Catholic Social Teaching:
*Human Dignity & the Common Good*

Spiritual Care Champions
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Objectives

- Understand some core concepts about Catholic Social Teaching, especially themes related to the dignity of the person and the common good
- Understand how Catholic Social Teaching practically affects the delivery of care, including pastoral and spiritual care services, and self-understanding of the Catholic health ministry
Agenda

- Catholic Social Teaching
- Personal Voice
- Dignity of the Person
  - Scriptural Foundations
  - Teaching
- Common Good
  - Scriptural Foundations
  - Teaching
- Health Care Applications
- Discussion
Catholic Social Teaching
Catholic Social Teaching

- **Subject**
  - Persons-in-community
  - Rights and responsibilities
  - Dynamic expression of persons and communities as co-creators

- **Sources**
  - Scripture
  - Teaching
  - Community Praxis/Action
Catholic Social Teaching

■ Purpose

● 1. Personal
  ✓ Guidance for reflection, living, participation

● 2. Ecclesial
  ✓ Active participation in society
  ✓ Shapes responses for influencing society

● 3. Social
  ✓ Dialogue with society and all disciplines
  ✓ Speaks to and influences conversation, public policy and practice
Catholic Social Teaching

- Reflection on Human Experience
  - Paying Attention – Lonergan
    - Intentional disposition and practice
  - Praxis – Aristotle & Freire
    - Knowledge directed toward action
  - Dangerous Memory – Metz & Groome
    - Keeping alive memory in order to act

*Know through engagement of the whole person.*
Catholic Social Teaching

“Church's social doctrine “belongs to the field, not of ideology, but of theology and particularly of moral theology.” It cannot be defined according to socio-economic parameters. It is not an ideological or pragmatic system intended to define and generate economic, political and social relationships, but is a category unto itself.

It is “the accurate formulation of the results of a careful reflection on the complex realities of human existence, in society and in the international order, in the light of faith and of the Church's tradition …”

- Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church
Personal Voice
Voice

Witnessing Voicelessness
- Without a voice
- Deprived of voice - silenced

Personal Experiences of Voicelessness
- As receivers?
  ✓ At work, at home, in society
- As agents?
  ✓ At work, at home, in society
Having a Voice

What does it mean *not* to have a voice?
Having a Voice

A central theme of Catholic Social Teaching is about the importance of relationships:

- Of living in community
- Of full participation
- Of having a voice
Having a Voice

Having a voice is one of the important ways in which:

- We express our dignity as persons
- Our dignity is acknowledged and honored by others
Dignity of the Person
Scriptural Foundations

- **Psalm 139: 14**
  - “I praise you, so wonderfully you made me; wonderful are your works…”

- **Genesis 1: 27**
  - “God created human beings in his own image…”
  - *Imago Dei*

- **Genesis 2:7**
  - God’s breath of life brings to persons to life
Scriptural Foundations

- *Imago Dei* is constitutive
  - Not added on, extra or after the fact
  - The truth of the human person includes being created in the divine image
  - What it means to be a human person is precisely to be created in God’s image

*Human person is the clearest reflection of God.*
Scriptural Foundations

- Naturally oriented toward God
  - The human person as a “capacity for God”
    - “…my soul thirsts for the living God…” – Psalm 42
    - Capax Dei – Augustine’s De Trinitate
    - Natural hunger, longing, thirst, openness
  - Only satisfied by final vision of God
    - “We see now as through a glass darkly; but then face to face…” – 1 Cor. 13
    - Aquinas, Cajetan, deLubac, Rahner
Scriptural Foundations

- Naturally drawn toward eternity
  - Uniquely spiritual and oriented toward eternal life
  - Uniquely self-aware and self-reflective
  - In search of meaning and purpose
  - “… put timelessness in their hearts…” - Ecclesiastes 3:11
“We are all pilgrims on the roads of our life. There is always something ahead of us that we have not yet overtaken.

“When we do catch up with something it immediately becomes an injunction to leave it behind us and to go onwards. Every end becomes a beginning.”

- Karl Rahner, *Prayers and Meditations and Prayers*
Teaching

- Rights and obligations flow directly from human nature
  - *Pacem in Terris*, 1963
- The sublime dignity of the human person
  - *Gaudium et Spes*, 1965
- Persons are willed by God
  - *Centesimus Annus*, 1991
- Clearest reflection of God’s presence in the world
  - *The Challenge of Peace*, 1983
- All enjoy equal dignity
  - *Catechism #1934*, 1994
Practical Principles

Shared Statement on Catholic Identity

*Catholic Health Association*
Practical Principles

- Principles
  - Every person is a treasure
  - Every life is a sacred gift
  - Every person is a unity of body, mind, spirit
  - Persons are more important than things
  - The measure of every institution is how it enhances or diminishes human dignity
Practical Applications

Applications
- Find the hidden treasures
- Recognize holiness as embodied
- Focus on holistic approaches to the person
- Creative critique of materialism
- Analysis of all institutions on light of the human person
Dignity of the Person

Expression of personal freedom, creativity and voice

&

Attendant rights and responsibilities
The Common Good
Scriptural Foundations

- **Amos 5:14**
  - “Seek good and not evil that you may live…let justice prevail at the gate…”

- **Matthew 10:8**
  - “Freely you have received, freely give.”

- **Acts 2:44**
  - “…but they had everything in common…”

- **1 Cor. 12:7**
  - “…but to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

- **1 Peter 4:8**
  - “Use gifts to serve one another.”
Scriptural Foundations

- Community is for persons
- The person is revealed in community
- Universal destination of goods
- Preferential option of the poor
- No one is exempt from participation and cooperation – both a right and a duty
- Political structures are a means, not an end
Teaching

“The common good embraces the sum total of all those conditions of social life which enable individuals, families, and organizations to achieve complete and effective fulfillment.”

- John XXIII, Mater et Magistra, 1961
Teaching

- The common advantage of all is to be pursued
  - *Quadragesimo Anno*, 1931
- Whole reason for civil authorities is the realization of the common good
  - *Pacem in Terris*, 1961
- Contribute to the common good according to one’s means
  - *Gaudium et Spes*, 1965
- Love of neighbor include broader commitment to the common good
  - *Economic Justice for All*, 1983
Teaching

- Concerns the life of all
- Requires prudence from each, but even more from those who exercise authority
- Three essential elements
  - Respect for the person, with inalienable rights
  - Social well being and development
  - Peace, i.e. secure, stable, just order

- Catechism, #1906-1909, 1994
Practical Principles

Shared Statement on Catholic Identity

Catholic Health Association
Practical Principles

- Principles
  - Work to bring about Gospel vision of justice and peace
  - Promote wellness for all persons and communities
  - Special attention and service to neighbors who are poor and vulnerable
Practical Applications

- Applications
  - Participate in neighborhood, community, national, world-wide activities
  - Encourage the participation of others
  - Support just social practices
  - Speak out against injustices on all levels
  - Witness by personal example and service
Health Care Applications
Health Care Applications

- **Mission**
  - Ministry of the Church
  - Broadly understood and respectful
  - Catholic identity as an expression of specific commitments

- **Administration**
  - Ministry leaders
  - Commitment to organization’s mission on behalf of persons and communities
  - More than the veneer of Catholic commitment
Health Care Applications

Ethics

- Within context of *whole* Catholic tradition
- Social context and community responsibility
- Virtue ethics: existing moral sensitivity and role of developing habits
- Focus on organizational ethics
  - Workplace justice
  - Inclusivity and diversity
  - Compensation
  - Participation and association
Health Care Applications

- Pastoral and Spiritual Care
  - Respect for the dignity of persons, including diverse religious and spiritual expressions
  - Care for persons in their wholeness: mind, body, spirit
  - Attend to the communities which form and influence the development of persons
  - Assist with other caregivers in understanding and respecting these dimensions
  - Collaborate with local communities
Pastoral Circle

- **Personal Experience**
  - What is it?

- **Social Analysis**
  - What does it mean in this context?

- **Faith Reflection**
  - What does faith say and call us to?

- **Planning & Action**
  - What do we do?

- **Evaluation**
“From the Heart of the Church”

Judith Merkle

A New Vision for Community

- Communities of Shared History
- Communities of Mutuality
- Communities that are pluralistic
- Communities that are autonomous
Discussion
Questions & Conversation

■ What are some of the challenges?
  - Personally
  - Professionally
  - Organizationally

■ How do you address those challenges?

■ What is the role of Catholic Social Teaching in the health ministry?
Thank you.