

DIPPING INTO THE CATECHISM

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From the Compendium to the Catechism paragraphs: 401 – 408

THE HUMAN COMMUNITY

In what does the social dimension of man consist?

Together with the personal call to beatitude, the human person has a communal dimension as an essential component of his nature and vocation. Indeed, all are called to the same end, God Himself. There is a certain resemblance between the communion of the divine Persons and the fraternity that people are to establish among themselves in truth and love. Love of neighbour is inseparable from love for God.

What is the relationship between the person and society?

The human person is and ought to be the principle, the subject and the end of all social institutions. Certain societies, such as the family and the civic community, are necessary for the human person. Also helpful are other associations on the national and international levels with due respect for the principle of subsidiarity.



What is the principle of subsidiarity?

The principle of subsidiarity states that a community of a higher order should not assume the task belonging to a community of a lower order and deprive it of its authority. It should rather support it in case of need.

What else is required for an authentic human society?

Authentic human society requires: respect for justice, a just hierarchy of values, and the subordination of material and instinctual dimensions to interior and spiritual ones.

In particular, where sin has perverted the social climate, it is necessary to call for the conversion of hearts and for the grace of God to obtain social changes that may really serve each person and the whole person. Charity, which requires and makes possible the practice of justice, is the greatest social commandment.

What is the foundation of the authority of society?

Every human community needs a legitimate authority that preserves order and contributes to the realisation of the common good. The foundation of such authority lies in human nature because it corresponds to the order established by God.

When is authority exercised in a legitimate way?

Authority is exercised legitimately when it acts for the common good and employs morally licit means to attain it. Therefore, political regimes must be determined by the free decision of their citizens. They should respect the principle of the “rule of law” in which the law, and not the arbitrary will of some, is sovereign. Unjust laws and measures contrary to the moral order are not binding in conscience.

What is the common good?

By the common good is meant the sum total of those conditions of social life which allow people as groups and as individuals to reach their proper fulfilment.

What is involved in the common good?

The common good involves: respect for and promotion of the fundamental rights of the person, the development of the spiritual and temporal goods of persons and society, and the peace and security of all.



It is essential that every Catholic has access to good Catechesis to be able to deepen their faith. The Diocese of Plymouth recommends the many Catechetical Workshops from 'Franciscan at Home,' for more information on access to these and online or real group sessions contact deborah.vankroonenburg@prcdtr.org.uk