

*Information from the Called by Name Passionist Weekend Retreat  
referenced by Faith Offman*

## **Catholic Social Teaching**

*Catholic Social Teaching* is the term used to describe the body of teaching that concerns current issues in our world and how we must approach them as Catholic Christians.

The concept originated in 1891 with a document written by Pope Leo XIII entitled *Rerum Novarum – On the Condition of Labor*.

All encyclicals are entitled with the first two Latin words of the document.

The *hierarchy of teaching* helps us determine the priority and importance of the documents.

The hierarchy of teaching

- Magisterium – The Pope, bishops, theologians and experts in the field
- Encyclicals – written by Popes
- Pastorals – written by bishops for their local diocese or national bishops together for their country
- Decrees – intended to initiate conversation around a particular issue

While some of these documents might seem intimidating, they can more easily be navigated by reviewing the following outline of their structure.

1. Summary  
What is the issue we are going to talk about?
2. Theology
  - a. What do the Hebrew Scriptures have to say to this issue?
  - b. What do the Christian Scriptures have to say to this issue?
3. History  
What does history have to show us/teach us on this issue?
4. Current  
What is happening today; why are we talking about this?
5. Pastoral  
What can we do about it? How do we respond?
6. Prayer  
A closing prayer for the “journey.”

Some of the documents referenced on the retreat weekends of the 2017-2018 season can be downloaded or purchased from [USCCB.org](http://USCCB.org) or [Vatican.com](http://Vatican.com)

*Vatican II in Plain English* by Bill Huebsch, (RCL) and the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace) are also helpful resources to consider.

The following encyclicals and pastorals cover a wide range of deeply important and sometimes challenging topics. Taking the time to read and absorb them can help us grow closer to God and one another, and to be active witnesses to our faith in the modern world.

#### Encyclicals –

- *Rerum Novarum – On the Condition of Labor*
  - Pope Leo XIII 1891 – to the Catholic Hierarchy
- *Pacem in Terres – Peace on Earth*
  - Pope John XXIII 1963 – first to all people of good will
- *Humanae Vitae – On Human Life*
  - Pope Paul VI 1968
- *Evangelii Nuntiandi – Evangelization in the Modern World*
  - Pope Paul VI 1976
- *Evangelium Vitae – The Gospel of Life*
  - Pope John Paul II 1995
- *Laudato Si – Care of our Common Home*
  - Pope Frances 2017

#### Pastorals –

- *Brothers and Sisters to Us* (Racism)
  - US Bishops 1979
- *The Challenge of Peace* (just war and nuclear weapons)
  - US Bishops 1983
- *Economic Justice for All* (the economy and workplace)
  - US Bishops 1986
- *When I Call for Help* (10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary) (domestic violence)
  - US Bishops 2000
- *Walk in the Light* (survivors of sexual abuse)
  - US Bishops 1995
- *Always our Children* (families and friends of gays and lesbians)
  - US Bishops 1997
- *Health and Health Care*
  - US Bishops 1981
- *U.S. Bishops Statement on Capital Punishment*
  - US Bishops 1980