

Rights and Responsibilities

In a world where some speak mostly of "rights" and others mostly of "responsibilities, the Catholic tradition teaches that human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Therefore, every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities--to one another, to our families, and to the larger society. While public debate in our nation is often divided between those who focus on personal responsibility and those who focus on social responsibilities, our tradition insists that both are necessary.



Scripture

- [Leviticus 25:35](#)
When someone is reduced to poverty, we have an obligation to help.
- [Ruth 2:2-23](#)
Boaz cares for Ruth, a widow and a foreigner, giving her far more than the law requires.
- [Tobit 4:5-11](#)
Give from what you have received and do not turn away from the poor.
- [Proverbs 31:8-9](#)
Open your mouth to speak on behalf of those in need.
- [Isaiah 1:16-17](#)
Seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow.
- [Jeremiah 22: 13-16](#)
A legitimate government upholds the rights of the poor and vulnerable.
- [Jeremiah 29:4-7](#)
Seek the welfare of the city, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.
- [Matthew 25: 31-46](#)
Just as you did it to the least of these, you did it to me.
- [Luke 16:19-31](#)
The rich man has a responsibility to care for Lazarus.
- [Acts 4:32-35](#)
There was not a needy person among them.
- [2 Corinthians 9:6-15](#)
God's gifts are given to be shared.
- [James 2:14-18](#)
Faith without works is dead.