

Social Justice Reflection  
The Common Good  
November 2024

The basic premise of social justice might be summed up as living in right relationship: with God, neighbor, self. A number of principles serve as foundations and models how we can attain these right relationships. One of them is the principle of the common good. Pope Francis, in his encyclical 'Laudato Si', full title: "LAUDATO SI', mi' Signore" – "Praise be to you, my Lord", states that the common good is "the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfilment". This implies that it is in our own self-interest to strive towards attaining the common good. Rather than submitting to the false notion that the world had a scarcity of resources, not 'enough to go around', thus compelling individuals to acquire more and more for themselves, the premise of working towards the common good implies there is an abundance of resources, enough for all, if distributed in a fair and equitable manner. But it is more than merely a distribution of material goods; a component of the common good also lies in a correct understanding of the dignity and the rights of individuals and groups of people. As far back as 1910, the Catholic Catechism stated: [It is in the] "*political community* that the most complete realization [of the common good] is found". (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1910*). Further to this: According to [their] means and position in society, [people] participate "in promoting the common good...by taking charge of the areas for which one assumes *personal responsibility*". (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1914*). For further insights, refer to the following resource pages. There are many, many others.

<https://capp-usa.org/laudato-si/#159>

<https://www.cwl.ca>

<https://www.catholic.com/magazine/print-edition/seven-principles-of-catholic-social-teaching>

<https://devp.org/en/catholic-social-teaching/common-good/>

<https://www.caritas.org/who-we-are/catholic-social-teaching/>