THEMES OF CHRISTIAN SOCIAL TEACHING

1) **Dignity of the Human Person** - All people are made in the image of God and are the clearest reflection of God among us. Respecting everyone’s dignity implies that individuals have access to the basic necessities of life that enable them to live humanly.
   - “How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points?” - Pope Francis.
   - What is an example of human dignity being diminished?
   - How can you and I repair the ways in which human dignity is diminished?

2) **Solidarity of the Human Family** - We each exist in community. The human family depends on each other. We are all part of the earth’s household - no one should be excluded. We must walk with the people.
   - “We are all one family in the world. Building a community that empowers everyone to attain their full potential through each of us respecting each other’s dignity, rights and responsibilities makes the world a better place to live.”
   - What is an example of community being broken or weakened?
   - How can you and I work to build community?

3) **The Common Good** - Everyone has a responsibility to contribute to the good of the whole society, to the common good. The common good implies that social structures of society must be crafted in such a way that all people have the opportunity to participate and fulfill their basic human needs. Human Dignity is realized and protected in the context of relationships with the wider society.
   - Pursuit of the common good is one of the ways in which we practice solidarity: the common good is not just shared with those nearest to us, or even with all those in our own society; it is a universal principle, which fosters the unity of the whole human family.
   - What is an example of working for individualistic good rather than the common good?
   - How can you and I stretch our concern beyond just our close circle to work for the common good?

4) **Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers** - The dignity of work flows from the dignity of the human person and the rights of the person to participate in using his or her gifts and skills to provide for one's livelihood and that of one’s family. Everyone should be involved in decisions that affect their lives.
   - Work and workers must always be respected and valued.
   - In what ways are workers respected less and less?
   - What can you and I do to make sure all workers receive respect?

5) **Standing together with the Poor** - The key Gospel principle is the obligation to attend to people who are poor. In her social teachings, the Church holds strongly to the truth that the moral fabric of a nation is determined by how well it provides for the poor in its midst. All gifts of nature, natural resources and technology must serve the dignity of the person, support the community and contribute to the common good.
   - New ideologies, characterized by rampant individualism, egocentrism and materialistic consumerism, weaken social bonds, fueling that “throw away” mentality which leads to contempt for, and the abandonment of, the weakest and those considered “useless.” - Pope Francis.
   - Can you give an example of how the poor and weak are disregarded or diminished?
   - What can you and I do to stand together with the poor and weak?

6) **Care and Responsibility for Ecology and all Creation** - The well-being of human creation is intertwined with the well-being of natural creation. Each member of the community of creation – wind, water, animal, sun, planet, moon, stars – plays an essential role in the survival and sustenance of the whole.
   - “Creation is not a property, which we can rule over at will; or, even less, is the property of only a few: Creation is a gift, it is a wonderful gift that God has given us, so that we care for it and we use it for the benefit of all, always with great respect and gratitude.” - Pope Francis.
   - What is an example of the natural world being harmed?
   - What can you and I do to care for all creation better?