



II The Common Good

Excerpt from the Catechism of the Catholic Church; Third part (Life in Christ); First section (The Vocation of man: Life in the Spirit); Chapter Two (The human community); Article 2 (Participation in social life); Point II (The Common Good)

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Catechism of the Catholic Church

- * PART THREE LIFE IN CHRIST
- o FIRST SECTION THE VOCATION OF MAN: LIFE IN SPIRIT
- + CHAPTER 2 THE HUMAN COMMUNITY
- # ARTICLE 2 PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL LIFE
- * II The Common Good

1905 according to the social nature of man, the good of each is necessarily related to the common good. This can only be defined with reference to the human person:

Do not live isolated, closed in yourselves, as if you were already justified, but gathered together to seek out what constitutes the common interest (Bernabé, Ep. 4, 10).

1906 For the common good, it is necessary to understand 'the whole of those conditions of the social life that allow the groups and each one of its members to achieve more fully and easily its own perfection' (GS 26, 1; CF GS 74, 1). The common good affects everyone's life. It requires prudence on the part of each one, and even more so for those who exercise authority. It involves three essential elements:

1907 Assumes, first of all, respect for the person as such. In the name of the common good, the authorities are obliged to respect the fundamental and inalienable rights of the human person. Society must allow each of its members to carry out their vocation. In particular, the common good resides in the conditions of exercise of the natural liberties that are indispensable for the development of

the human vocation: 'right to... act in accordance with the standard of their conscience, the protection of the private life and the fair freedom, also in religious matters (cf GS 26, 2).

1908 Secondly, the common good demands social well-being and the development of the group itself. Development is a summary of all social duties. It is certainly up to the authority to decide, in the name of the common good, between the various particular interests; but it must provide each one with what it needs to lead a truly human life: food, clothing, health, work, education and culture, adequate information, right to found a family, etc. (cf GS 26, 2).

1909 The common good implies, finally, peace, that is to say, the stability and the security of a just order. It assumes, therefore, that the authority ensures, by honest means, the security of society and that of its members. The common good bases the right to individual and collective self-defense.

1910 If every human community possesses a common good that configures it as such, the most complete realization of this common good is verified in the political community. It is up to the State to defend and promote the common good of civil society, citizens and intermediate institutions.

1911 Human interdependences intensify. They extend slowly to the whole earth. The unity of the human family that brings together beings with the same natural dignity implies a universal common good. It requires an organization of the community of nations capable of 'providing the different needs of men, both in the fields of social life, to those belonging to food, health, education..., as in not a few particular situations that they may arise in some parts, as they are... to help refugees scattered around the world in their sufferings or to assist migrants and their families ' (GS 84, 2).

1912 The common good is always oriented towards the progress of the people: 'the social order and its progress must be subordinated to the good of the people... and not the contrary ' (GS 26, 3). This order is based on truth, is built on justice, is quickened by love.