



Catholic Teaching in Action

God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:27

Catholic Relief Services is dedicated to preserving the sacredness and dignity of human life from conception to natural death. Every aspect of our work helps life flourish. We defend the dignity of life and embody Catholic social and moral teaching through opposition to intrinsic evils such as abortion and torture, as well as through our commitment to life free from poverty, violence, and oppression for the poor and vulnerable in over 100 countries around the globe.

For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me...

Matthew 25:35-36

Catholic Relief Services responds to emergencies around the world, providing food, water, shelter, and clothing to countless people in desperate need immediately following a disaster. Consistent with Catholic teaching on the dignity of work, CRS strategy also emphasizes long-term recovery from emergencies through improved livelihoods so that individuals and communities can support themselves and their families well into the future. For example, Catholic Relief Services' microfinance program is aimed at the world's most vulnerable communities, providing access to financial services that support small business development. Currently, our microfinance programs reach more than 1 million clients (69.9 percent women) in 36 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

For I was... ill and you cared for me...

Matthew 25:35-36

CRS operates community health programs in 26 countries serving approximately 3.5 million people. These programs include life-saving treatment for victims of HIV/AIDS, nets and education to prevent malaria, and nutrition programs for malnourished children and families, among others. CRS focuses on providing healthcare for vulnerable groups in marginalized, unserved or underserved communities. Priority is given to those who are at greatest risk, typically women of reproductive age, infants and very young children. These programs identify and train local leaders in basic health services. Through partnerships with local public, church, and other private institutions, CRS health programs meet the immediate needs of vulnerable populations, and also strengthen the ability of communities to provide their own health care in the future.

It...is becoming a social and even economic necessity...to hold up to future generations the beauty of marriage and the family... Caritas in Veritate 44

CRS has developed a range of programs that support marriage and family life. For example, in East Timor, a country with one of the highest maternal and infant mortality rates in Asia, CRS pioneered a program to teach natural family planning to at-risk families. Through this program, women responsibly increase the time between childbirth, reducing infant mortality.

CRS HIV prevention programs worldwide encourage sexual abstinence-until-marriage and mutual fidelity within marriage. In Uganda, CRS strengthens marriages through training couples in the “Faithful House” program. The program is based on four pillars of love, faithfulness, respect, and communication, and focuses on commitments to God, spouse, children, and job. Through this program, CRS affirms the centrality of marriage, celebrates life through children, and also teaches couples responsible behavior so that they avoid HIV infection.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Matthew 5:9

Catholic teaching upholds life from conception until natural death. CRS efforts to promote and defend life include programs for building peace. Much of our work occurs in places that are recovering from or are on the edge of violence and war, and we have learned that the way we do our emergency and development programming helps prevent or transform conflicts. If we help our partners address the injustices in their society that cause conflict and facilitate respectful relationships between conflicting parties then our work together builds sustainable peace.

In places where violent conflicts are ongoing, we try to ensure our emergency relief programming does not exacerbate the conflict, but rather utilizes resources for peaceful change. For example, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Catholic Relief Services began laying the groundwork for interfaith cooperation during the war by working with Orthodox, Muslim, Jewish and Catholic organizations on emergency relief efforts. Similarly, in Indonesia, CRS worked with the Central Java Interfaith Emergency Program on emergency assistance. In some countries CRS works on providing peace education for children in refugee camps or improving relations between refugees and local inhabitants. For example, CRS provided staff dealing with refugees from East Timor with education on conflict resolution to help prevent conflicts occurring within the camp. In West Africa, CRS supports the West Africa Network for Peace's (WANEP) Preventive Peacebuilding efforts, which include an early warning and early response network.

To be authentic, [development] must be well rounded; it must foster the development of each man and of the whole man. Populorum Progressio 14

CRS programming is concerned with integral human development, a strategy which lifts up intellectual and spiritual well-being as fundamental to human dignity. In the Democratic

Republic of the Congo, CRS sponsored a seminar to help implement the papal encyclical Caritas in Veritate and exhortation Africae Munus. The theme of the Seminar was “From Caritas In Veritate to Africae Munus: Today’s Challenges for Africa in the light of the Social Doctrine of the Church”. Participants included Cardinals, Bishops and Archbishops and representatives of Justice and Peace Commissions.

In Haiti, a country with 45% adult illiteracy, together with the University of Notre Dame and other partners, CRS is developing a comprehensive program to support Catholic education, including teacher training and technology assistance. CRS supports the Catholic Church in Haiti in other ways. In June 2012, CRS sponsored the first-ever national Haiti partnership conference for parishes and dioceses in the US. Six Haitian bishops attended, along with representatives from every diocese in Haiti. The conference gave the Haitian Church the opportunity to present its vision of mission to Catholics in the United States.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

Matthew 5:6

Catholic teaching on international development emphasizes the social responsibility of consumers, businesses, politicians, and financiers in the United States. It is important that they have fully formed consciences “attuned to the requirements of the common good” (CV 66; 71). Through its offices in the United States, CRS works to inform and educate US Catholics so that they will better understand Catholic teaching and support the works of charity, justice, peace and human development. CRS also advocates for US policies that support international development, and, through its charitable giving programs, provides a mechanism for Catholics in the United States to support responsible human development programs that follow Catholic Church teaching.

The leadership and staff of Catholic Relief Services are moved by these words of Pope Paul VI, and we pray for the continued courage to live his vision:

Finally, a word to those of you who have heard the cries of needy nations and have come to their aid. We consider you the promoters and apostles of genuine progress and true development. Genuine progress does not consist in wealth sought for person comfort or for its own sake; rather it consists in an economic order designed for the welfare of the human person, where the daily bread that each man receives reflects the glow of brotherly love and the helping hand of God. We bless you with all Our heart, and We call upon all men of good will to join forces with you as a band of brothers.

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