
Synoptic Chart

Magnifica Humanitas

The Principles of Catholic Social Teaching

Pope Leo XIV

15 May 2026

“a harmonious relationship between these principles requires that they be considered collectively, so that it becomes clear how they relate to and complement each other.”

(¶46)

The Foundation: the Dignity of the Human Person

Every principle rests on the person, created in the image of the Triune God (¶¶48–50). Leo distinguishes several senses of “dignity” (¶52) and affirms the deepest as infinite (¶53).

- **Moral** — “the way in which a person directs his or her choices and actions.”
- **Social** — “a person’s living conditions and the concrete respect received from society.”
- **Existential** — “the way in which a person perceives his or her own worth and the value of life.”
- **Ontological** — “the dignity that belongs to every human being simply by virtue of existing, of having been willed, created and loved by God”; the deepest level, which no sin or exclusion can diminish.
- **Infinite** — quoting *Dignitas Infinita*: “Every human person possesses an infinite dignity, inalienably grounded in his or her very being” (¶53).

The first three senses “can be enhanced or diminished”; ontological dignity cannot. It grounds the equal dignity of all (¶51) and the inviolable human rights that express it (¶¶54–58).

The Five Principles of Social Doctrine

- **The common good (¶¶59–64)** — “the social expression of the dignity recognized in every person”; not a sum of interests but a “plus” reached only by shared effort.
- **The universal destination of goods (¶¶65–67)** — the goods of creation, and now “patents, algorithms, digital platforms, technological infrastructure and data” are given for all; private property is subordinate to it.
- **Subsidiarity (¶¶68–72)** — decisions “at the closest level possible to the persons involved”; higher bodies support, never supplant, lower ones.
- **Solidarity (¶¶73–76)** — “the future of each individual is connected to the future of all”; both an objective principle and a virtue.
- **Social justice (¶¶77–81)** — the capacity of an order “to allow everyone — particularly the weakest — to live a truly dignified life, without leaving anyone behind.”

How the Principles Relate

They form one ordered whole that begins in dignity and is realized in development: **Dignity** → **the common good** → **(universal destination of goods · subsidiarity ↔ solidarity · social justice)** → **integral human development**.

- **Dignity is the root.** The common good is “the social expression of the dignity recognized in every person” (§59), so it orders the rest.
- **Under the common good.** The universal destination of goods is one of the “implications of the common good” (§65).
- **Subsidiarity and solidarity are reciprocal:** “When subsidiarity is not linked to solidarity, it ends up becoming merely the protection of particular interests; when solidarity is not supported by subsidiarity, it degenerates into a form of welfare that does not foster responsibility” (§73).
- **Social justice is the measure at the bottom** — how an order treats the least is “the measure of our relationship with God” (§77).
- **Integral human development is the synthesis** (§§82–85): where the principles are “implemented in real life.”