



# Catholic Social Teaching: Sharing the Secret...

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**21 November, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.:** National Justice & Peace AGM, to be held in London with Zoom access available to those who cannot travel. Please book through Eventbrite:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/njpn-agm-networking-day-tickets-121751701617>

**25 November to 2 December:** Week of action sponsored by the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign to make the UN Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people.

For more information, please see <https://www.palestinecampaign.org/>

**7 December: Pax Christi Advent Peace Service.** This will be an online event with music, readings, messages, songs, and a

## Conversion of Heart

Dear young friends,

Only conversion of heart can make our world, which is full of terror and violence, more humane. And that means patience, justice, prudence, dialogue, integrity, solidarity with victims, the needy, and the poorest, limitless dedication, love even unto death for the sake of the other. When you have understood that quite deeply, then you can change the world as committed Christians. The world cannot continue down the path that it is taking now. If a Christian in these days looks away from the need of the poorest of the poor, then in reality he or she is not a Christian!

Can we not do more to make this revolution of love and justice a reality in many parts of this tormented planet? The social doctrine of the church can help so many people!

**Pope Francis, Foreword to the young people’s book on Catholic Social Teaching (DOCAT: What to Do?)**

## Institutions and Corporations

Jean Jacques Rousseau said: “Man is naturally good, but institutions make him bad, so let us overthrow institutions.”

I say: Man is partly good and partly bad, but corporations, not institutions, make him worse.

“An institution,” said Emerson, “is the extension of the soul of a man.” Institutions are founded to foster the welfare of the masses. Corporations are organized to promote wealth for the few.

So let us found smaller and better institutions and not promote bigger corporations.

**Peter Maurin, Easy Essays**

virtual marketplace afterward. For more information, please see the website [https://paxchristi.org.uk/event/advent-peace-service-online/?instance\\_id=925](https://paxchristi.org.uk/event/advent-peace-service-online/?instance_id=925)



All Christians, their pastors included, are called to show concern for the building of a better world....The Church's social thought is primarily positive: it offers proposals, it works for change, and in this sense it constantly points to the hope born of the loving heart of Jesus Christ.

Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (83)



The Coronavirus situation has made many rethink how they spend money, what they can do to be greener, and how they can help to leave a better world for their children.

Among the suggestions are the following:

- Ask yourself "Do I really need this?" Spend less and put what you've saved into an ethical bank account
- Boycott unethical companies. An organization called Ethical Consumer can identify some who fail to provide good working conditions
- Consider buying secondhand tech items and clothing
- Change the way you travel, such as by using an electric car, bicycle, car sharing or car pooling
- Reduce your meat and dairy consumption, as by trying some vegan dishes or having vegetarian days

## New "Social Encyclical" Published by Pope Francis

Just a few weeks ago, Pope Francis signed his new encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, which Vatican News describes as a "social encyclical" seeking to foster a universal sense of fraternity and a renewed recognition that we all belong to one human family.

He had already begun writing it when he found himself blindsided by the sudden appearance of the coronavirus pandemic. Pope Francis said that the global crisis showed in a very real way that none of us can face life in isolation, and that the time had come to dream that all nations can come together as one in a shared objective. The fact that the pandemic reached nearly every country in the world made this even more pressing.

The National Catholic Reporter (US) made the following observations:

1. The encyclical is not something you can breeze through. It is meant to be read slowly and digested over a long period of time.
2. Much of it is not really new but consists of ideas and principles that need to be restated again and again.
3. There are no simple solutions to complex problems, but instead Pope Francis encourages dialogue and inclusion.

The encyclical consists of eight chapters. This month's newsletter looks at the first four chapters; the December issue will cover the last four.

**Chapter 1: Dark Clouds Over a Closed World.** This chapter might seem to be grim reading indeed, as it spells out in no uncertain terms the multitude of problems facing today's world. Pope Francis tackles such topics as shattered dreams, the growing loss of a sense of history, lack of a plan for all, living in a "throwaway" world, insufficiently universal human rights, globalization and progress without a shared road map, absence of human dignity at borders, shameless verbal attacks on various social groups, and an information explosion without corresponding wisdom. But this chapter ends with the heading "Hope." With God, nothing is ever hopeless, and we are urged to advance along the paths of trust in love and goodness.

**Chapter 2: A Stranger on the Road.** This chapter opens with an account of the parable of the Good Samaritan. One of the questions Francis asks is, "Which of the characters in the parable do you identify with?" It can be quite distressing to think of the many times we fail to do all we can to help others in need or in pain. But as Francis also points out, every day offers a new opportunity, another possibility to start anew. Christians are always called to recognise Christ himself in each person we meet, no matter what their circumstances.

**Chapter 3: Envisaging and Engendering an Open World.** Chapter 3 calls us to move beyond ourselves and also beyond our families and immediate communities. The spiritual stature of a person's life is measured by love, which should always take first place and leads us away from selfishness to seek the good of others.



Christianity has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult and never tried.

G.K. Chesterton, English writer and convert to Catholicism



All created things show the goodness and generosity of the Creator; the sun sheds light, the fire heat, every tree extends its arms, which are its boughs, and yields us the fruit which it produces, and the water and the air and all nature shows the liberality of the Creator. It is because of avarice, I say, that we who are His living image do not represent Him, but by our unloving selfishness deny Him in our actions, although with our mouth we confess Him.

St Philip Neri (1515-1595)



The sacraments are only empty signs...if Christians do not translate the new life that has been granted to them into authentic action. One cannot go to Communion and at the same time deny others their daily bread. The sacraments call us to a love that is willing "to go out of [itself] and to go to the peripheries, not only geographically, but also to the existential peripheries: the mystery of sin, of suffering, of injustice, of ignorance and indifference to religion, of intellectual currents, and of all sorts of poverty."

Pope Francis (speech, 2013)

Christians must always respect the dignity of others and recognise that human rights are not limited by national borders. Although there is a God-given right to private property, it is not absolute when other people's lives are at stake.

**Chapter 4: A Heart Open to the Whole World.** This chapter deals mainly with migration; while affirming that unnecessary migration should be avoided by ensuring people have, in their native countries, a living wage and the conditions that allow them to live in dignity and safety, Pope Francis recognises that sometimes people do need to seek a better life in another country, especially when fleeing war or persecution. What is needed is a proper balance between protecting the rights of citizens and guaranteeing a welcome and assistance to migrants. The need is urgent, as migrations have increased globally, and international cooperation and planning are essential in today's world.

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## Carlo Acutis: Teen Computer Geek Named a 'Blessed'



A teenager clad in tracksuit and sneakers is not what people typically envision when they think of holiness or sainthood.

But on October 10, Pope Francis beatified Carlo Acutis, a 15 year old computer devotee who died of leukemia on October 12, 2006. Although Carlo was born in London on May 3, 1991, his parents moved to Italy when he was only a few months old, and he lived in Milan for the rest of his life.



## What Social Problems Does Globalisation Bring With It?

Accelerated globalization such as occurs today unfortunately does not mean that all countries are equally developed and that all people can benefit to a similar extent from its networking. Quite the contrary: problems such as poverty, hunger, lack of education, poor health care, and human rights violations are still daily occurrences. Poorer countries are often extremely dependent on how much the better developed countries produce in them or buy from them. At the same time, the wages paid to workers in poorer countries are extremely low. For example, a seamstress in Bangladesh receives only two or three cents for a T-shirt that costs about \$5 in United States. This gives rise to injustices, and many are deprived of fundamental human rights. In addition, wealthier countries often deplete poorer countries of their natural resources and leave them destitute and with contaminated water supplies. Globalisation, therefore, not only has some advantages but also aggravates many problems or even causes them in the first place.

### DOCAT: What To Do? The Social Teaching of the Catholic Church



The administration of the government must be conducted for the benefit of those entrusted to one's care, not to those to whom it is entrusted.

Marcus Tullius Cicero, Roman politician (106-43 B.C.)

Carlo was noted for his cheerfulness, his computer skills, and his devotion to the Eucharist. He was very devout and became a catechist at the age of 11.

It was his love for the Eucharist that led him to a fascination with Eucharistic miracles (such as when the sacred Host is seen to levitate). To help others grow in devotion, he used his digital media skills to develop a website that catalogued known sites of Eucharistic miracles, which number in the thousands. He had a keen desire to go on pilgrimage to some of these sites, but leukemia intervened. The list he created can be accessed at <http://www.miracolieucaistici.org/en/Liste/list.html> .

However, despite being a computer geek, he warned other young people that although the internet can be a blessing, it can also be a curse and lead to hate speech, bullying, stalking, and other well-known social media problems.

Carlo also was active in helping the poor, sometimes using his savings to buy sleeping bags for the homeless, brought them hot drinks, and volunteered at a soup kitchen in Milan. In his honour, a soup kitchen has recently been opened in Assisi, where he was beatified.

Carlo's mother believes she herself has received a miracle from Carlo: four years to the day of his death she gave birth to twins.

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## Capitalism, CST and Pope John Paul II

In view of the spectacular failure of the central planning economy in the Soviet system, Pope John Paul II wrote "If by 'capitalism' is meant an economic system which recognizes the fundamental and positive role of business, the market, private property, and the resulting responsibility for the means of production, as well as free human creativity in the economic sector, then the answer [to whether capitalism is compatible with human dignity] is certainly in the affirmative, even though it would perhaps be more appropriate to speak of a 'business economy,' market economy,' or simply 'free economy.' But if by 'capitalism' is meant a system in which freedom in the economic sector is not circumscribed within a strong juridical framework which places it at the service of human freedom in its totality, and which sees it as a particular aspect of that freedom, the core of which is ethical and religious, then the reply is certainly negative."

**Pope John Paul II, Centesimus Annus (42)**