speaker: Jim McGill

**December 11, 2025
10-1130am
Upper Room**

The topics of Nonviolence, Peace, War, and the Kingdom of God are explored

- Foundational roots in Scripture, Tradition, and History**
- Characteristics of the Kingdom of God on Earth**
- Their importance for our understanding, faith, and a just and peaceful world**



Opening Prayer

- “where 2 or more are gathered ... “
- “... your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.” Matthew 6:10
- “The Kingdom of God is among (or within) you!” Luke 17:21

Catholic Social Doctrine gives a Framework for Making Moral Decisions

- 1. Introduce basics of Catholic Social Doctrine**
- 2. Provide a framework to inform/form conscience based on the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church**
- 3. Provide guidance to apply Social Doctrine to old and new moral and social issues that we face daily**

Themes of Catholic Social Doctrine

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) is the social doctrine of the Church. The scope... includes truth of revelation about human life, dignity, solidarity, and principles of justice and peace.

Care for Creation – Laudato Si
-- Stewardship

Life and Dignity of
Human Person

Family, Community, Participation

Rights and Responsibility

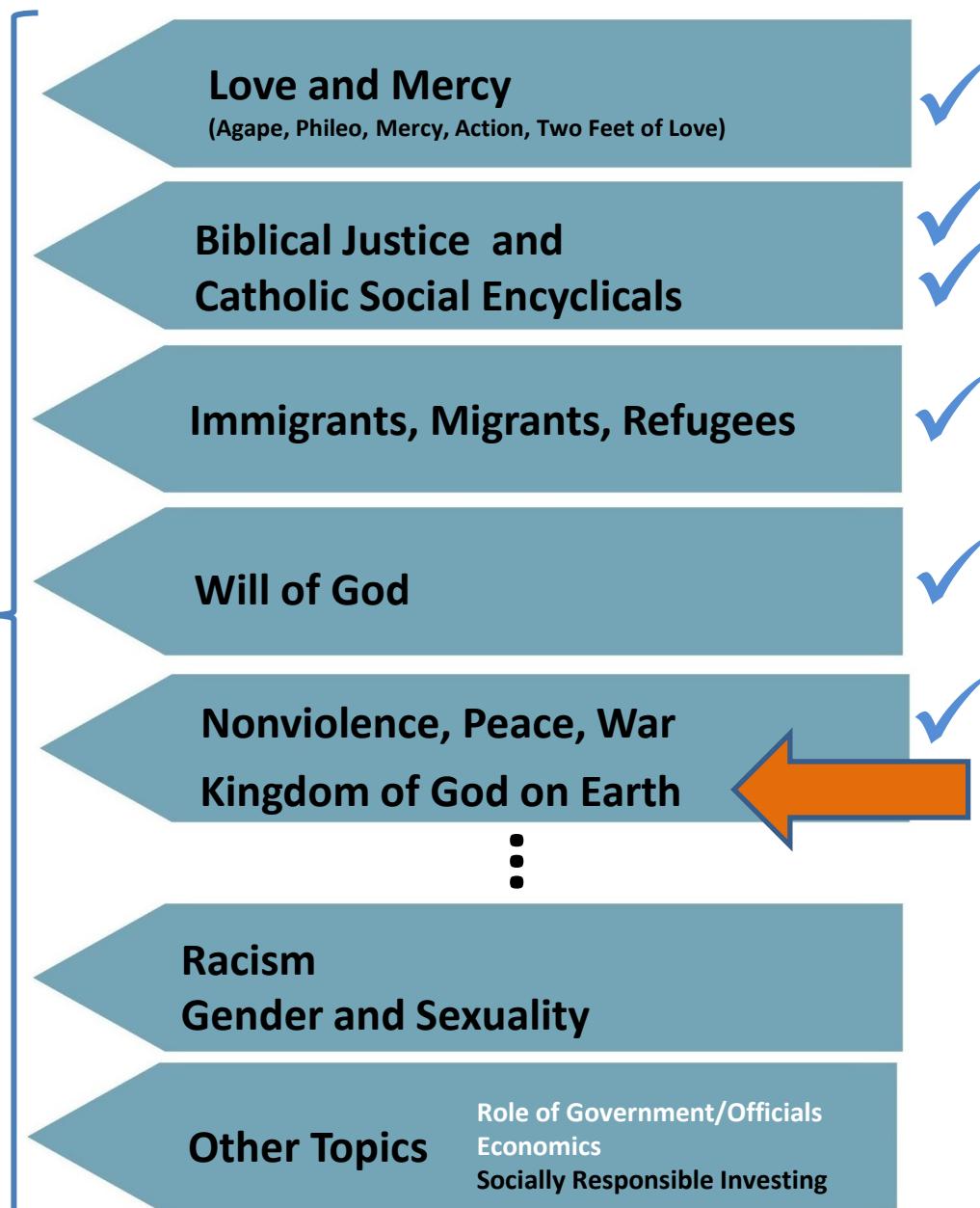
Global Solidarity and
Common Good

Preferential Love for the
Poor and Vulnerable

Dignity of Work and
Worker Rights

Catholic Social Doctrine Related Topics ...

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) is the social doctrine of the Church. The scope includes truth of revelation about human life, dignity, solidarity, and principles of justice and peace.



Jim McGill

- Jim holds an MA in Theology and a BA in Philosophy
- Experienced in Ministry since 1980
 - Director of Parish Adult Religious Education (1980-1989)
 - Instructor of Theology and Sacred Scripture in the Greco Institute (1989-2007) and University of Dallas (2007-2022)
 - Regular Adjunct Professor at University of Dallas Biblical School (2022-present)
 - Instructor in Deacon Formation for the Diocese of Dallas
- Jim has engaged and guided adult learners in scriptural and pastoral study as they journey in faith at Good Shepherd for many years.

The Kingdom of God

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.”

Matthew 6:9-10

Mark 1:14-15

Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God:

“This is the time of fulfillment.

The kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent,

and believe in the gospel.”

Kingdom; Kingship; Reign; Realm.

- The Kingdom is **already here but also not yet** – at hand but still to come.
- The Kingdom is “coming” and so we pray: “Maranatha” “Come, Lord Jesus.”
- The Church **witnesses** both the presence and the coming of the Kingdom.
- The Church **serves** in the spirit of this Kingdom.

Many Christians do not recognize the social implications of God's justice and mercy. This is due in part to the fact that Christianity has been the religion of the dominant culture in the West since the time of Constantine.

In Western cultures, and especially the United States, individualism dominates. It is the core value of the culture. We see ourselves as “self-made.” We are often blind to the web of relationships and circumstances that shape our lives long before we make a single decision (born on third). There is a “village” surrounding us whether we acknowledge it or not.

The political passion of the Bible protests the systemic injustice of the kingdoms and empires that dominate the world. The key events of the Bible – the slaves in Egypt, the exiles in Babylon, and Jesus on the cross – are all created by the power of oppressive political systems. The fate of widows and orphans, the poor and the marginalized are of great concern to God.

The challenge is to avoid a theocracy (a “king like the nations”/ Sharia Law).

In the past this took the form of Christendom.

Today in the USA it takes the form of Christian Nationalism.

As we will see, the final temptation Christ resists in blending his mission with the kingdoms of this world.

The Catholic Church has a sense of social justice that transforms society rather than wielding political power that imposes values on society.

Old Testament

In the ancient world, political powers ruled because of the will of their gods. Kings rule in every era by divine right. Yet in the OT the God of Israel is on the side of slaves and exiles. The great voices of the prophets are raised in protest against the unjust systems imposed by the powerful upon the weak.

New Testament

Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom of God seems to be the central focus of his message. This Kingdom points to the power of God at work in Jesus, to the presence of God in history, to the community of humanity and creation united under God's rule, and even to the messianic age beyond history into the future.

Kingdom of God also has a political meaning. Obviously the word “kingdom” was itself a political word in the ancient world.

Jesus is executed precisely for the accusation that he was a king – “King of the Jews”

INRI is on every crucifix.

The political meaning of the Kingdom of God is what life would be like on earth if God were king and the rulers of the world were not.

(As Monika Hellwig said: “Jesus is the only person who ever lived as if only God had authority.” As an aside, this may be one of the reasons we believe that Jesus is like us in all things but sin.)

For Jesus the Kingdom of God (Heaven in Matthew) was for the earth. Crossan's quote is on the money: "Heaven's in great shape; earth is where the problems are." The solution for many Christians is to abandon the earth for heaven.

The solution for God seems to be to bring the power and life of heaven to earth. God's response is not to bundle the saved off to heaven and destroy what's left of humanity and creation. God demands that we live as we were created to live. The Kingdom proclaimed by Jesus is what such a life would look like. Note the difference between the devil's agenda and Jesus' agenda in Luke 4:1-21.

Filled with the holy Spirit, Jesus returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the desert for forty days, to be tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when they were over he was hungry. The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, **command this stone to become bread.**” Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘One does not live by bread alone.’” Then he took him up and showed him all **the kingdoms of the world** in a single instant. The devil said to him, “I shall give to you all this power and their glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I may give it to whomever I wish. All this will be yours, if you worship me.” Jesus said to him in reply, “It is written:

‘You shall worship the Lord, your God,
and him alone shall you serve.’”

Then he led him to Jerusalem, made him stand on the parapet of the temple, and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, **throw yourself down from here**, for it is written:

‘He will command his angels concerning you,
to guard you,’ and:

‘With their hands they will support you,
lest you dash your foot against a stone.’”

Jesus said to him in reply, “It also says, ‘You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.’” When the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from him for a time.

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news of him spread throughout the whole region. He taught in their synagogues and was praised by all.

The Rejection at Nazareth. He came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring **glad tidings** to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim **liberty** to captives
and recovery of **sight** to the blind,
to let the oppressed **go free**,
and to proclaim a year **acceptable to the Lord.**”

Luke 4: Two Agendas

Devil:

Stones to bread. (Pleasure)

Jump off the Temple. (Spectacle)

Kingdoms of this world. (Power)

Jesus:

Good news to the **poor**.

Liberty for **captives**.

Sight for the **blind**.

Freedom for the **oppressed**.

Jesus Is Lord

This sentence has far more political overtones than we usually notice. If Jesus is Lord, Caesar is not. Rome was a goddess (Roma) and Caesar was a god. The Kingdom of God, while not a political entity itself, is a challenge to all dominant political powers in the world especially when these powers promote systemic injustice and oppression. A careful reading of the Book of Revelation shows it speaking as much about a social critique of the Roman Empire as about the end of the world.

It seems clear that the preaching of Jesus on the Kingdom of God still presents a challenge to every entity that wields political power in the world. Modern popes have made this point many times.

Conclusion

These two transformations, personal and social, are at the center of the Christian vision of life as we see it in the Bible and in Jesus. “If we emphasize only one, we miss half of the biblical message, half of the gospel.

The strength of much of conservative Christianity is that it has emphasized the first, personal transformation. Its weakness is that it has often neglected the Kingdom of God.

The strength of much of liberal Christianity has been that it has often emphasized the second. Its weakness is that it has often neglected being personal conversion and virtue.

Action and Contemplation

A politically engaged spirituality affirms both spiritual transformation and political transformation. The message of Jesus, and the Bible as a whole, is about both. What we see in Jesus and the Bible answers our deepest personal longing, to be born again, and the world's greatest need, the Kingdom of God.

The concept of the Kingdom of God being present in the world is central to Christian theology. It is often understood as both a current spiritual reality and a future hope.

Jesus' Teachings and Ministry: Jesus frequently spoke of the Kingdom of God as being "in your midst" (Luke 17:21). His miracles, teachings, and acts of compassion demonstrated the values and power of this Kingdom.

The Role of the Church: The Church is seen as a primary agent of the Kingdom's presence. Believers are called to embody principles like righteousness, peace, and joy, reflecting the transformative power of the Kingdom.

The Church is not the Kingdom.

The Church is a witness and servant of the Kingdom.

Ethical Living: The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) outlines the ethical standards of the Kingdom, emphasizing love, humility, and mercy. These teachings challenge Christians to live in a way that reflects God's values.

Social Justice: The Kingdom's presence is also linked to social justice, advocating for the marginalized and oppressed. This aligns with the prophetic tradition of justice and righteousness.

"Already, but Not Yet": While the Kingdom is present through Christ's work and the Holy Spirit, its full realization is awaited in the future. This dual aspect is a cornerstone of Christian eschatology.

Hope!

Evidence of the Kingdom?

The "already, but not yet" concept plays out in many ways in daily life.

Acts of Compassion: When people help the poor, advocate for justice, or care for the sick, they reflect the "already" of the Kingdom—God's values in action. At the same time, the persistence of poverty, injustice, and illness shows the "not yet."

Community and Forgiveness: In a church or faith community, moments of unity, love, and reconciliation embody the "already." Yet, misunderstandings, conflicts, and the need for continual forgiveness remind us of the "not yet."

Inner Transformation: A believer might experience personal growth, peace, or joy through their relationship with God. This reflects the "already" presence of God's Spirit. However, ongoing struggles with doubt, temptation, or hardship point to the "not yet."

Hope in Tragedy: After a natural disaster or personal loss, when communities come together to rebuild and support one another, it mirrors the "already." But the pain and brokenness that remain highlight the "not yet."

Prayer and Worship: Any prayer by anybody minimally acknowledges one simple fact: “I am not God.”

Times of prayer and worship can offer profound moments of connection with God, glimpsing the "already" Kingdom. Yet, the longing expressed in prayers—"Your Kingdom come, your will be done"—reflects the "not yet."

Questions for Jim?

Homework (1 of 2)

- 1. Prayerfully review Catechism of the Catholic Church (62 mentions of Kingdom of God or Kingdom of Heaven) and Gospels (100+ mentions in New American Bible Revised Edition).**
 - Describe 3-5 aspects of your vision of the Kingdom of God on Earth (a place where you would want to be)
 - Share with others to build a common vision
- 2. Between now and New Year Eve, think about and resolve to do 1-2 (or more) specific things to increase aspects of the Kingdom of God on Earth within and around you in**
 - Thoughts
 - Words
 - Deeds

Homework (2 of 2)

“... whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.”
Matthew 25:40

3. Sign up for action alerts, discern God’s will, and respond in a way that furthers the Kingdom of God on Earth

Advocacy Requests	Link to Advocacy Signup
US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)	https://www.votervoice.net/USCCB/register
USCCB Justice and Peace	https://usccb.us11.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=75c0c9953e20885f1295adc0f&id=3758e6e5cd
USCCB Justice for Immigrants (MRS)	https://justiceforimmigrants.org/join-us/
Catholic Charities USA	https://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/advocacy-1/action-center/#/
Catholic Climate Covenant	https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/join-us/
Catholic Relief Services	https://www.crs.org/ways-to-help/advocate/take-action
Catholic Mobilizing Network	https://catholicsmobilizing.org/join/
Catholic Labor Network	https://catholiclabor.org/
Pax Christi USA	https://paxchristiusa.org/join/#individual



NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS, AND LEISURE



Guest Speaker: Dr. J. Marianne Siegmund

**January 24, 2026
930-1100am
Parish Hall Center
Room St. Maria Goretti (2)**

Topics to be explored are

- Leisure: What is it and Who Needs it?**
- How Does Prayer Connect to Leisure?**
- The Redemption, Leisure, and Lenten Resolutions: A Possibility and a Joy**

Closing Prayer

Calling on God as our Liberator

...

*“walk humbly with your God
... love goodness
... and do justice”*

(Micah 6:8 adjusted ... for the Earth that we live on with
the 8 billion other people who are also created in God’s
image and likeness)