



Society of St. Vincent de Paul Council of the United States

Starting a Voice for the Poor Committee	4
Make Advocacy Part of your “Business Plan.”	5
Initiating the First Project	6
The Significance of Home Visits	7
Voice for the Poor Mentors /Regional committee leaders	7
Who are Official Spokespersons for the Society?	7
Appendix A.....	8
Example of VFP Conference Survey	8
Appendix B.....	9
Examples of Voice for the Poor advocacy	9
Appendix C.....	10
What does The Rule say about advocacy?.....	10
Appendix D	11
Difficult Questions, Catholic Answers	11
Appendix E.....	12
Papal statements on Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable	12
Appendix F	13
Web Resources	13
Appendix G	13

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The National Council Board of Directors rebranded the Voice of the Poor Committee to the Voice for the Poor Committee in 2024.

Updated March 2024

Starting and Sustaining a Voice for the Poor Committee



“The science of charity reform is not transmitted through books and at assemblies' tribunes as much as by climbing stairs in the home of the poor, kneeling at his bed, suffering from the same cold as he does, and discovering the secret of a grief-stricken heart in the course of a friendly conversation. When we have accomplished this ministry, not for months, but over long years; when we have thus studied the poor at home, at school, at the hospital, not only in one city but in several, and also in the country, in whatever condition God placed him, then we can start to know the formidable problem of misery, then we are entitled to propose serious measures...”

Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, 1848

It is with this mandate from our founder that the Society of St. Vincent de Paul established the Voice for the Poor in 2001. VFP is the advocacy arm of our Society, formed to educate Vincentians about public policy efforts which might negatively impact those we serve and encourage advocacy to mitigate harmful impact of those policies. We are completely nonpartisan and operate within the IRS guidelines for 501(c)(3) organizations. In 2024, the Voice of the Poor became the Voice for the Poor.

Mission Statement

In the spirit of Christian love and justice, the Voice for the Poor Committee upholds Catholic values by researching, validating, documenting, advocating, and promulgating issues related to the condition of those living in need and the disenfranchised for the purpose of helping Vincentians

live their faith by acting knowledgeably and credibly as a unified body, speaking with one voice to build up the kingdom of God.

The Rule of The Society of St. Vincent de Paul and Catholic Social Teaching

An entire chapter of our Rule (Sect. 7) is devoted to instructing Vincentians on our relationship with civil society working towards social justice. The Rule clearly states that we are to offer immediate helps but also see mid-term and long-term solutions. Likewise, Catholic teaching mandates action on behalf of justice and provides a framework for action that is deeply rooted in the example and teachings of Jesus. Like Vincent and Frederic our action must be carefully organized and set on a solid foundation that is basic to our Catholic faith. It is vital that we understand Catholic social teachings and the position of the Church. Documents, dating from the Second Vatican Council (*"The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World"*) to the present day.

Starting a Voice for the Poor Committee

There are numerous Voice for the Poor Committees nationwide and hundreds of Vincentians participating in Voice for the Poor at the Conference, District and Council level in the United States. It is important for each conference to participate by having an active representative to VFP. See Appendix D resources for state and regional VFP rep. Vincentians, who have a passionate interest in promoting justice and finding the systemic causes of the poverty and neglect they see in their home visits, are often led to the Voice for the Poor. This work is rooted in a willingness to advocate through legislative and policy changes on a local, state, and national level. Success in these ventures is dependent on sincere effort, creative thinking, and enormous dependence on prayer to the Holy Spirit.

Characteristics of a Member of a Voice for the Poor Committee

- ☐ Be aware of issues that affect the poor as well as recognition of the importance of intelligently speaking out on their behalf.
- ☐ Being open to others and their opinions. Flexibility and be willing to analyze, discuss and communicate facets of social concerns by working in the spirit of Vincentian friendship.
- ☐ Accept the duty of the Voice for the Poor Committee in upholding the Rule and mission of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.
- ☐ Realize the importance to uphold gospel values, with a desire to serve Jesus by the examples of St. Vincent de Paul and Frederic Ozanam.

Make Advocacy Part of your “Business Plan.”

As a part of our faith, we need to talk about advocacy in our council and conference meetings. Make sure that everyone signs up to become an advocate (for the poor). You can do this by signing up on Voter Voice. This tool has a website where you can see the current action alerts that are active. You can sign up to receive emails when legislation is in your area. Then you can send messages directly to your legislators. <https://scdpusa.org/take-action>

Make sure Advocacy is on your conference and council meeting agenda once a month, even if there is no VFP Committee.

- Check the Voter Voice website for new action alerts.
- Assign a member to report on the grassroots activities from their church, bishops, state Catholic Conference
- Set a recruiting goal to acquire advocates.

Importance of Communication between the Voice for the Poor Committee and the Council/District for Continued Success

It is helpful for the chair of the VFP committee to have a position on the Council/District board. This will keep the board informed of the work of the committee and ensure that the committee also has a clear understanding of what actions it can take. This assures that the committee only speaks as Voice for the Poor with the approval of the district council president. Isolated Conferences must seek the approval of their Regional VP.

The following steps are offered as a suggested plan:

Ask the Diocesan Council to appoint a “Board Liaison” for Voice for the Poor. This Vincentian should be genuinely interested in the Society’s role as an advocate for those living in poverty. The liaison’s responsibilities should include resources for state and regional VFP rep. (See Appendix D)

- ☐ Become familiar with the Voice for the Poor’s mission, structure, and protocol.
- ☐ Learn what other communities and organizations are doing regarding poverty.
- ☐ Stay on top of the national legislative agenda and SVdP Voice for the Poor position statements.
- ☐ Help to publicize formation of Voice for the Poor to Vincentians, parish peace and justice committees (where they exist), and local clergy.
- ☐ Assist in distribution of flyers and an agenda to announce conferences throughout the Council.

- ☐ Once familiar with the VFP material, the VFP Chair should reach out to SVdP Conferences in your area to ask for volunteers to participate in the Voice for the Poor committee.

The First VOP Meeting

Note: Always have an agenda for meetings and send it out in advance by email: Early meeting agendas might include development of a Mission Statement/Flyer about VFP for distribution to prospective members and interested community groups.

The agenda for the first meeting could also include:

- ☐ A motivational speaker on Catholic social teaching (the “why” behind the Society’s advocacy). As an alternative, a good resource can be found at:
 - <https://www.usccb.org/offices/justice-peace-human-development/catholic-social-teaching> Discussion of Part 7 of The Rule (“Relationship with Civil Society: Work for Social Justice”) for review.
- ☐ Information on the Voice of the Poor national legislative agenda, and official SVdP Positions Statements as the “umbrella issues” for VFP at both the national and local levels.
- ☐ Sign-in sheet for all attending including (printed): Name, address, telephone, email (very important) and Conference. (This is the initial roster for VFP).
- ☐ Calendar for future VFP meetings (monthly to start).
- ☐ Information about resources such as the workbook and video *Serving in Hope (Module IV): Our Vincentian Mission*, available from the National Council.

Initiating the First Project

The National Council has approved **13 Position Papers** on issues affecting people in need. These are the positions Vincentians are allowed in making advocacy priorities. They can also be used as “leave behind” material on advocacy visits or as education materials for your parish. The papers can be accessed at: <https://members.ssvpusa.org/voice-of-the-poor/the-vincentian-position-position-papers/>

<i>Affordable Housing</i>	<i>Circle of Protection</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Environment</i>
<i>Fair Wages</i>	<i>Health Care for the poor</i>	<i>Homelessness</i>	<i>Human Trafficking</i>
<i>Hunger/Food Insecurity</i>	<i>Immigration</i>	<i>Predatory Lending</i>	<i>Restorative Justice</i>
<i>Self-sufficient Wages</i>			

It is suggested that, at the beginning, the VFP committee focus on a single issue that is relatively achievable and would appeal to many, if not most, Vincentians in the area. Remember, the more Vincentians that support an issue, the more likely we are to win the issue.

Some basic steps to develop your first project:

Identify organizations in your community for collaboration. Do not rely solely on the expertise of fellow Vincentians: remember that there is strength in numbers will improve VFP efforts at advocacy. Contacting these groups and asking them to attend their meetings will also enhance the VFP's credibility in the community. (Examples: Peace and Justice Parish Committees, other nonprofit service providers and coalitions, governmental agencies providing social services.)

- ☐ Develop a simple survey of issues for local Conferences to discuss and return to you. Prioritize and select no more than three issues to follow at any given time. You're looking for issues that engage everyone.
- ☐ Identify local leaders and decision makers involved in the high priority issues and introduce them to SVdP. (Establish your credentials as someone who works directly with those living in poverty.)

The Significance of Home Visits

Through their observations and experiences during home visits to address immediate needs through charity, Vincentians can advocate for justice. Listening to the stories of those in need may help to identify the root causes of poverty that could be appropriately addressed by Voice for the Poor. Our neighbors in need may sometimes have ideas to help create solutions. Most notably, having a neighbor speak on an issue can be a very powerful approach.

Serving in Hope Module VII and its accompanying video is an excellent tool for understanding the value of the Home Visit in relation to Voice for the Poor.

Voice for the Poor Mentors / Regional committee leaders

The Voice for the Poor National Committee is composed of two representatives from each of the Society's nine regions in the United States.

Contact your regional Voice for the Poor representative for assistance in finding help close to you. To find your regional VFP representative go to www.ssvpusa.org or contact the National Council Advocacy staff at vop@svdpusa.org.

If there is an issue to advocate for, reach out to your regional committee leader. Then you need to get approval from those who represent the society in your area: see below.

Who are Official Spokespersons for the Society?

National Issues: The Society's National President is the spokesperson for the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

State and local issues: The Arch/Diocesan Council President with the approval of the local diocesan council and based on recommendations by Voice for the Poor.

NOTE: The National President or the (Arch) Diocesan Council President may, depending on the circumstances and the issue, choose to designate someone to fulfill the role of spokesperson.

Appendix A

Example of VFP Conference Survey

Here is a sample survey that was used to gather information to prioritize issues for Voice for the Poor.

Voice for the Poor Conference Survey

Dear Conference Presidents,

As you know, St. Vincent de Paul Voice for the Poor works to identify and educate our community about the many challenges facing our neighbors in need. Additionally, we are called to encourage Vincentians to discernment and prayer to identify specific ways that we might advocate for and act on behalf of our brothers and sisters in need. Vincentians may feel called to act as individual citizens to contact elected officials and urge their support for pending legislation. Vincentians may speak through their personal vote.

Your responses to this survey will help us to determine how Voice for the Poor can best support the work of your SVDP conference.

1. What are the key problems the poor in our area face? Check any below you believe apply. Write in any other issues you know of.

_____ Affordable Housing

_____ Child Care

_____ Food Deserts

_____ Living Wages

_____ Transportation

Other areas of concern: _____

2. What kinds of information from Voice for the Poor would your conference find most helpful?

_____ Articles to educate members about any of the problems mentioned above

_____ "Boots on the ground" work being done in our area to address those needs

_____ Information about local agencies to which Vincentians might refer an individual neighbor in need

_____ Pending legislation to address the above problems

_____ Seminars and podcasts that address the problems

Other: _____

3. Do you have any ideas regarding what SVDP can do to advocate for our neediest citizens?

4. How are you most likely to use information that you receive from Voice for the Poor? Check all that apply.

_____ I would forward to my conference members the information that I feel they would find most relevant and helpful for their personal prayer and discernment.

_____ We would most likely discuss a relevant article, etc. in a conference meeting.

_____ We may incorporate a specific issue into the prayer petitions at a conference meeting.

Other: _____

NAME _____ **CONFERENCE** _____

WEBSITE: <https://svdpusa.org/take-action>

MEMBERS.SSVPUSA.ORG>special works>starting a VFP program>Voter Voice Action Center alert>click on link to sign up for alerts from national SVdP.

Appendix B

Examples of Voice for the Poor advocacy

- Legislation to stop payday lending activity in Oregon, sponsored and successfully spearheaded by the Archdiocesan Council of Portland, OR.
- Low-income children's health care outreach for a program called "Love Your Kids Day," which involved Conferences in targeted zip codes by Diocesan Council of Phoenix, AZ.
- Letter-writing campaign to promote energy assistance for low-income families, organized by the Diocese of Belleville, IL.
- Affordable housing in collaboration with Washington State Catholic Conference and Archdiocesan Council of Seattle, WA.
- "Tent City" in Milwaukee received a commitment by the City of Milwaukee to create a housing trust fund, with assistance from the Diocese of Milwaukee, WI.
- Reduce recidivism, prison ministry, full-time prison chaplain and shelter for women released from prison, sponsored by the Diocese of San Mateo, CA.

- Advocating with the public transit bus system to add a micro transit system. This is a publicly funded uber type of system that is smaller than a bus but bigger than an uber vehicle. Kalamazoo, MI
- Advocating for habitable housing in Atlanta, GA

Appendix C

What does The Rule say about advocacy?

Part VII of the International Rule of the Society, “Relationship with Civil Society, Work for Social Justice,” calls Vincentians to address injustice as part of their mission of service to the poor. Excerpts from Part VII (April, 2005):

7.1 The Society gives immediate help but also seeks mid-term and long-term solutions.

...In all its charitable actions there should be a search for justice; in its struggle for justice, the Society must keep in mind the demands of charity.

7.4 The practical Vincentian approach to social justice.

The distinctive approach of Vincentians to issues of social justice is to see them from the perspective of those we visit who suffer from injustice.

7.5 A voice for the voiceless.

The Society helps the poor and disadvantaged speak for themselves. When they cannot, the Society must speak on behalf of those who are ignored.

7.6 Facing the structures of sin.

Where injustice, inequality, poverty or exclusion are due to unjust economic, political or social structure or to inadequate or unjust legislation, the Society should speak out clearly against the situation, always with charity, with the aim of contributing to and demanding improvements.

7.8 Political independence of the Society

The Society does not identify with any political party and always adopts a nonviolent approach

We speak as Catholics, whose teaching states that we must consider the needs of those less fortunate when forming our conscience. Catholic Social Teaching, including the US Bishops document “Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship”, as well as our Society of St. Vincent de Paul are clear in those teachings.

Appendix D

Difficult Questions, Catholic Answers

Q: Why should I get involved in advocacy, such as VFP activities? I only want to do home visits in my Conference.

A: Our church and our founder both urge us to help those in need AND to work to mitigate the causes of that need: "Charity is the Samaritan who pours oil on the wounds of the traveler who has been attacked. It is justice's role to prevent the attacks."

Blessed Frederic Ozanam

As Pope Francis said, "Politics, though often denigrated, remains a lofty vocation and one of the highest forms of charity." Evangelii Gaudium, 2013

Q: I cannot get involved in Voice for the Poor because I am a [Republican] [Democrat] [Independent].

A: You don't have to give up your political tenets when you become a member of Voice for the Poor. We are about finding common ground for solutions, including political solutions, to those programs or institutions that create or keep people living in poverty. Also, realize that we advocate for issues, not candidates.

Q: Isn't it illegal for me as a Vincentian to advocate for candidates for public office? Couldn't we lose our non-profit status with the IRS?

A: The law provides that charitable organizations can engage in lobbying. In fact, the general experience for many organizations is that they have increased their impact by carefully undertaking lobbying activities. We are not permitted by law to engage in electioneering — in other words, getting involved in supporting or opposing a particular political candidate. Get-out-the-vote and voter education campaigns, including education about a specific issue, are not, by law, considered electioneering. Lobbying policymakers is just one aspect of political or social involvement. Another is advocacy, which means simply arguing in favor of a particular cause or action. Not-for-profit organizations by their very existence are advocates for something specific, such as the arts, the environment, education, justice, transportation, poverty, and so forth. When you read our mission, we have a responsibility to advocate for those we serve and to alleviate the root causes of poverty. We do this most effectively and in an organized way through our Voice for the Poor committees at the national and local levels.

Q: What if I disagree with the Society's position? For example, I think all illegal immigrants should be locked up, sent back, etc. Why should we advocate for them? They broke the law!

A: The Society, specifically VFP, advocates for a comprehensive immigration policy, which includes enforcement of our borders and a practical solution to the immigrants who are here. When we say practical, for example, it's unreasonable— not to mention inhumane — to round up, or even try to round up, millions of people. Our justice system wouldn't have room for

them, the country doesn't have the money or manpower to process that many people, and the country would be at an uproar at creating more chaos than that approach would solve.

Q: How can I get involved and committed to Voice for the Poor?

A: Start small and grow with persistence. Here are some practical steps:

- (1) Use home visits. What you learn from those visits will form the basis of your arguments. Many people hold negative views about those living in poverty simply because they lack first-hand knowledge and experience of who they are and how they struggle.**
- (2) Use the resources available on the VOP web site, as well as other Society communications that lay out our positions.**
- (3) Seek out speaking engagements, especially those venues where you can meet decision makers and legislators.**
- (4) Use SVdP communications, create your own communications, etc.**
- (5) Partner with other Catholic groups, including your state's Catholic Conference, on issues of importance to your state and local community.**

Q. What is the Society's stance on getting out the vote for our neighbors in need?

A: The USCCB has long supported forming consciences for faith citizenship. It is well within the Voice for the Poor guidelines to encourage voting among Vincentians and among those we serve. As we are a 501(c)3, we do not endorse candidates, but we can encourage voting <https://www.usccb.org/offices/justice-peace-human-development/forming-consciences-faithful-citizenship>

Appendix E

Papal statements on Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

- "When there is question of defending the rights of individuals, the defenseless and the poor have a claim to special consideration. The richer class has many ways of shielding itself and stands less in need of help from the State; whereas the mass of the poor has no resources of their own to fall back on and must chiefly depend on the assistance of the State. It is for this reason that wage-earners, since they mostly belong to the latter class, should be specially cared for and protected by the Government". (Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, 42, 1891)
- "The so-called "preferential option for the poor", an option which I defined as a "special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity" (Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 11, 1991)

- “The preferential option for the poor is implicit in the Christological faith in the God who became poor for us, so as to enrich us with his poverty (cf. 2 Cor 8:9).” Pope Benedict, 2007
- “Church teaching on giving priority to the well-being of the poor and marginalized is not a political or ideological choice; it lies at the very heart of the Gospel.” Pope Francis, 2020
- “The preferential option for the poor, which includes feeding the hungry and drawing close to the excluded, is the key criterion of Christian authenticity.” Pope Francis, 2020
- “Hospitality in itself is not enough. It is not enough to give a sandwich if it is not accompanied by the possibility of learning to stand on one’s own feet. Charity that does not change the situation of the poor is not enough.” From Pope Francis’ 2023 New Year’s resolutions

Appendix F

Web Resources

Training, Outreach, and Advocacy Resources- <https://members.ssvpusa.org/voice-of-the-poor/training-outreach-and-advocacy-resources/>

Guide to Financial Literacy Resources: Using Financial Literacy Resources to Enhance Services to our Neighbors- <https://members.ssvpusa.org/systemic-change/alternative-lending-microloan-programs/guide-to-financial-literacy-resources/>

VOP Position Papers- <https://members.ssvpusa.org/voice-of-the-poor/issues/>

Appendix G

Scriptural Basis List for Catholic Social Teaching

Life and Dignity of the Human Person

Genesis 1:26-31 God created man and woman in his image.

Deuteronomy 10:17-19 God loves the orphan, the widow, and the stranger. You should too.

Proverbs 22:2 The Lord is the maker of both rich and poor.

Luke 10:25-37 The good Samaritan recognized the dignity in the other and cared for his life.

John 4:1-42 Jesus broke with societal and religious customs to honor the dignity of the Samaritan woman.

Romans 12:9-18 Love one another, contribute to the needs of others, live peaceably with all.

1 Corinthians 3:16 You are holy, for you are God's temple and God dwells in you.

Galatians 3:27-28 All Christians are one in Christ Jesus.

James 2:1-8 Honor the poor.

1 John 3: 1-2 See what love the Father has for us, that we should be called Children of God.

1 John 4:7-12 Let us love one another because love is from God.

Call to Family, Community, and Participation

Genesis 4:8-15 I am my brother's and sister's keeper.

Leviticus 25:23-43 What you own belongs to the Lord and is given for the good of all.

Jeremiah 7:5-7 If you act justly with one another, God will dwell in the land.

Micah 6:6-8 Act justly, love kindness, walk humbly with God.

John 15:12-17 This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you.

Acts 2:43-47; Life among the believers.

Romans 12:4-8 We are one body, individually members one of another.

Hebrews 10:24-25 Inspire one another to love and good works.

1 Peter 4:8-11 Serve one another with the gifts you have received.

1 John 3:16-18 We ought to lay down our lives for one another.

1 John 4:19-21 Those who love God must love their brothers and sisters.

Rights and Responsibilities

Leviticus 19:9-10 A portion of the harvest is set aside for the poor and the stranger.

Ruth 2:2-23 Boaz cares for Ruth, a widow, and a foreigner, giving her far more than the law requires.

Tobit 4:5-11 Give from what you have received and do not turn away from the poor.

Isaiah 1:16-17 Seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.

Jeremiah 22: 13-16 A legitimate government upholds the rights of the poor and vulnerable.

Jeremiah 29:4-7 Seek the welfare of the city, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

Matthew 25: 31-46 Just as you did it to the least of these, you did it to me.

Luke 16:19-31 The rich man has a responsibility to care for Lazarus.

Acts 4:32-35 There was not a needy person among them.

2 Corinthians 9:6-15 God's gifts are given to be shared.

James 2:14-18 Faith without works is dead.

Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

Exodus 22:20-26 You shall not oppress the poor or vulnerable. God will hear their cry.

Job 34:20 The Lord hears the cry of the poor.

Proverbs 31:8-9 Speak out in defense of the poor.

Sirach 4:1-10 Don't delay giving to those in need.

Isaiah 25:4-5 God is a refuge for the poor.

Isaiah 58:5-7 True worship is to work for justice and care for the poor and oppressed.

Luke 4:16-21 Jesus proclaims his mission: to bring good news to the poor and oppressed.

Luke 6:20-23 Blessed are the poor, theirs is the kingdom of God.

1 John 3:17-18 How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's good and sees one in need and refuses to help?

Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

Genesis 2:1-3 God rests on the seventh day.

Deuteronomy 5:13-15 The Sabbath is for everyone all are allowed to rest from their work.

Deuteronomy 14:28-29 The Lord blesses our work so that we may share its fruits with others.

Deuteronomy 24:14-15 Do not withhold wages from your workers, for their livelihood depends on them.

Sirach 34:26-28 To deprive an employee of wages can lead to their death: which you are liable.

Isaiah 58:3-7 To observe religious practices, but oppress your workers is false worship.

Jeremiah 22:13 Woe to him who treats his workers unjustly.

Matthew 20:1-16 All workers should be paid a just and living wage.

Mark 2:27 The Sabbath was made for people, not people for the Sabbath.

Luke 3:10-14 Practice integrity in your work.

Luke 12:13-21 One's worth is not determined by an abundance of possessions.

James 5:1-6 Those who become rich by abusing their workers have sinned against God.

Solidarity

Genesis 12:1-3 God blessed Israel so that all nations would be blessed through it.

Psalm 72 Living in right relationship with others brings peace.

Psalm 122 Peace be with you! For the sake of the Lord, I will seek your good.

Zechariah 8:16 These are the things you should do: Speak truth, judge well, make peace.

Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, they will be called children of God.

Matthew 5:21-24 Be reconciled to one another before coming to the altar.

Romans 13:8-10 Living rightly means to love one another.

1 Corinthians 12:12-26 If one member suffers, all suffer. If one member is honored, all rejoice.

Colossians 3:9-17 Above all, clothe yourself with love and let the peace of Christ reign in your hearts.

Care for God's Creation

Genesis 1:1-31 God made the heavens and the earth and it was good.

Genesis 2:15 Humans are commanded to care for God's creation.

Leviticus 25:1-7 The land itself must be given a rest and not abused.

Deuteronomy 10:14 All of heaven and earth belong to the Lord.

Psalm 24:1-2 All the earth is the Lord's.

Daniel 3:56-82 Creation proclaims the glory of God.

Matthew 6:25-34 God loves and cares for all of creation.

Romans 1:20 Creation reveals the nature of God.

1 Corinthians 10:26 Creation and all created things are inherently good because they are of the Lord.

Papal Encyclicals/Doctrine on Catholic Social Teaching

Rerum Novarum (On Capital and Labor) Pope Leo XIII - May 15, 1891

Quadragesimo Anno (After Forty Years) - On Reconstruction of the Social Order Pope Pius XI - May 15, 1931 - the 40th anniversary of Rerum Novarum

Mater et Magistra (On Christianity and Social Progress)

Pope John XXIII - May 15, 1961

Pacem in Terris (Peace on Earth) Pope John XXIII - April 11, 1963 on Establishing Universal Peace in Truth, Justice, Charity, and Liberty

Populorum Progressio (On the Development of Peoples) Pope Paul VI - March 27, 1967

Laborem Exercens (On Human Work) Pope John Paul II - September 14, 1981

Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (20th Anniversary of Populorum Progressio) Pope John Paul II - December 30, 1987

Centesimus Annus (The Hundredth Year) Pope John Paul II - May 1, 1991 - the 100th anniversary of Rerum Novarum

Evangelium Vitae (The Gospel of Life) Pope John Paul II - March 25, 1995

Fides et Ratio (Faith and Reason) Pope John Paul II - September 14, 1998

Deus Caritas Est (God Is Love) Pope Benedict XVI - December 15, 2005

Caritas in Veritate (Charity in Truth) Pope Benedict XVI - June 29, 2009

Laudato Si' (On Care for Our Common Home) Pope Francis - May 24, 2015