

Assumption Resurrection

## **Social Justice Reflection**

### **Principles of Social Justice: Dignity of the Human Person**

January 2025

The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. Every person is precious; we do not earn dignity by any actions, dignity has not been invented as the domain of a select few. Dignity is an intrinsic 'given' because we have all been created by God, in God's image, and we are obligated to treat everyone with respect and compassion. There are numerous examples where human dignity is denied: when people are excluded, marginalized, or forced to live in unsafe or unhealthy conditions; when unequal economic structures deprive people of basic needs; when natural disasters disrupt the lives of people, leaving them without shelter or food. In Pope Francis' third encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti* (On Fraternity and Social Friendship), he states:

"The dignity of others is to be respected in all circumstances, not because that dignity is something we have invented or imagined, but because human beings possess an intrinsic worth superior to that of material objects and contingent situations. This requires that they be treated differently. That every human being possesses an inalienable dignity is a truth that corresponds to human nature apart from all cultural change. For this reason, human beings have the same inviolable dignity in every age of history and no one can consider himself or herself authorized by particular situations to deny this conviction or to act against it." For the start of further in depth reading, three suggested sites:

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2024-08/pope-all-christians-must-reaffirm-dignity-of-every-human-being.html>

<https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/life-and-dignity-of-the-human-person>

<https://rcpolitics.org/the-dignity-of-the-human-person>