

Our Faith and Economic Justice



Economic Justice

Economics should be governed by justice, not simply by the laws of the marketplace.

The economy is a means by which people are enabled to share in the resources of the world.

Social Location

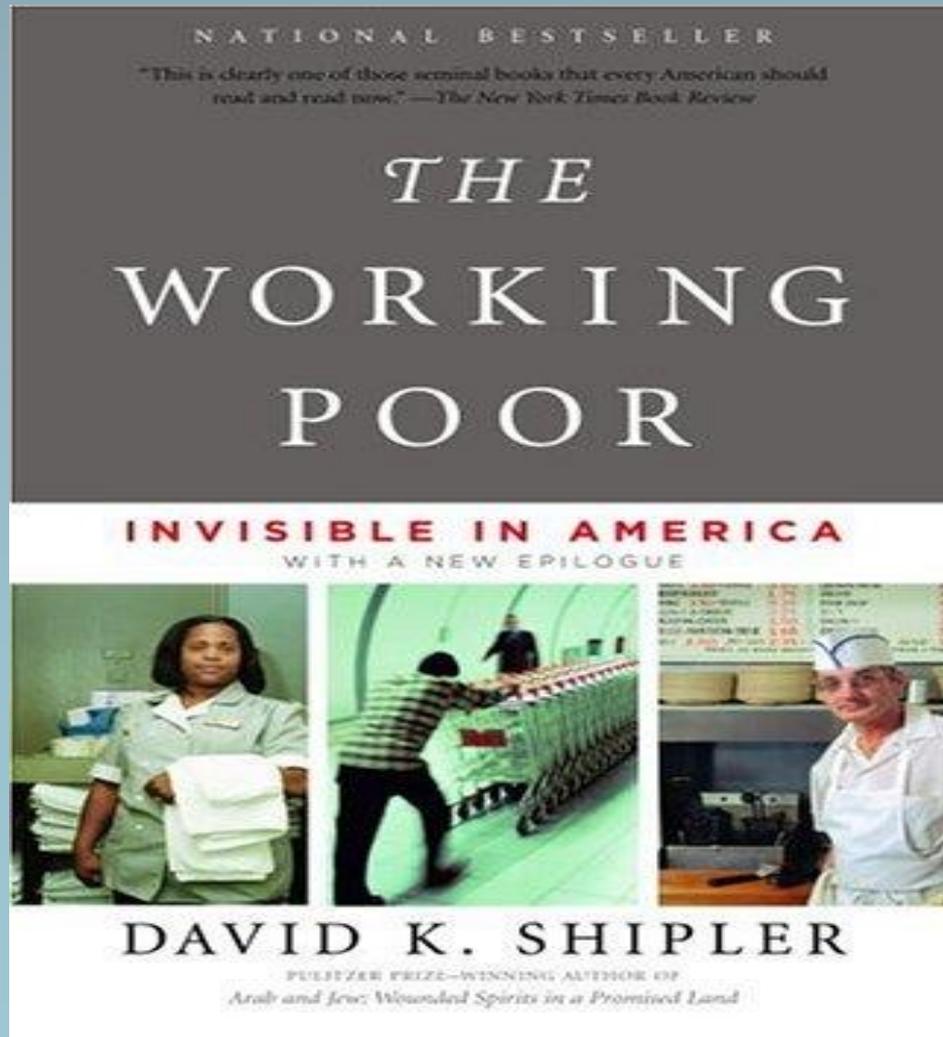
What is my safety-net?

Signs of the Times

1. What is the level of poverty in the U.S.?
2. How do we assess income inequality? Is the present income inequality too great?
3. How do we assess wages? Are wages too low?
4. What is the just way for our federal government to spend our money?
5. What is economic justice in a global economy?



Christie's Story



Jesus and the Gospels

Scripture mentions the responsibility to care for the poor over 300 times compared to sexuality only about 7 times.

Luke 4:18-19

Luke 6:20; 24

Luke 18: 18-23

Luke 16: 19-31

Matthew 25



Catholic Social Teaching

Key Texts for Economic Justice

Rights and Duties of Capital and Labor, Pope Leo XIII, 1891

Reconstruction of the Social Order, Pope Pius XI, 1931

Mother and Teacher, Pope John XXIII, 1961

Peace on Earth, Pope John XXIII, 1963

Development of Peoples, Pope Paul VI, 1967

Justice in the World, Synod of Bishops, 1971

On Human Work, Pope John Paul II, 1981

Economic Justice for All, USCCB, 1986

On Social Concern, Pope John Paul II, 1987

Compendium of the Social Doctrine, 2004

“Towards reforming the international financial and monetary systems in the context of global public authority,” Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace, 2011

Catholic Social Teaching

Rights and Duties of Capital and Labor, Pope Leo XIII, 1891

Wages were not to be decided by what employers or employees could get away with under the working of the market. Instead of a merely economic wage a worker had a right to be paid a 'just wage'. This would be negotiated by free collective bargaining, but should allow a worker to live in 'reasonable comfort.'

Catholic Social Teaching

Mother and Teacher, Pope John XXIII, 1961

“the Church is called in truth, justice and love to cooperate in building with all men and women an authentic communion. In this way economic growth will not be limited to satisfying person’s needs, but it will also promote their dignity.”



Catholic Social Teaching

Development of Peoples, Pope Paul VI, 1967

“economic development is surest road to peace”

Justice in World, Synod of Bishops, 1971

1. We must stand with the poor and oppressed to be faithful to gospel

2. “action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel”

3. It is necessary to work for structural change

Catholic Social Teaching

On Social Concern, Saint Pope John Paul II,
1987

“war and military preparations are the major enemy of integral development of peoples”

“private property has a social mortgage or function: based on universal destination of goods”



Catholic Social Teaching

Economic Principles: USCCB's 1996 Framework

The economy exists for the person, not the person for the economy.

All economic life should be shaped by moral principles. Economic choices and institutions must be judged by how they protect or undermine the life and dignity of the human person, support the family and serve the common good.

A fundamental moral measure of any economy is how the poor and vulnerable are faring.

All people have a right to life and to secure the basic necessities of life (e.g., food, clothing, shelter, education, health care, safe environment, economic security.)

All people have the right to economic initiative, to productive work, to just wages and benefits, to decent working conditions as well as to organize and join unions or other associations.

Catholic Social Teaching

Economic Principles: USCCB's 1996 Framework

All people, to the extent they are able, have a corresponding duty to work, a responsibility to provide the needs of their families and an obligation to contribute to the broader society.

Society has a moral obligation, including governmental action where necessary, to assure opportunity, meet basic human needs, and pursue justice in economic life.

Workers, owners, managers, stockholders and consumers are moral agents in economic life. By our choices, initiative, creativity and investment, we enhance or diminish economic opportunity, community life and social justice.

The global economy has moral dimensions and human consequences. Decisions on investment, trade, aid and development should protect human life and promote human rights, especially for those most in need wherever they might live on this globe.

CST and Economic Systems

The pros and cons about capitalism and socialism are reflected in Reconstruction of Social Order (QA), 1931

Capitalistic System:

“With all his energy Leo XIII sought to adjust this economic system according to the norms of right order; hence, it is evident that this system is not to be condemned in itself. But it does violate right order when capital hires workers, that is, the non-owning working class, with a view to and under such terms that it directs business and even the whole economic system according to its own will and advantage, scorning the human dignity of the workers, the social character of economic activity and social justice itself, and the common good. #101 QA

CST and Economic Systems

Socialism:

“Socialism inclines toward and in a certain measure approaches the truths which Christian tradition has always held sacred; for it cannot be denied that its demands at times come very near those that Christian reformers of society justly insist upon.” 113

“If the foregoing happens, it can come even to the point that imperceptibly these ideas of the more moderate socialism will no longer differ from the desires and demands of those who are striving to remold human society on the basis of Christian principles.” 114

CST and Economic Systems

Appropriate Response:

Spirit of Cooperation: reflected in Credit unions and Cooperative Businesses. *Example: Mondragon Cooperative in Spain*



Capitalism in the Encyclicals

St. Pope John Paul

“The Church's social doctrine is not a "third way" between liberal capitalism and Marxist collectivism, nor even a possible alternative to other solutions less radically opposed to one another: rather, it constitutes a category of its own.”

“Its main aim is to interpret these realities, determining their conformity with or divergence from the lines of the Gospel teaching on the human person and our vocation.”

SRS #41

Social Responsibility of Capital in Encyclicals

Pope Benedict XVI

“Today's international capital market offers great freedom of action. Yet there is also increasing awareness of the need for greater *social responsibility* on the part of business.”

“There is a growing conviction that *business management cannot concern itself only with the interests of the proprietors, but must also assume responsibility for all the other stakeholders who contribute to the life of the business: the workers, the clients, the suppliers of various elements of production, the community of reference.*” Caritas in Veritate, 2009 #40

Social Responsibility of Capital in Encyclicals

Pope Francis

“Saving banks at any cost, making the public pay the price, foregoing a firm commitment to reviewing and reforming the entire system, only reaffirms the absolute power of a financial system, a power which has no future and will only give rise to new crises after a slow, costly and only apparent recovery.”

“The financial crisis of 2007-08 provided an **opportunity to develop a new economy**, more attentive to ethical principles, and new ways of regulating speculative financial practices and virtual wealth. But the response to the crisis did not include rethinking the outdated criteria which continue to rule the world.” Laudato Si # 189

Economy that Kills

Pope Francis

“Just as the commandment “Thou shalt not kill” sets a clear limit in order to safeguard the value of human life, today we also have to say “thou shalt not” to an economy of exclusion and inequality. **Such an economy kills.**”

“How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points? This is a case of exclusion. Can we continue to stand by when food is thrown away while people are starving? This is a case of inequality. Today everything comes under the laws of competition and the survival of the fittest, where the powerful feed upon the powerless. As a consequence, masses of people find themselves excluded and marginalized: without work, without possibilities, without any means of escape.” Joy of the Gospel, 53



Economy that Kills

U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops, Economic Justice for All, 1986

“We are dismayed that the United States, once the pioneer in foreign aid, is almost the last among the seventeen industrialized nations in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in percentage of GNP devoted to aid” 266



Economy that Kills

U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops, Economic Justice for All, 1986

“The hundreds of billions of dollars spent by our nation each year on the **arms race** create a massive drain on the U.S. economy as well as a very serious “brain drain.” Such spending on the arms race means a net loss in the number of jobs created in the economy, because defense industries are less labor-intensive than other major sectors of the economy.”

Economy that Kills

U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops, Economic Justice for All, 1986

“Moreover, nearly half of the American scientific and engineering force works in defense-related programs and over 60 percent of the entire federal research and development budget goes to the military. We must ask whether our nation *will ever* be able to modernize our economy and achieve full employment if we continue to devote so much of our financial and human resources to defense-related activities” 148

March 3, 2017 [USCCB Letter to Congress on Budget](#)

Feb. 11, 2016 [CMSM Statement on Budget](#)

What can we do today?

Two feet of Justice: direct service and structural change—
root causes

1. Pay living wages <http://livingwage.mit.edu/>
2. Purchase from just institutions
www.betterworldshopper.org and <http://ethicaltrade.crs.org/>
3. Use credit unions and if you invest, only do so in just institutions www.iccr.org
4. Build cooperative businesses www.ncba.coop
5. Promote nonviolent practices, policies, and institutions
www.nonviolencejustpeace.net
6. Join local and national advocacy coalitions to ensure just economic policies based on the Gospels and CST

Peace be with you!