



Catholic Social Teaching on The Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers



**Guest Speakers: Alma Miller, CCFW
Brooke Neff, CCFW**

**September 14, 2026
10-1130 am
St. Maria Goretti (Room 2)**



Abstract: We will explore the Catholic Social Teaching about the Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers. We will discuss Scripture, Catechism of the Catholic Church, and

- **God's first job for us and being co-creators with Him**
- **Rights and responsibilities of workers, employers, and consumers**
- **Practical applications with CCFW and other projects**



Prayer

- **“where 2 or more are gathered ... ”**
- **God we thank you for**
 - the fruits of all YOUR work in Creation
 - creating each of us as a unique image and likeness of YOU
 - the gift of life
 - continuing to walk with us in Creation
 - inviting us to be stewards and co-creators with YOU

“Walk humbly with your God, love goodness, and do justice” (Micah 6:8 re-ordered)



Welcome!!!

- **Thanks for joining us**
- **Recording**
- **Please mute computers/phones**



Catholic Social Doctrine is a Framework for Making Moral Decisions

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



Themes of Catholic Social Doctrine

The Seven Themes of CST are explored in a Speaker Series presented with reference to the Catechism, Encyclicals, Scripture, and other Church documents.

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 (Part 1 and 2)





Work and Worker Rights

- **Huge topic**
- **We will focus on Dignity of Work and Worker Rights**
- **CSD/CST of Work-Workers Part 2 will address**
 - **The role of business, government, organizations, informal groups, and the economy**
 - **The duties of Catholics and others within these and other groups of people**



Alma Miller Bio

- **Alma has been happily married to Bill for 30 years**
 - They raised their sons in the Northeast Tarrant Area
 - Their parish is St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
- **Alma earned her Bachelor of Business Administration from The University of Mary Hardin-Baylor in Belton**
- **She has dedicated the past nine years to Catholic Charities Fort Worth in the**
 - Family First program
 - Parish Social Ministry
 - Major Gifts Officer on the Advancement team



Brooke Neff Bio

- **Brooke serves as the Community Engagement Specialist at Catholic Charities Fort Worth**
 - She fosters community connections
 - Raises awareness CCFW efforts to combat poverty and empower individuals and families in need.
- **Brooke earned a BA in English with a minor in Education from UT Arlington.**
- **She has been married to husband, Eric, for 12 yrs**
 - Eric serves as a Sergeant with the Arlington PD
 - They are raising two young sons.



Robert Torres Bio

- **Cradle Catholic and Native Texan from San Antonio**
 - Catholic school K-12, B.S. from St. Mary's University
 - Married 57 yrs, four adult children, nine grandchildren, ...
- **Lay ministry in League City, Round Rock, Colleyville**
 - Middle/high school formation (25+ yr)
 - Pre-Cana (2 yr), Safe Environment (8 yr)
 - Social Justice Ministry (2012 – present)
- **Continuing education**
 - Parish scripture studies
 - USCCB Certificate -- Catholic Social Teaching (2024)
 - USCCB Certificate -- CST Pastoral Planning (2026 E)
 - Univ. of Dayton -- Social Justice certificate program underway

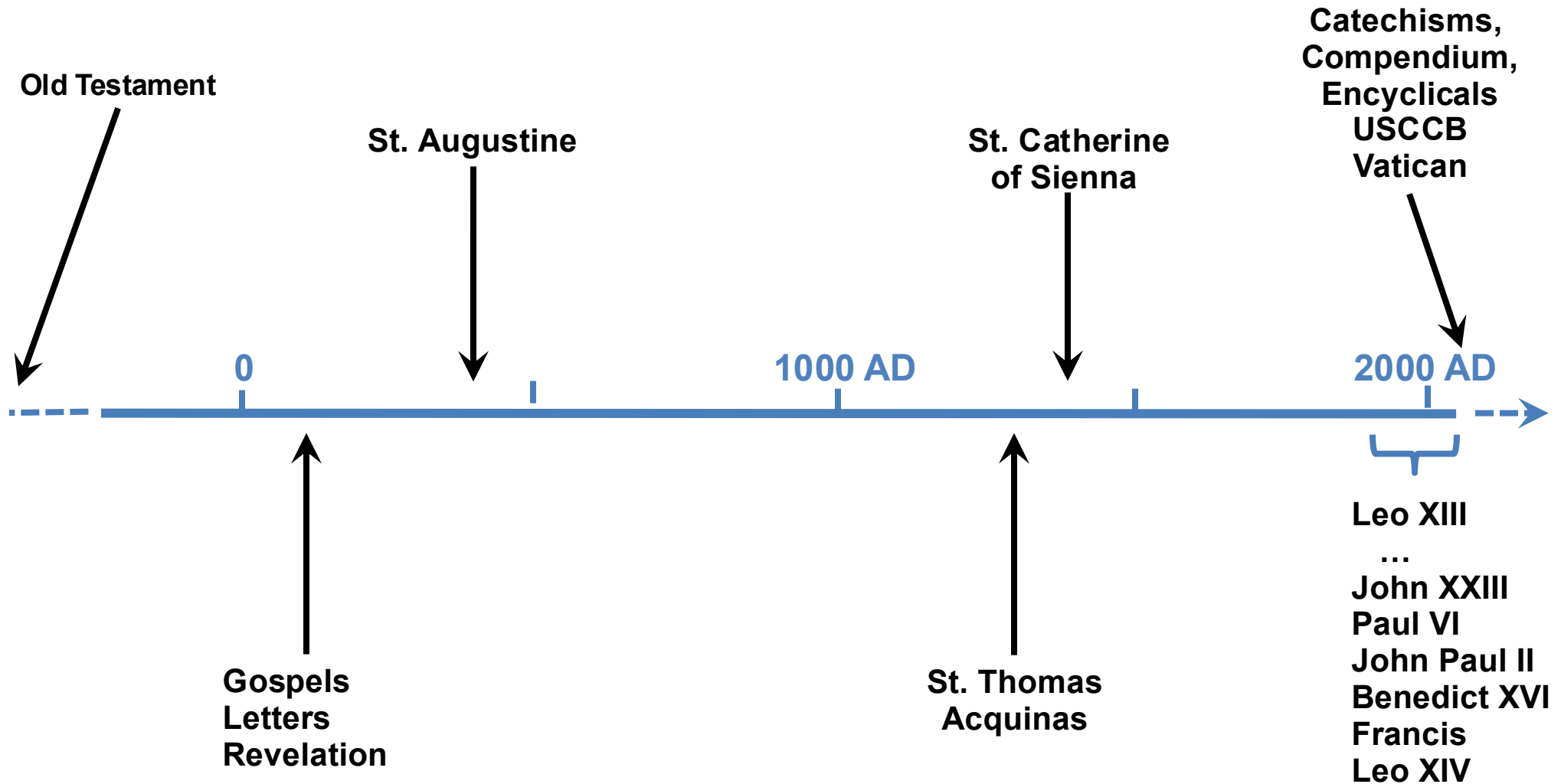


Outline

- **Overview and GSCC-Diocesan Actions (Robert)**
- **Catholic Charities Fort Worth (Alma, Brooke)**
- **Q&A**
- **Homework + Next CSD/CST Presentation**



Connecting God's Word and Will for Work/Workers Over Time



“ Blessed is he who hears the word of God and observes it! “ Luke 11:28



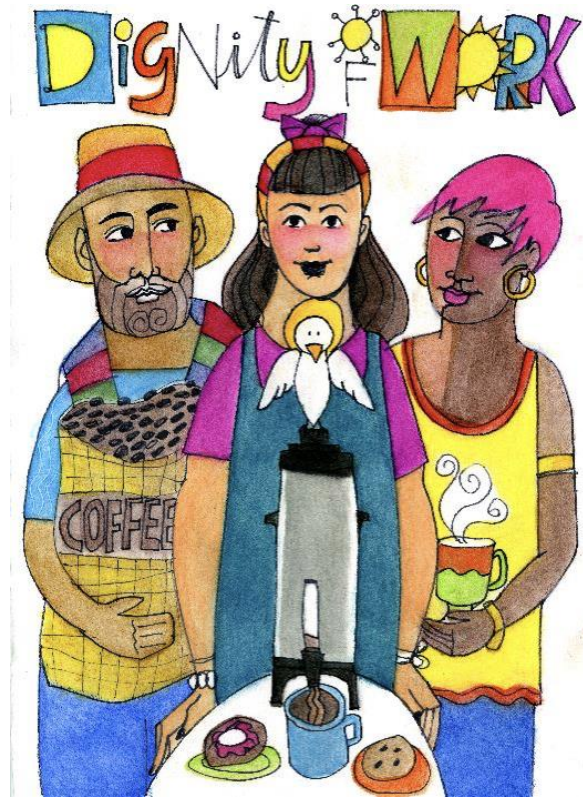
Work is ... ?

- **What kinds of “work” do you do? (or job(s) you have)**
- **Why do you work?**
- **How hard do you “work” at**
 - Relationship with God, self, and others
 - Being Catholic
 - Family and household
 - Your job
 - Hobbies
 - Other



USCCB Video – CST 101

The Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers (and our rights and duties as disciples)



Exercise:

Jot down what
the video says
about our rights
and duties as
“workers” !!!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2G8jGOva7Y>



Video Key Points 1 (Theology of Creation)

God's creative work is inherently dignified (very good)

The “Dignity of Work” comes from God -- a gift and invitation to

- **Participate in God's ongoing creative work**
- **To transform all of Creation into God's Kingdom**
- **Continue growing as human persons**
- **Foster the growth and well being of our neighbors**
- **Contribute to the common good**
- **Respect the life, dignity, and rights of each worker, family members, and all of God's People (no exceptions)**

Avoid “work” against God, neighbor, and the Kingdom of God!



Video Key Points 2 (Theology of Creation)

- **Workers have a duty of fair day's work for fair day's wage**
- **Managers, supervisors, employers have a duty to**
 - Uphold rights of workers
 - Provide “decent” wages
 - Safe working environment
- **Catholic Community (living as Disciples of Jesus) has duty to**
 - Defend human life, dignity, and rights of workers, employers, consumers, others, and preferentially the most vulnerable
 - Help the “unemployable” find work
 - Think about moral and ethical production along the entire personal “supply chain” of what we consume and ...
 - How our choices affect others, e.g., Fair Trade vs. Free Trade
 - Promote just laws and good practices of those in business/government



Summary of Rights from Video

Social Doctrine on Work/Workers	OT	NT	Doctors, etc.	CCC	CCUSA	CSDC	Popes
Stewards of Creation							
Preferential care for the poor, vulnerable, others							
Work to live (self, family)							
Just wage							
Safe working conditions							
Time to rest							
Benefits (illness, injury, ...)							
Unions							

*“Created for relationship, every human person is planned and willed by God to enter into communion with him,
with others,
and with creation.”*

Pope Leo XIV, Magnifica Humanitas 50



Teachings in Hebrew Scripture 1/2

- **God works. Creates and “make all things new!”**
(Genesis 1:1, Revelation 21:5)
- **First task for us. "The LORD God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it." Genesis 2:15**
- **Tasked as stewards. "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it." Genesis 1:28**
 - ==> perhaps like a “ranch foreman” on a huge property
 - ==> continue God’s work by transforming the world (LE 5)



Teachings in Hebrew Scripture 2/2

- **Work to live. "By the sweat of your brow shall you get bread to eat..."** Genesis 3:17-19
- **Just Wages. "You shall not exploit your neighbor"**
(Leviticus 19:13, Deuteronomy 24:14-15, Sirach 34:26-27)
- **Treat all workers well. Your worship is false otherwise.**
(Isaiah 58:3-7, Jeremiah 22:13, Malachi 3:5)
- **Share Fruits of Labor with Others.**
(Deuteronomy 14:28-29)
- **Sabbath. All are allowed to rest**
(Exodus 20:9-10, Deuteronomy 5:13-15)

Including the
Poor
Vulnerable
Migrants
Outcasts
Etc.



Teachings in the New Testament 1/2

- **Jesus worked. As son of a “carpenter” (skilled artisan, handy man), Jesus worked with his hands and probably did chores around the household too!**
(Matthew 13:55, Mark 6:3)
- **“My Father is at work until now, so I am at work.”**
(John 5:17)
- **Fair wages. “...the laborer deserves his payment.”**
(Luke 10:7, 1 Timothy 5:18, James 5:4)
- **Work for God, self, and others. “... do everything for the glory of God.” “Serve the Lord.”**
(1 Corinthians 10:31, Romans 12:11)



Teachings in the New Testament 2/2

- **“The Kingdom of God is like a landowner who ...”**
(Matthew 20 Landowner and Workers in the Vineyard)
 - **Unconditional, selfless, active love for all the day workers**
 - **All workers went home with the living wage of the day**
(How God thinks!) ... (How did some workers think?)
- **How can we follow the example of the landowner for the workers around and among us?**

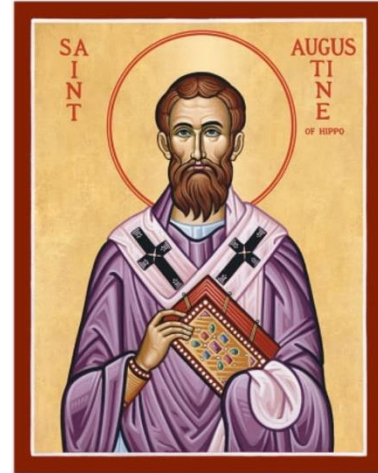
**The Kingdom of God is like a home owner who ...
(or, what can you as a home owner do?)**



St. Augustine and St. Aquinas

- **St. Augustine (354 – 430)**

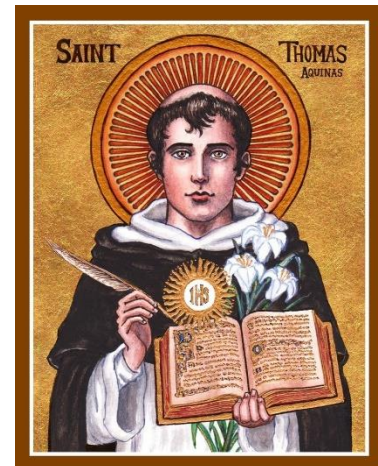
- *"The man was placed in paradise to work and to keep it.*
- *This work was a joyful occupation, not a laborious toil.*
- *For the toil and hardship of work came only after sin."*
The Literal Meaning of Genesis, Book VIII, Chapter 8 (¶15)



- **St. Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274)**

- *"... the rule of equality according to justice must be observed."*
- *Employers and workers (and buyers) must be honest and fair with each other, e.g., just wage.*

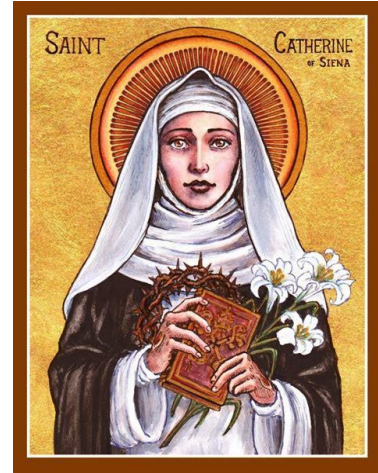
Summa Theologiae, II-II, Question 77, Article 1





Saint Catherine of Siena (1347 – 1380)

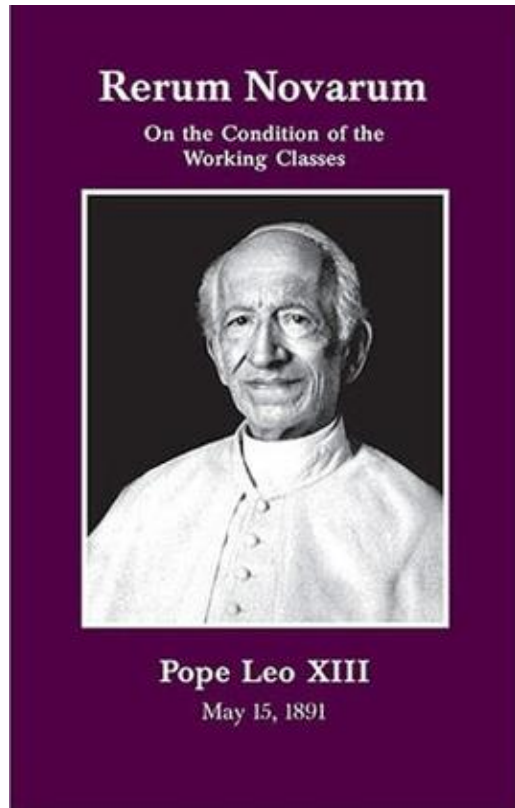
- Saint Catherine of Siena (1347 – 1380)
 - *"Labor in the vineyard... in different ways."*
(Dialogue, ch. 165)
 - *"Never refusing labor, but serving all with charity."*
(Dialogue)



Participate with “love” in God’s work of creation



Pope Leo XIII



“To labor (work) is to exert oneself for the sake of procuring what is necessary for the various purposes of life, and chief of all for self-preservation.” (RN 44)

The right to ...

- **Equal rights (workers, owners, poor, etc.)** 13, 33, 40
- **Wages to meet needs** 5, 44, 46
- **Possess and dispose of money** 22
- **Private property** 5-6, 13
- **Earth for use and enjoyment by all** 8
- **Marriage and family** 12-13, 20
- **Aid in necessity (injury, illness, etc.)** 14, 58
- **Rest** 41
- **Care for the poor and vulnerable** 22, 28, 37, 59
- **Organizing and joining unions** 39, 49
- **Focus on morality and Kingdom of God** 57
- **Work** 58

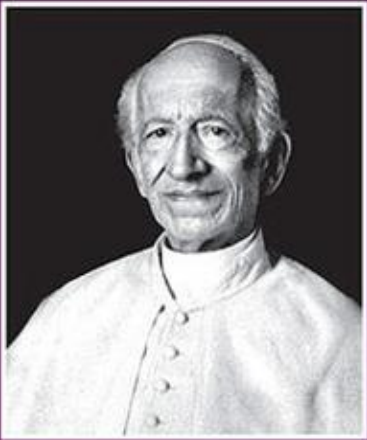
Relevant to the working poor and the unemployed looking for work!



Pope Leo XIII (Con't)

Rerum Novarum

On the Condition of the
Working Classes



Pope Leo XIII

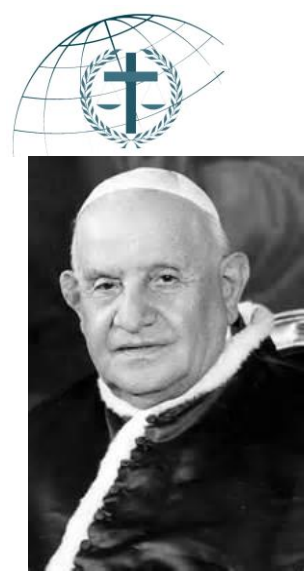
May 15, 1891

“... lives sparingly, saves money, and, for greater security, invests his savings ...” RN 5

“Whoever has received from the divine bounty a large share of temporal blessings, whether they be external and material, or gifts of the mind, **has received them for the purpose of**

- using them for the **perfecting of his own nature**, and, at the same time, that he may
- employ them, **as the steward of God's providence, for the benefit of others.”**

RN 22



Saint Pope John 23rd taught

“Every man has the right to life and ...

- the means for the proper development of life
- primarily food, clothing, shelter, rest, medical care ...
- the right to **security in sickness, inability to work, widowhood, old age, unemployment,**
- ... the **opportunity to work**

or other ... “

Pacem in Terris (11, 12, 13, 18, etc.) (1963)

How exhaustive is this list of rights (human dignities)?



Key Encyclicals

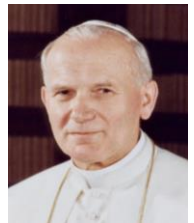
“In Rerum Novarum this principle was set down with regard to a **just wage** for the individual worker;

but it should **be applied with equal force to contracts made between nations.**

(Pope Paul VI, Populorum Progressio 59)



“... the right to a **just wage** and to the personal security of the worker and his or her family....” (St. Pope John Paul II, Laborem Exercens 8)



“...the right to a **just wage**...” (Pope Benedict XVI, Caritas Veritate 63)

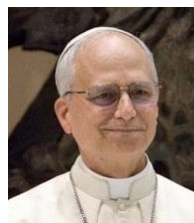


“A **just wage** enables them to have adequate access to all the other goods which are destined for our common use.” (Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium 192)



“... the right to a **fair wage** for oneself and one’s family; recognizes that persons have a fundamental value that takes precedence over capital and profit ...”

(Pope Leo XIV, Magnifica Humanitas 30)



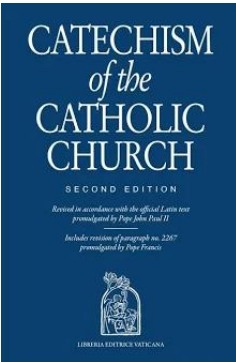


Key Documents

“... called to prolong the work of creation by subduing the earth, both with and for one another.

... draw from work the means of providing for his life and that of his family, and of serving the human community.

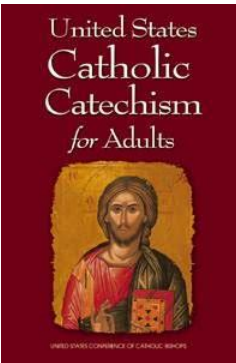
... **just wage** is the legitimate fruit of work.” (CCC 2426 – 2436)



“... the dignity of work, the need of workers to receive a **salary** that will enable them to care for their families

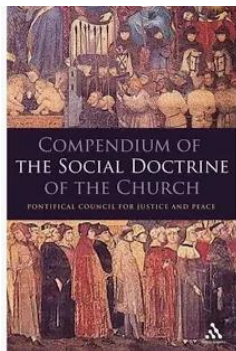
... Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God’s creation.

... We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God’s creation.” (CCUSA pp 419-427)



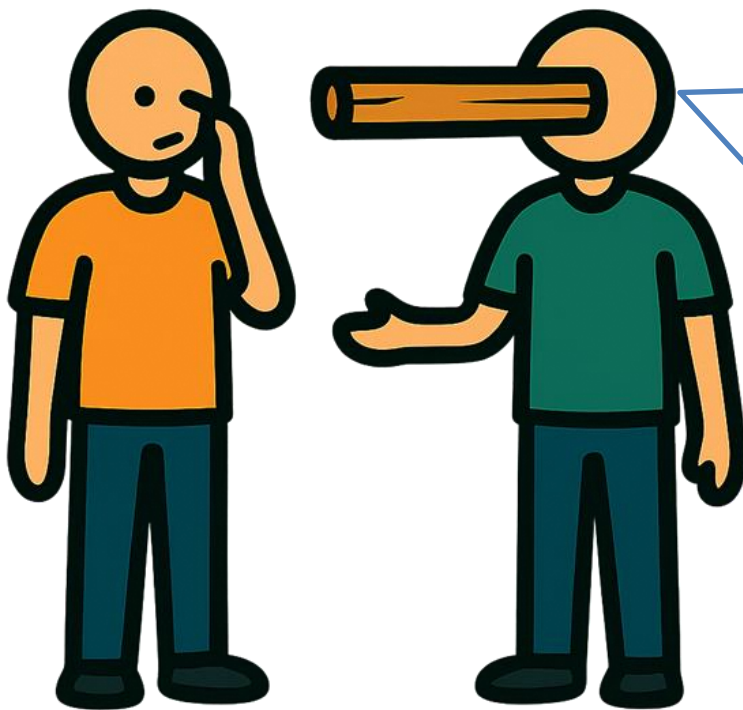
“Jesus teaches man **not to be enslaved by work**. Before all else, he must be concerned about his soul; gaining the whole world is not the purpose of his life (cf. Mk 8:36).

... Human activity aimed at **enhancing and transforming** the universe can and must unleash the perfections which find their origin and model in the uncreated Word” (CSDC 255 - 322)





Looking in the mirror *(Matthew 7:3)*



- How do I demean the worker?
- How do I demean the work?
- How do I advocate for wages that workers can live on?
- How can I change my lifestyle to support a living wage?

* Love = willing the good of the other



As a consumer ... pay more attention to how the workers are treated!

- **In the US as well as worldwide**
- **Example: web sites like Better World Shopper and other web sites**

<https://betterworldshopper.org/#companies-section>

There are sites like this for US and other countries. If you find one that you like, please let me know!



Work towards Kingdom of God (and not against it!)

Social Doctrine on Work/Workers	OT	NT	Doctors, etc.	CCC	CCUSA	CSDC	Popes
Stewards of Creation							
Preferential care for the poor, vulnerable, others							
> Right to dignified work							
Work to live (self, family)							
Just wage, schedule, duties							
Safe working conditions							
Time to worship/rest							
Benefits (illness, injury, ...)							
Unions							
> Focus on Kingdom of God							

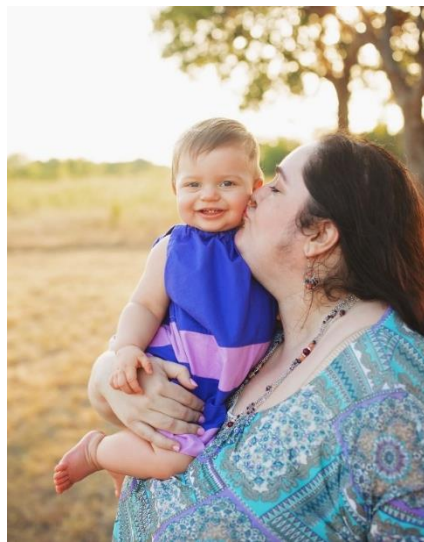
* As part of a follow-up, we will talk about Catholic Social Doctrine about the role of business, government, other organizations, informal groups, and the economy. This includes the responsibility of Catholics within these and other groups of people.



Catholic
Charities
Fort Worth

**KNOW
POVERTY®**

FAITH-DRIVEN. CLIENT-LED. RESEARCH-BACKED.



OUR VISION

To **RELENTLESSLY** end poverty through holistic, evidence-based solutions.

OUR MISSION

To provide service to those in need, to advocate compassion and justice in the structures of society, and to call all people of goodwill to do the same.

OUR HISTORY



FOUNDED IN 1910

We got our start in 1910 when a small group of women attended the annual St. Patrick's Day celebration at St. Patrick's Cathedral to petition Bishop Edward Dunne to allow them to begin a "work of mercy." Dedicated to the well-being of their community, these women saw the needs and pains of the poor and took it upon themselves to be a voice for the voiceless.



AT ST. TERESA'S—Sister Mary Joseph, C.C.V.I., an experienced teacher, helps out the professional kindergarten teacher with two of the children in the reading prepara-

1920s

St. Teresa's Home for Children opens its doors to provide shelter and care for neglected children.

1970s

The agency added immigration and refugee services, earning recognition as one of the largest social service providers in the area.

1990s

Catholic Charities launches the first of three social enterprises, addressing unmet needs in North Texas while ensuring long-term service sustainability.



OUT OF POVERTY PATHWAYS



2010s

Catholic Charities opens their Northwest Campus in Wichita Falls, bringing life-saving services to 27 rural counties in North Texas.

2020

The agency invests more than \$10 million into the community for COVID-19 pandemic-related needs, serving nearly 10,000 clients.

2021

Catholic Charities launches their Out of Poverty Pathways, a multi-dimensional framework for navigating the complexities of poverty.

We serve because of our faith.

We are a Catholic organization that holds true to the values of **Catholic Social Teaching** – we believe that every human being is **valuable** and worthy of **dignity and respect**.

Myths

Myth 1: Employees must be Catholic to work here and clients must be Catholic to receive our services.

FALSE. We embrace the diversity of each staff member and client, and honor each individual's beliefs. We serve because of *our* faith as we guide our clients out of poverty, regardless of their individual religious or cultural backgrounds.

Myth 2: We only serve the City of Fort Worth.

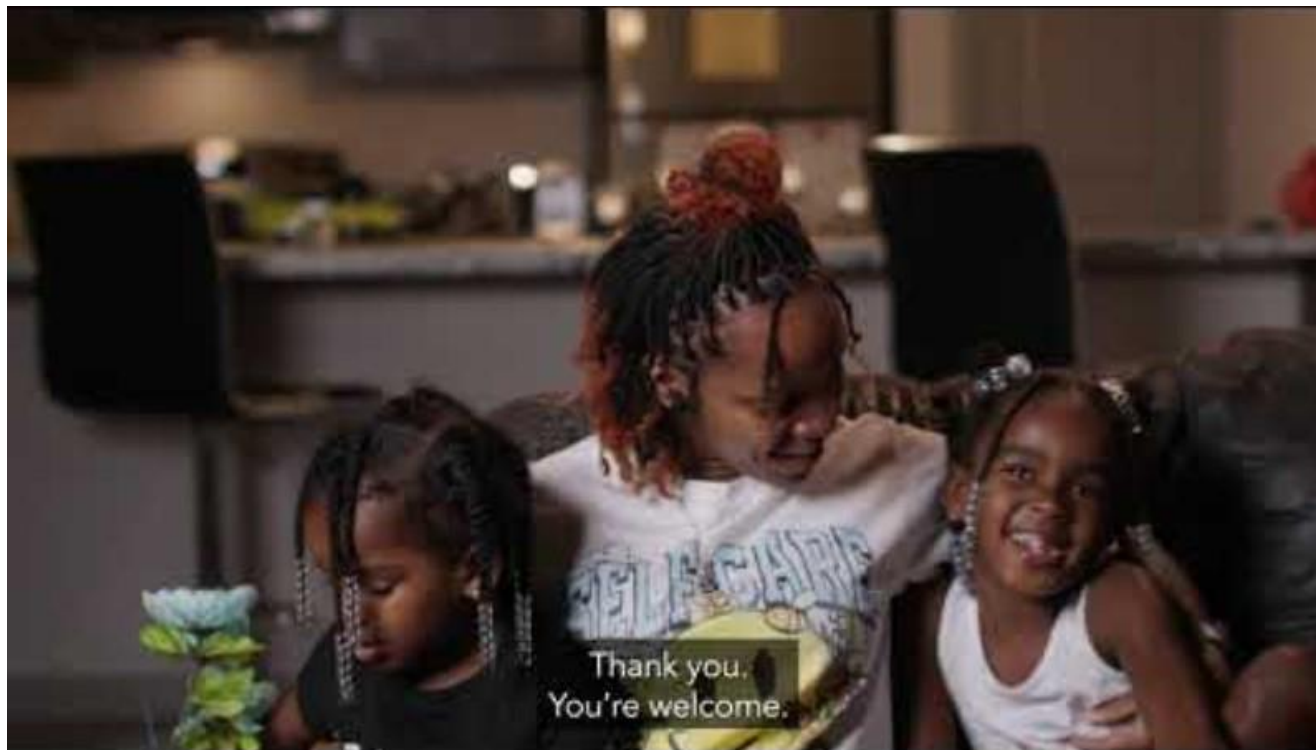
FALSE. CCFW serves all 28 counties of the Diocese of Fort Worth; from Hillsboro to Stephenville, from Wichita Falls to Gainesville and everywhere in between.

Myth 3: CCFW is funded solely by the Catholic Church.

FALSE. Our funding comes from a variety of sources such as grants, foundations, corporations and like-minded individuals (just like you!)

CLIENT-LED





Jasmine's Story



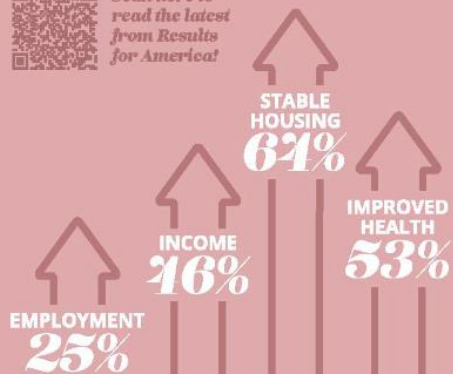
NEARLY 800 families

across North Texas have rewritten their stories through Padua, our approach to ending poverty.

Third-Party Results via the Lab for Economic Opportunities at the University of Notre Dame:



Scan here to read the latest from Results for America!



03

In 2026,

we are launching our first two partnerships, working alongside Goodwill Michiana and Goodwill Chicago. Together, we will provide the tools, training, and technical support needed to implement the Padua model in their local communities.



Fully-funded by the local communities these new sites serve, Padua's impact is going national while keeping our services rooted in North Texas.



04

CLIENT-LED



Catholic
Charities
Fort Worth

CREATE A PATH...
BE A GAME CHANGER.





EDUCATION PATHWAY

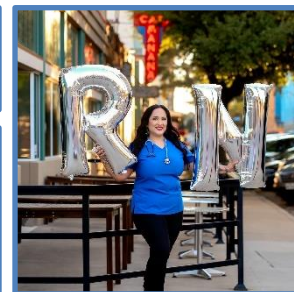
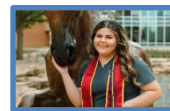
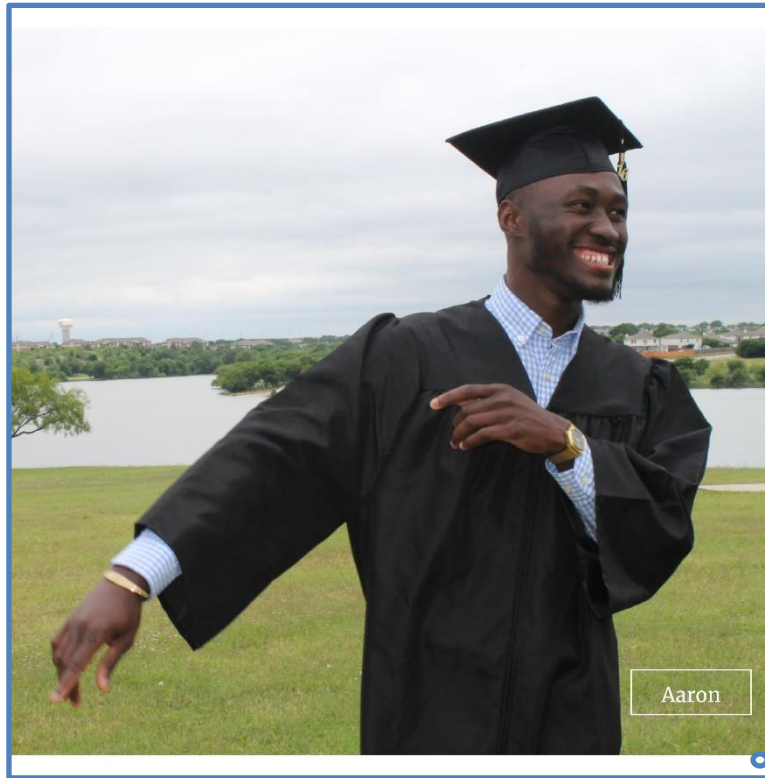
Education is a key player in long-term poverty solutions, leading to more employment opportunities, an increase in earnings over time and other advantages.

Helping students navigate **non-academic barriers** to complete their educational goals and **increase earnings**.



Blanca and Victor's Story

Sponsor-A-Student



GET INVOLVED



- Volunteer
- Become an Ambassador
- Be a Game Changer
- Donate
- Host a drive
- Introduce us to your business or network

Thank you!

Learn more at *catholiccharitiesfortworth.org*.





Questions ?

Comments?

Suggestions?



Other Diocesan Actions

- **Parish Mission Activities (Haiti, Honduras, Guatemala)**
<https://fwdioc.org/parish-mission-activities>
- **Volunteer** <https://fwdioc.org/volunteer>
- **GSCC**
 - Outreach <https://gsc.net/ministries/outreach-services/>
 - Mission <https://gsc.net/ministries/mission-ministry/>



**Be open to
new
sources of
work that
help the
poor and
vulnerable**



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Through the Work Experience Program, you can custom train individuals to meet the needs of your business. Our program takes people with little or no work experience and pays their wages while you teach them the day-to-day of a job in the real world.

The trainee is introduced to work and its technical requirements while learning personal skills and qualities needed to succeed in employment.

Your business will benefit from having an extra worker on hand at no cost while providing this trainee with opportunities for career exploration and skills development.

MAIN OBJECTIVES

- To help the trainee develop good work habits and useful skills.
- To provide a record of skills developed as a result of this work experience.
- To provide a source of income for the trainee.

BENEFITS TO EMPLOYERS

- 100% of the trainee's wages are paid by Workforce Solutions North Texas during the training period.
- Get no cost help for the training you provide.
- Be an instrumental component of our mission to place North Texans in jobs and equip workers with skills that foster economic development.
- Interact with prospective future employees prior to employment.

CONTACT US

4309 Old Jacksboro Hwy - Entrance 5
Wichita Falls, TX 76302
Phone: (940) 322-1801
Toll Free: (800) 333-8209

★★★★★
WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS
NORTH TEXAS

A proud partner of the [americanjobcenter](#) network



“Lord, what shall we do?” (Luke 3:10)

Continue with Charity and Work for Justice



Remember:

“God knows your heart!”

“Love for others, and in the first place love for the poor, in whom the Church sees Christ himself, is made concrete in the promotion of justice.” (Centesimus annus, 58)



Homework

- 1. Act (using “Mustard Seed Commitments” and “Two Feet of Love”)**
 - Between now and Thanksgiving, what 1-2 specific work-worker actions that you do?
 - Between Thanksgiving and Christmas, what 2-3 additional work-worker actions that you do?

- 2. Read**
 - **Mustard Seed Commitments** <https://www.usccb.org/resources/catholic-social-teaching-mustard-seed-commitments>
 - **Catechism of Catholic Church** (paragraphs 2426 – 2436)
 - **US Catholic Catechism for Adults** (pages 419-427)
 - **Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church** (pages 255 - 322)
 - **USCCB information on CST of Dignity of Work and Worker Rights**
<https://mailchi.mp/usccb/finding-christ-in-the-most-vulnerable-4849461?e=41b41f67ec>
<https://www.usccb.org/resources/CST%20Mustard%20Seed%20Commitments.pdf>



**CATHOLIC SOCIAL
TEACHING SERIES**



Catholic Social Teaching Introduction to Laudato Si' Action Platform



**October 10, 2026
930 -- 1100 am
St. Maria Goretti (Room 2)**

Abstract: The Laudato Si' Action Platform is a tool to help guide our actions as stewards of God's Creation. Join us for a workshop as we use the Platform to explore the goals of Laudato Si' and

- **Select from suggested and specific creative actions as Individuals and Families.**
- **Add our own ideas as stewards of Creation**
- **Build a personal Laudato Si Action Plan**



Closing Prayer

Calling on God as our Liberator

...