

# Solidarity



In their statement on *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, the Catholic bishops of the United States identify the four main principles of the Church’s social teaching and apply them to some concrete issues. This is not to tell the faithful for whom or against whom to vote, but instead to help them form their consciences in accordance with God’s truth as they approach this often-challenging decision. The four main principles are the Dignity of the Human Person, the Common Good, Solidarity, and Subsidiarity. They are all interrelated. This bulletin focuses on **Solidarity**, and the other three principles are covered in three other bulletins in this series. —★

Solidarity is “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to . . . the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.”<sup>1</sup> We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. The person is social in nature; we develop and flourish within a community. As baptized members of the community of the Church, we are part of one body in Christ and we are also part of one global human family.<sup>2</sup>

In *Fratelli Tutti (On Fraternity and Social Friendship)* Pope Francis places solidarity at the center of what it means to cultivate social friendship as one family:

*Solidarity means much more than engaging in sporadic acts of generosity. It means thinking and acting in terms of community. It means that the lives of all are prior to the appropriation of goods by a few. It also means combatting the structural causes of poverty, inequality, the lack of work, land, and housing, the denial of social and labor rights.<sup>3</sup>*

Thus, solidarity affects not only the goals we pursue in public life, but also the way we pursue them—ever mindful that we are all brothers and sisters, all children of God.

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In imitation of the Good Samaritan, we seek to be neighbor to all.<sup>4</sup> We are called to practice “radical solidarity” by accompanying pregnant women to choose life and by offering support to new mothers and their children.<sup>5</sup> As neighbors to all, we also advocate for families affected by poverty, unemployment, or illness, individuals struggling with mental illness or addiction, the elderly and those with disabilities, and all whose livelihoods and homes are endangered by climate change.<sup>6</sup>

In countries ravaged by war, such as Ukraine, West Africa, and the Middle East, we must “touch the wounded flesh of the victims” and support efforts for relief and peace,<sup>7</sup> while also working collaboratively to reduce and eliminate nuclear weapons.<sup>8</sup>



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We seek policies that “welcome, protect, promote, and integrate” migrants and refugees who arrive at our borders, and which aid development in countries of origin.<sup>9</sup>

Racism is an obstacle to solidarity, and we strive to root it out not only by examining our hearts individually, but also by looking critically at our policies and institutions.<sup>10</sup>

In a culture that overemphasizes the accumulation of wealth, we must not forget our “obligation to ensure that every person lives with dignity and has sufficient opportunities for his or her integral development.”<sup>11</sup>

As we seek to foster solidarity in hearts and policies, let us pray with Pope Francis in *Fratelli Tutti*:

*Lord, Father of our human family . . . Move us to create healthier societies and a more dignified world, a world without hunger, poverty, violence and war. Amen.*<sup>12</sup>

This bulletin insert along with five others was approved by the body of U.S. bishops in November 2023. Find this and more complementary resources at [www.faithfulcitizenship.org](http://www.faithfulcitizenship.org).

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1 *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 193, quoting St. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (*On Social Concerns*), no. 38. (See Mt 10:40-42, 20:25; Mk 10:42-45; Lk 22:25-27.)

2 Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est* (*God is Love*), no. 25b. See also: USCCB, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, nos. 52-54.

3 Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti* (*On Fraternity and Social Friendship*), no. 116, quoting *Address to Participants in the Meeting of Popular Movements* (October 28, 2014).

4 Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 80.

5 USCCB Chairmen, “Letter and Policy Recommendations Supporting Women and Children,” October 26, 2022.

6 Pope Francis, *Laudato Si’* (*On Care for Our Common Home*), nos. 25, 48-49. See also: Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (*Charity in Truth*), nos. 48-52, and Pope Francis, *Laudate Deum*, no. 31.

7 Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 261.

8 Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 262. See also: St. John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, nos. 23-24.

9 Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, nos. 129 and 132. See also: Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, no. 62.

10 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love, a Pastoral Letter Against Racism*, 2018. See also: *Fratelli Tutti*, nos. 20, 41, and 97.

11 Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 118.

12 Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 287.