

CRS Guiding Principles

As the official international Catholic relief and development agency of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic Relief Services draws upon a rich tradition of Scripture and Catholic social teaching, which serve as the foundation for CRS' Guiding Principles. Acting as a guide to what a just world might look like, these Principles are shared across religious and cultural boundaries and articulate values that are common among people who seek to promote and work towards true justice and lasting peace.

Sacredness and Dignity of the Human Person

Created in the image of God, all human life is sacred and possesses a dignity that comes directly from our creation and not from any action of our own.

Rights and Responsibilities

Every person has basic rights and responsibilities that flow from our human dignity and that belong to us as human beings regardless of any social or political structures. The rights are numerous and include those things that make life truly human. Corresponding to our rights are duties and responsibilities to respect the rights of others and to work for the common good of all.

Social Nature of Humanity

All of us are social by nature and are called to live in community with others — our full human potential isn't realized in solitude, but in community with others. How we organize our families, societies and communities directly affects human dignity and our ability to achieve our full human potential.

The Common Good

In order for all of us to have an opportunity to grow and develop fully, a certain social fabric must exist within society. This is the common good. Numerous social conditions — economic, political, material and cultural — impact our ability to realize our human dignity and reach our full potential.

Subsidiarity

A higher level of government — or organization — should not perform any function or duty that can be handled more effectively at a lower level by people who are closer to the problem and have a better understanding of the issue.

Solidarity

We are all part of one human family — whatever our national, racial, religious, economic or ideological differences — and in an increasingly interconnected world, loving our neighbor has global dimensions.

Option for the Poor

In every economic, political and social decision, a weighted concern must be given to the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable. When we do this we strengthen the entire community, because the powerlessness of any member wounds the rest of society.

Stewardship

There is inherent integrity to all of creation and it requires careful stewardship of all our resources, ensuring that we use and distribute them justly and equitably — as well as planning for future generations.