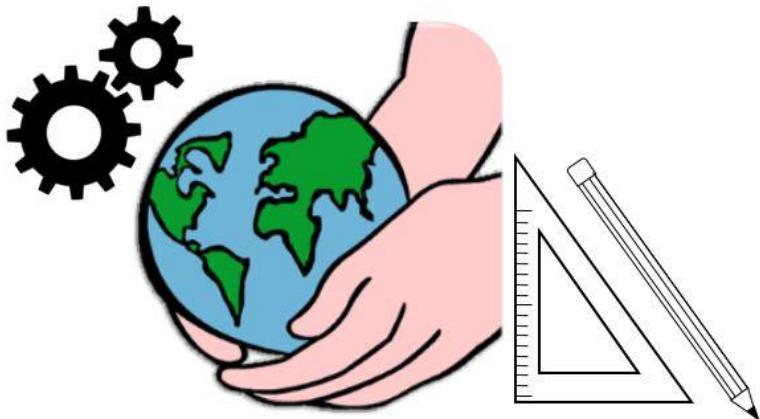


# **An Introduction to Catholic Social Tradition for Engineering Students Workshop**



**Catholic Social Tradition  
Capstone  
Emily Apakian, Class of 2020**

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## **Introduction**

What is Catholic Social Tradition (CST)?

Catholic Social Tradition, also known as Catholic Social Teaching or Catholic Social Thought, encompasses the teachings of the Catholic Church about social issues impacting our world today in light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. CST helps us to understand ourselves and how we should relate to one another. One can use CST as a lens to view the world and to make decisions in one's own personal life and career, whether professional or academic.

What are the core themes of Catholic Social Teaching?

1. Life and Dignity of the Human Person – all humans have equal human dignity, no matter his or her gender, race, socioeconomic status, age, ability, etc., because each human was made in God's image.
2. Call to Family, Community, and Participation – each individual has the duty to participate and serve in his or her communities when able.
3. Rights and Responsibilities – each person has rights by way of common human nature. Such rights include the

right to life, the right to food and shelter, and the right to education and healthcare, among others. Each right must be protected, and each right is accompanied by responsibility.

4. Option for the Poor and Vulnerable – oftentimes, the poor are affected most by our actions. The poor and vulnerable must be protected in each state's laws and policies.
5. Dignity of Work and Workers – workers' rights must also be protected because of the dignity of work. The economy exists to serve the people; people do not exist to serve the economy.
6. Solidarity – the concept of solidarity is centered on the fact that all are part of the same human family. One who is in solidarity with another or with a group of individuals not only shows support, but also attempts to share in their experiences.
7. Care for Creation – stewardship of the earth is necessary because the earth is our home and should be protected for future generations. Our actions impact individuals for years to come.

Ultimately, working to bring these themes to the forefront of our lives can help us to achieve

the common good, when the wellbeing of all in the world is met.

## Why does Catholic Social Teaching matter to engineers?

Engineers work to make the world better through solving the world's biggest problems. Engineers have the capacity to work for the good of all through the development of new technologies and processes. When engineers apply CST to their studies or career, they can ensure that all people, to the best of their ability, are not negatively impacted, that individuals' rights are not taken away, and that the earth's resources are respected and protected.

At the end of undergraduate studies, engineers usually take the oath called "The Obligation of the Engineer," promising to work for the public good. Finding the connection between engineering and CST in this oath is not difficult. Incorporating CST into one's studies and career as an engineer just makes sense.

## **The Obligation of the Engineer**

I am an Engineer.

In my profession I take deep pride. To it I owe solemn obligations.

As an engineer, I, (full name), pledge to practice Integrity and Fair Dealing, Tolerance, and Respect, and to uphold devotion to the standards and dignity of my profession, conscious always that my skill carries with it the obligation to serve humanity by making best use of the Earth's precious wealth.

As an engineer, I shall participate in none but honest enterprises. When needed, my skill and knowledge shall be given without reservation for the public good.

In the performance of duty, and in fidelity to my profession, I shall give the utmost.

### **Self-Reflection Questions**

Before starting this workshop, it is necessary to ask yourself some questions:

Why are you choosing to attend this workshop?

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How are you challenged in your faith?

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What types of social issues are you passionate about?

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How is technology beneficial to society and at the same time detrimental?

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## **Modules**

### **Module 1: Human Dignity**

Concept: All humans have equal worth and are deserving of respect no matter their background or way of life.

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**Any well-regulated and productive association of men in society demands the acceptance of one fundamental principle: that each individual man is truly a person. His is a nature, that is, endowed with intelligence and free will. As such he has rights and duties, which together flow as a direct consequence from his nature.**

- Pope John XXIII,  
Pacem in Terris,  
Para. 9

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## **Module 2: Common Good**

Concept: All people should have access to resources so that they can live fulfilling lives.

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**On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.**

- Pope John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, Para. 38

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## **Module 3: Care for Creation**

Concept: All individuals have the duty to safeguard the environment to ensure its protection for future generations.

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**By virtue of our unique dignity and our gift of intelligence, we are called to respect creation and its inherent laws, for “the Lord by wisdom founded the earth” (Prov 3:19).**

- Pope Francis,  
**Laudato Si, Para.  
69**

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**Peace, justice and the preservation of creation are three absolutely interconnected themes, which cannot be separated and treated individually without once again falling into reductionism.**

- Pope Francis,  
Laudato Si, Para.  
**92**

## **Module 4: Putting It All Together**

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**Hence the craftsman's business and that of the family farm, as well as the co-operative enterprise which aims at the completion and perfection of both these concerns—all these are to be safeguarded and encouraged in harmony with the common good and technical progress.**

- Pope John XXIII,  
Mater et  
Magistra, Para.  
**85**

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## **Key Takeaways**

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## **Application to Engineering**

How might you utilize what you learned about Catholic Social Teaching in this workshop in your studies?

Here are some ideas for incorporating CST:

1. Determine how the chemical plant you designed impacts the environment and

human health and what can be done to improve this

2. Analyze the positive and negative impact of building a bridge in a developing country and how this can contribute to the common good
3. Examine how developing biomedical devices affirms human dignity
4. Consider how creating a new app can promote the common good
5. Respect your peers
6. Incorporate CST into research, senior design projects, and internships, and later, career

## **Evaluation**

Please answer the following questions to give feedback on this workshop.

1. How was the content of this workshop?

1            2            3            4            5

2. Did you learn anything useful?

1            2            3            4            5

3. Do you have a better understanding of how you can apply Catholic Social Teaching to engineering?

1            2            3            4            5

4. Were the discussion questions engaging?

1            2            3            4            5

5. Did this workshop live up to your expectations?

1            2            3            4            5

6. How knowledgeable was the workshop leader on Catholic Social Teaching as it relates to engineering?

1            2            3            4            5

7. How was the pace of the workshop leader?

1            2            3            4            5

8. What is one key takeaway from this workshop?

9. How could this workshop be improved?

10. Do you have any suggestions for hands-on activities for future workshops?

11. Any other suggestions or comments?

## **Further Resources**

The following is a list of papal encyclicals written by various popes for more information on Catholic Social Teaching.

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si.* 2015.

Pope John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra.* 1961.

Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris.* 1963.

Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus.* 1991

Pope John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae.* 1995.

Pope John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens.* 1981.

Pope John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis.* 1987.

Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum.* 1891.

Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio.* 1967.

Pope Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno.* 1931.

These can all be found on the Vatican's website or [www.papalencyclicals.net](http://www.papalencyclicals.net).

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops also has a lot of additional information on Catholic Social Teaching and is more condensed. This information can be found here: <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/index.cfm>.

Professor Jay Brockman at the University of Notre Dame is an engineering professor and director for the Center for Civic Innovation. He is familiar with Catholic Social Teaching and incorporates it into engineering.

Dr. Vito Punzi at Villanova University developed a 3-credit course on Catholic Social Teaching for Engineers. He also wrote a paper, titled “A Social Responsibility Guide for Engineering Students and Professionals of all Faith Traditions: An Overview,” published in *Science and Engineering Ethics* in 2017.

**About the Project:**

This workshop was developed by Emily Apakian, class of 2020 at the University of Notre Dame, as the culmination of her Catholic Social Tradition Minor. She thanks everyone who has supported her throughout her life.

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