

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of The Church

What is it? How did it come about?

Overall teachings of the Church have been consistent since the time of Christ. However, major changes in the temporal world during the last several centuries were considered to require more detailed analysis and guidance.

New forms of government and political developments, new economic combines and situations of work, growing effects of a global economy, and newer weapons and consequences of war are among major concerns that were felt to require deeper review and guidance.

Newly-developing social and justice issues had been addressed by papal encyclicals and direction on a case-by-case basis. Finally, **Pope John Paul II** decided that the proliferation of issues and related material needed to be combined in one place, and **appointed a Pontifical Council** to bring them together.

The result was the release, in 2004, of the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of The Church. It was published to serve as a tool to inspire and guide the Catholic community through the moral and pastoral challenges that confront us today. It's intended to sustain and foster the activity of Catholics in the social sector, **especially the activity of the lay faithful – who have the major responsibility in working to bring justice and peace into our world today**. This document intends to help them in this daily mission.

The Church's teachings on social matters are clearly laid out, explained, and backed up by references from the Bible, councils, papal documents, congregations and Church writers. The book aims to provide "the principles for reflection, the criteria for judgment and the directives for action."

The Compendium addresses the issues with specific chapters on each of the following areas. This is a very abbreviated listing, just for general illustration purposes; for a full listing, see it's Table of Contents.

- The Human Person and Human Rights
- Principles of The Church's Social Doctrine - including
 - Fundamental Values of Social Life
- The Family, The Vital Cell of Society - including
 - Marriage, the Foundation of the Family
 - Society at the Service of the Family
- Human Work – including
 - The Dignity of Work
 - The “New Things” of the World of Work

- Economic Life – including
 - Morality and the Economy
 - Private Initiative and Business Initiative
 - Economic Institutions at the Service of Man
 - Globalization: opportunities and risks

- The Political Community – including
 - Foundation and Purpose of the Political Community
 - The Democratic System
 - The Political Community at the Service of Civil Societies

- The International Community – including
 - Fundamental Rules and Organization

- Safeguarding the Environment – including
 - Man and the Universe of Created Things
 - A Common Responsibility

- The Promotion of Peace – including
 - Peace: the Fruit of Justice and Love
 - The Failure of Peace: War
 - The Contribution of the Church to Peace

- Social Doctrine and Ecclesial Action – including
 - Promoting dialogue
 - Acting with prudence
 - Service in the various sectors of social life