



Archdiocese of Indianapolis - Catholic Charities
Introduction to
Parish Social Ministry

VII. Ongoing Faith Formation

It has often been said one of the best kept secrets of the Catholic Church is its beautiful rich tradition of Social Doctrine which has been summarized in the principals of Catholic Social Teaching (CST). The depth and richness of the traditions of CST affirm that all life, from conception to natural death, has inherent dignity and a right to life consistent with that dignity. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) defines CST as “a rich treasure of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of modern society.” In other words, there is an essential connection between our faith and the way we put love into action in the world. It is through ongoing spiritual formation that we learn the reasons we are called to love, encounter and become a sign of Christ’s love to each person we meet.

“A prayer that does not lead you to practical action for your brother – the poor, the sick, those in need of help, a brother in difficulty – is a sterile and incomplete prayer.”

(Pope Francis – Angelus, 7/21/13)

“The most important setting for the Church’s social teaching is not in a food pantry or in a legislative committee room, but in prayer and worship, especially gathered around the alter for the Eucharist. It is in the liturgy that we find the fundamental direction, motivation, and strength for social ministry. Social ministry not genuinely rooted in prayer can easily burn itself out. On the other hand, worship that does not reflect the Lord’s call to conversion, service, and justice can become pious ritual and empty of the gospel.”

(USCCB, Communities of Salt and Light – 1994)

Spiritual formation resources can be found at www.archindy.org/psm