

Catholic Social Thought

Inspired by the Gospel and grounded in shared beliefs and values, we work together to achieve a Canadian society that reaches out to every person who is suffering from illness, stigma, poverty or loneliness.

Purpose Statement, Catholic Health Alliance of Canada

Catholic health draws on a rich heritage of Catholic social thought, which offers a way of thinking, being and seeing the world. The principles of Catholic social teaching provide a vision for a just society in which the dignity of all people is recognized, and all have the opportunity to belong and thrive. These perspectives and principles help us reflect on social issues and how we relate to one another in our local and global communities. Catholic social teaching includes insight from the Scriptures, as well as understanding from the thinking, reflections and lived experience of people throughout the past two centuries.

HUMAN DIGNITY

- Human life is sacred and the dignity of the person is the foundation of a moral vision for society.
- Every person—regardless of race, sex, age, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, economic status, health, intelligence, achievement or any other characteristic—is worthy of respect.
- Human life at every stage is precious and worthy of protection and respect.
- Integral human development includes the wellbeing of each person in every dimension: economic, political, social, ecological and spiritual.
- Equality of all persons comes from their intrinsic dignity. Treating equals equally is one way of defining justice.

SOLIDARITY

- We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic or ideological differences.
- We are all responsible for each other as brothers and sisters.
- We are all interconnected and interdependent.
- We must see ourselves in others and collaborate towards solutions.
- We have a commitment to strengthen community and promote a just society. We think and act in terms of community.

COMMUNITY AND THE COMMON GOOD

- Each person is not only sacred, but social.
- The moral test of society is how our most vulnerable members are faring.
- How we organize our society directly affects human flourishing and the capacity of individuals to grow in community.
- Humans achieve fulfillment in association with others and with social institutions that foster growth, protect dignity and promote the common good.
- We are called to prioritize those who are in most need.

PARTICIPATION

- The principle of human dignity gives each person membership in a community, the human family.
- Human beings are social, and how we live together affects the dignity of the individual and the progress of society.
- All people must be able to participate in the economic, political and cultural life of society.
- All persons are entitled to participate in community, and in the decisions that affect their lives, and must not be excluded or abandoned for any reason.
- Each person should have access to those institutions that are necessary for human fulfillment.