

## Catholic Social Teaching #6: Living the Principles with Fred Kammer, S.J.

“Catholic social teaching is a central and essential element of our faith.

Its roots are in the Hebrew prophets who announced God’s special love for the poor and called God’s people to a covenant of love and justice.”

~ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops



### SUMMARY

To live out Catholic Social Teaching, Fr. Kammer suggests that we all engage in service that provides at least some face-to-face contact on a regular basis with those in poverty, those on the margins, those who suffer injustice. In building human relationships, we are more able to see the face of Christ in “the least of these,” as Matthew proclaims.

Catholic Social Teaching encourages us to recognize the human dignity and the humans rights of every person, no matter how dysfunctional or wounded they are—then we are called to explore the root causes of human misery and brokenness. By doing an in-depth study of one issue that impacts the people we serve, we will have a better sense of what systems and structures need to be changed to transform the situation and build up the Kingdom of God. We then can speak out for justice from a more informed place and articulate the perspective of those suffering in the context of the Church’s Social Teaching.

Watch the video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VlrJjiwRSWs>

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Why is it so important to ground our justice work in human contact? What service experiences have provided you, your family and your local community with opportunities to interact with people on the margins? What insights have these experiences given you? What new service experiences might you seek out to meet people affected by unjust systems and structures?



2. Why is it so important to go deeper into the root causes of injustice as you do service and charity work? Have you been able to do so? What have you learned? If you have not been able to do so in the past, how could you begin to take a deeper look at root causes that cause injustice? Who can help you do this? How can you develop a practice of looking deeper and of study around a justice issue?

3. While Father Kammer suggests becoming an “expert” in one area, sometimes we are called to support the work of justice on several fronts and on more than one issue; how can prayer and reflective discernment help us respond to the needs of the world without being overwhelmed, and help us as we walk the path of discipleship, making responsible choices ahead?

## Prayer

God of all life, thank you for being present  
To us in the poor of our world.

May you guide us to our vocation for social justice,  
Helping us use the gifts and talents you have so generously given us.

Help us to meet those who suffer in the spirit  
Through a deep encounter with another.

Guide us to be present to the pain of “the least of these,”  
Those on the margins, those in oppression.

Move us to study the root causes of their pain  
And to creatively imagine ways to transform  
unjust structures and systems.

Renew our hearts and remind us  
Your grace is working in us and through us  
so we may play a small part in the building of your Kingdom. Amen.

