



Principles of Catholic Social Teaching & the Earth Charter

Sister Theresa Nagle

Sister Theresa Nagle (Canada) became a School Sister of Notre Dame in 1981. For most of her religious life she was involved in Parish and Pastoral work in various areas of Canada. Since 2000 she has been the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation coordinator for the School Sisters of Notre Dame in Canada. She works extensively with our Stop Human Trafficking Committee and the anti-poverty group in Hamilton, ON. She's been actively involved in groups such as the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, Council of Canadians, and Kairos.

Catholic social teaching – the official body of teachings of the Roman Catholic Church on social, economic, and political issues – connects with the Earth Charter in a number of important ways. The following chart demonstrates this, showing different principles of Catholic Social Teaching (CST) and the corresponding principles in the Earth Charter (EC). Our community has found a number of ways to put these principles from Catholic social teaching and the Earth Charter into action; these are presented in the third column of this chart.

Catholic Social Teaching	Earth Charter	Corresponding Actions
<p>1. Dignity of the Human Person – Human life is sacred and the dignity of all persons is vital. This principle is grounded in the idea that the person is made in the image of God and is the clearest reflection of God among us.</p>	<p>11. Affirm gender equality and equity as prerequisites to sustainable development and ensure universal access to education, health care, and economic opportunity</p> <p>a. Secure the human rights of women and girls and end all violence against them.</p> <p>b. Promote the active participation of women in all aspects of economic, political, civil, social, and cultural life as full and equal partners, decision makers, leaders, and beneficiaries.</p> <p>c. Strengthen families and ensure the safety and loving nurture of all family members.</p>	<p>STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING I am part of our 'Stop Human Trafficking Committee,' which gives educational presentations throughout the year for different groups and youth. We have one workshop each year to invite a speaker to further educate us and the public about this terrible crime. People are used as property; as 21st century slaves, for the sex trade, labour or other reasons. No country is untouched by it. It strips women, men and children of their dignity. Fortunately there are more and more groups across the globe that are educating and advocating about this issue. We also have materials and books available to take or buy for further education.</p>

Catholic Social Teaching	Earth Charter	Corresponding Actions
<p>2. CST - Common Good and Community – Our dignity and rights are in relationship with those of others. How we organize our society – in economics and politics, in law and policy - directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. Everyone has a responsibility to contribute to the good of the whole society - the common good.</p>	<p>2. Care for the community of life with understanding, compassion and love Accept that with the right to own, manage, and use natural resources comes the duty to prevent environmental harm and protect the rights of people. Affirm that with increased freedom, knowledge, and power comes increased responsibility to promote the common good.</p>	<p>KAIROS – It unites eleven churches and religious congregations in faithful action for ecological justice and human rights. This is in response to the call to “do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8). They defend dignity and human rights for all; promote sustainable energy policies; build right relations with Indigenous peoples; inspire Canadians to seek climate justice; link women of courage around the world in common actions to end violence; and urge companies to respect human rights and ecological integrity. KAIROS’ work in sustainability focuses on four interconnected areas: climate justice, resource extraction, corporate accountability and global finance.</p>
<p>3. Option for the Poor – The moral test of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable members. We are called to look at public policy decisions in terms of how they affect the poor.</p> <p>A healthy community can be achieved only if its members give special attention to those with special needs, to those who are poor and on the margins of society.</p>	<p>9. Eradicate poverty as an ethical, social, and environmental imperative.</p> <p>b. Empower every human being with the education and resources to secure a sustainable livelihood, and provide social security and safety nets for those who are unable to support themselves.</p> <p>c. Recognize the ignored, protect the vulnerable, serve those who suffer, and enable them to develop their capacities and to pursue their aspirations.</p>	<p>ANTI-POVERTY GROUP in HAMILTON, ONTARIO This is an interdenominational group of which I am a part. The members of the group are the poor and those who advocate for them. We have peaceful rallies to bring awareness to and educate politicians and the public about the plight of those who are receiving social assistance or have low paying, part time employment. We work with other groups to organize all candidates meetings for elections for local, provincial and federal governments to assure that poverty issues are on the agenda. We have public forums to educate the public and to advocate for better conditions for the poor.</p>

Catholic Social Teaching	Earth Charter	Corresponding Actions
<p>4. Rights and Responsibilities – Human rights must be protected. Every person has a fundamental right to life and to what is needed including food, shelter and clothing, employment, health care, and education. With these rights comes a responsibility to one another, to our families and to the larger society.</p>	<p>9. Eradicate poverty as an ethical, social, and environmental imperative.</p> <p>a. Guarantee the right to potable water, clean air, food security, uncontaminated soil, shelter, and safe sanitation, allocating the national and international resources required.</p>	<p>UN -WORLD WATER DAY & WATER BOTTLE FREE ZONE IN CANADA I connect with other groups for events on World Water Day to educate that access to water is a human right and should be available to all. Water Bottle Free Zone is a campaign to remove bottled water from work places, schools and government meetings, and to replace it with permanent plastic bottles which can be refilled from the taps, or to use pitchers of water. We educate around this issue because water bottles are owned by corporations who deplete water systems and who see water as a commodity to sell rather than a human right and a necessity. Also, the bottles are often thrown into the garbage and end up in landfills. These plastic bottles are made from oil. Both of these special days are in March.</p>
<p>7. Stewardship of God’s Creation –The goods of the earth are gifts from God, and they are intended for the benefit of everyone. We have a responsibility to care for these goods as stewards and trustees, not as mere consumers and users. How we treat the environment is a sign of our respect for our Creator.</p>	<p>7. Adopt patterns of production, consumption, and reproduction that safeguard Earth’s regenerative capacities, human rights, and community well-being.</p> <p>a. Reduce, reuse, and recycle the materials used in production and consumption systems, and ensure that residual waste can be assimilated by ecological systems.</p> <p>b. Act with restraint and efficiency when using energy, and rely increasingly on renewable energy sources such as solar and wind.</p> <p>c. Adopt lifestyles that emphasize the quality of life and material sufficiency in a finite world.</p>	<p>ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION We promote and educate others about the 3 R’s (reduce, reuse and recycle), and we reduce our own paper use wherever possible. We recycle papers, cans, bottles and anything else that is recyclable. We also compost, making less garbage for the landfill. We try to get others to do the same. We receive and pray intercessions from Earth Care Connections. ECC promotes the conscious choice of living sustainably on small or median-sized farms, creating a healthy food system that supports a life-style valued by Saskatchewan residents.</p>

Catholic Social Teaching

8. Promotion of Peace and Disarmament

- In the words of Pope John Paul 11, "Peace is not just the absence of war. It involves mutual respect and confidence between peoples and nations. It involves collaboration and binding agreements." There is a close relationship in Catholic teaching between peace and justice. Peace is the fruit of justice and is dependent upon right order among human beings.

Earth Charter

16. Promote a culture of tolerance, nonviolence, and peace.

- a. Encourage and support mutual understanding, solidarity, and cooperation among all peoples and within and among nations.
- b. Implement comprehensive strategies to prevent violent conflict and use collaborative problem solving to manage and resolve environmental conflicts and other disputes.
- c. Demilitarize national security systems to the level of a non-provocative defense posture, and convert military resources to peaceful purposes, including ecological restoration.
- d. Eliminate nuclear, biological, and toxic weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

Corresponding Actions

WORLD DAY OF PEACE – SEPT. 21ST

We take part in activities on Sept. 21st each year and have a prayer service to pray that peace will become more and more a reality. We have planted a homemade peace pole on our property and have encouraged other places and churches to do the same, as a symbol that we promote peace. We take part in a Peace Medal breakfast in November in Hamilton, Ontario to support adults and youth in the area, who receive these medals for work they have done to promote peace