



Faith Reflection

Pope Francis calls young people today to form “a different kind of economy: one that brings life, not death, one that is inclusive and not exclusive, humane and not dehumanizing, one that cares for the environment and does not despoil it” (*The Economy of Francesco*, 2019).

It is time for the dignity of the human person and the health of our common home to be front and centre. The push for profit and economic growth at all costs has meant that life and death decisions are made far away from the people on the ground. With climate change, growing disparities of wealth and health and neo-colonial ideas, we see that: “some parts of our human family, it appears, can be readily sacrificed for the sake of others considered worthy of a carefree existence.” (*Fratelli Tutti*, 18).

This was how colonialism robbed many peoples of their land, history and rights. Today, the same theft continues at an international scale, for the benefit of giant corporations. The colonial attitude that treats vulnerable people, especially Indigenous communities as subordinate and less than equal persists in our time. So that the innate dignity of each person, created in the likeness of God, is properly protected by the law, we must secure the human and environmental rights of all peoples as we strive to “build back better” from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Let's be inspired by and learn from leaders around the world who are putting people and planet first!

Catholic Social Teaching

The principle of the dignity of the human person

“A just society can become a reality only when it is based on the respect of the transcendent dignity of the human person. ‘...the social order and its development must invariably work to the benefit of the human person, ...and not the other way around.’”

— *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 132



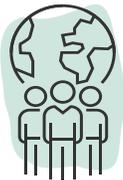
PHOTO BY CDA

The Village resident Solotina Voahangy Aimé tends to her garden in Rakotomalala village, Madagascar. ↑

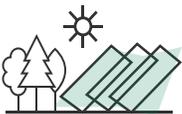
Development Council of Andohatapenaka (CDA) has worked with a Madagascan community severely affected by climate change and poverty to help it transform itself into a thriving, people-led ecological village. This work embodies Catholic Social Teaching principles in several ways:



In bringing people together to improve their life conditions, it reflects the principle of **Solidarity**.



We see **Participation** in action when individuals join in decisions that concern them, their family and their environment.



Solar panels and vegetable gardens involve each family in the **Stewardship of Creation**.



Economic Justice is furthered when villagers improve their lot by selling the produce from their gardens.

In Canada, Development and Peace members:



Recognize that we are on the territories of Indigenous peoples and that they can lead us towards right relationship with creation.



Commit to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 **Calls to action**, and to put the **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People** (UNDRIP) into action.

Let's show our solidarity by refusing to regard our common home solely as a resource to be exploited.

Reflection questions

- In my neighbourhood, do I see people exploiting the goodness of nature without limits? Is this overexploitation like or different from that which occurs in the Global South?
- How do we see nature? As a source of belonging, as a gift or as an asset to possess and exploit?
- How can I participate in an economy of life, inclusion and caring for our common home?



Take time to meditate on the inherent relationship between God, the environment and its peoples with this selection of prayers.