Bob’s Basic Booklet about the
Social Teachings of the Catholic Church
How to learn what God thinks about economics, politics, social justice, & solidarity.

Point the First: The Catholic Church has a distinctive set of teachings on social & economic issues. They are not optional suggestions, but definitive doctrines. It is our duty to form our consciences in accordance with those teachings and apply them to the issues of the day.

Point the Second: You won’t learn about the social teachings of the Catholic Church from conservative or liberal activists, talk show hosts, nor from political parties. To get the truth, you must listen to what the Catechism and the popes teach about social & economic issues.

START HERE: THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
несен Sections 2419 - 2463 on the Social Doctrine of the Church – http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/__P8C.HTM “The Church makes a moral judgment about economic & social matters, ‘when the fundamental rights of the person or the salvation of souls requires it.’ In the moral order she bears a mission distinct from that of political authorities: the Church is concerned with the temporal aspects of the common good because they are ordered to the sovereign Good, our ultimate end. She strives to inspire right attitudes with respect to earthly goods & in socio-economic relationships.” § 2420
несен Sections 1905 - 1917 on the Importance of the Common Good. http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/__P6K.HTM “Each human community possesses a common good which permits it to be recognized as such; it is in the political community that its most complete realization is found. It is the role of the state to defend & promote the common good of civil society, its citizens, & intermediate bodies.” §1910
несен Sections 1928 - 1948 on Social Justice & Solidarity http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/__P6N.HTM & the links thereafter for the rest of this chapter. “Society ensures social justice when it provides the conditions that allow associations or individuals to obtain what is their due, according to their nature & their vocation. Social justice is linked to the common good & the exercise of authority.”§1928

…”The principle of solidarity, also articulated in terms of ‘friendship’ or ‘social charity,’ is a direct demand of human & Christian brotherhood. ‘An error, today abundantly widespread, is disregard for the law of human solidarity & charity, dictated & imposed both by our common origin & by the equality in rational nature of all men, whatever nation they belong to. This law is sealed by the sacrifice of redemption offered by Jesus Christ on the altar of the Cross to his heavenly Father, on behalf of sinful humanity.’ (Pope Pius XII)” §1939

NEXT . . . you can’t go wrong listening to the Popes & the 2nd Vatican council teach about social justice. You do not need a theological degree to understand what they are saying to us.
несен RERUM NOVARUM, “On Capital & Labor,” Leo XIII, 1891 http://www.ewtn.com/library/ENCYC/L13RERUM.HTM “Some remedy must be found. . . for the misery & wretchedness which press so heavily at the moment on the large majority of the very poor... Hence by degrees... workers have been given over, isolated & defenseless, to the callousness of employers & the greed of unrestrained competition. . . when there is question of defending the rights of individuals, the poor & badly off have a claim to especial consideration. The richer class have many ways of shielding themselves, & st& less in need of help from the State; whereas the mass of the poor have no resources of their own to fall back upon, & must chiefly depend upon the assistance of the State. & it is for this reason that wage-earners, since they mostly belong in the mass of the needy, should be specially cared for & protected by the government.”
несен GAUDIUM ET SPES, The Church in the Modern World, Second Vatican council, 1965 http://www.ewtn.com/library/councils/v2modwor.htm “The social order & its development must unceasingly work to the benefit of the human person... this social order requires constant improvement. It must be founded on truth, built on justice, & animated by love; in freedom it should grow every day toward a more humane balance. . . the ferment of the Gospel, too, has aroused & continues to arouse in human hearts the irresistible requirements of their dignity.”
несен POPULORUM PROGRESSIO, On the Development of Peoples, Paul VI, 1967 http://www.ewtn.com/library/encyc/p6develo.htm “Today the peoples in hunger are making a dramatic appeal to the peoples blessed with abundance. The Church shudders at this cry of anguish & calls each one to give a loving response of charity to these brothers’ & sisters’ cry for help.”
particular, whose fundamental right to life is being trampled upon. If...the church could not be silent about the injustices of those times, still less can she be silent today, when the social injustices of the past, unfortunately not yet overcome, are being compounded in many regions of the world by still more grievous forms of injustice & oppression...Should we not question the very economic models often adopted by states which...cause & aggravate situations of injustice & violence in which the life of whole peoples is degraded & trampled upon?”

**Centessimus Annus, One Hundred Years, John Paul II, 1991**
http://www.ewtn.com/library/encyc/jp2hundr.htm “Love for others, & in the first place love for the poor...is made concrete in the promotion of justice. Justice will never be fully attained unless people see in the poor person, who is asking for help in order to survive, not an annoyance or a burden, but an opportunity for showing kindness...It is not merely a matter of ‘giving from one’s surplus,’ but of helping entire peoples which are presently excluded or marginalized to enter into the sphere of economic & human development...It is not enough to draw on the surplus goods which in fact our world abundantly produces; it requires above all a change of lifestyles, of models of production & consumption, & of the established structures of power which today govern societies.”

**Caritas in Veritate, Human Development in Charity & Truth, Benedict XVI, 2009**
http://www.ewtn.com/library/ENCYC/b16caritas.HTM “This dynamic of charity received & given is what gives rise to the Church’s social teaching, which is caritas in veritate in re sociali, the proclamation of the truth of Christ’s love in society...the social doctrine of the church has unceasingly highlighted the importance of distributive justice & social justice for the market economy, not only because it belongs within a broader social & political context, but also because of the wider network of relations within which it operates. In fact, if the market is governed solely by the principle of the equivalence in value of exchanged goods, it cannot produce the social cohesion that it requires in order to function well. Without internal forms of solidarity & mutual trust, the market cannot completely fulfill its proper economic function.
