
Catholic Social Teaching *and the Parish*

An Assessment Tool

for Parishes

in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati

INTRODUCTION

In *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions*, the U.S. bishops teach that “Catholic social teaching is a central and essential element of our faith” (pg. 1). Pope Benedict XVI in his first encyclical in 2005, *Deus Caritas Est (God Is Love)*, exclaims that the Church “cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice” (no. 28a)

We invite parishes (parish staffs, parish councils, social action committees) to assess the integration of Catholic Social teaching in their parish’s life.

The following questionnaire has been designed to help with such an assessment. The assessment asks the parish to examine four areas of parish life in light of Catholic Social Teaching: Liturgy and Public Prayer, Faith Formation and Education, Stewardship of Resources and Social Ministry. Each part is important. However, not all possible applications of Catholic Social Teaching are included. In addition, it is highly unlikely that any parish will check “Yes” to all of the questions and a “No” response is not necessarily an indication of a deficiency.

**Catholic Social Action Office,
Archdiocese of Cincinnati**

**Acknowledgement: The Office of
Evangelization and Catechesis and the
Worship Office assisted in the Preparation of
this survey.**

HOW TO USE

1. **Select a coordinator.** Identify a person or group who will play a coordinating role in undertaking this assessment. This person will vary from parish to parish.
2. **Involve others.** It may be appropriate to involve several parish committees in completing the different areas of the assessment.
3. **Review and discuss.** It is recommended that the parish pastoral council be informed about this process and about the results. Perhaps the results could be shared with the entire parish via the parish newsletter. The whole process could be celebrated with the parish at a special Sunday liturgy.
4. **Complete the questionnaire.** Insure that all portions of the questionnaire have been filled out and the key findings evaluated.
5. **Inform the Catholic Social Action Office.** Send a copy of your results to the Catholic Social Action Office in Cincinnati to 100 E. Eighth Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202 and in Dayton to 266 Bainbridge Street, Dayton, OH 45402 to assist them in their planning. Moreover, the Office would be glad to assist you as you undertake this endeavor.

The objective of this tool is to support your efforts in implementing the Church’s social mission. If your parish does not have a social action committee or is weak in some areas of implementation, perhaps this survey could be used as a teaching tool to encourage parishioners with the vision of a parish active in the work of justice. Parish gifts and talents could be called upon and encouraged by the parish staff in order to develop a parish social ministry. The final page of reflection questions might be helpful to you in analyzing strengths and weaknesses and in charting next steps.

