



CATHOLIC RURAL LIFE

Agricultural Ethics for a Global Generation

Economic Justice for the Poor and Vulnerable

Economic Justice means a distinctive concern for the poorest members of society. The Church teaches that through prayers and deeds one must show solidarity and compassion for the poor.

In *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI states that the moral test of any society is how it treats its most vulnerable members. The poor have the most urgent moral claim on the conscience of the nation; public policy decisions must be evaluated in terms of how they affect the poor.

“Life in many poor countries is extremely insecure as a consequence of food shortages, and the situation could become worse: hunger still claims enormous numbers of victims among those, who like Lazarus, are not permitted to take their place at the rich man’s table.”

Caritas in Veritate [27]

For the rural poor, the main cause of their poverty is unequal distribution of resources. Therefore, the prudent course of action calls for greater access to economic opportunities and participation in local and regional food production.

There is also an urgent and crucial need to recognize that women farmers have the potential and the solution to bring their families out of poverty. They should be at the forefront of agricultural assistance programs. By investing more in women, we amplify benefits across families and generations.

It is time to create food security, built on economic justice, in our resource-constrained world:

- Increase the productivity, self-reliance and economic opportunity of small-scale farmers, especially women.
- Increase farmers’ access to natural resources like water, and ownership over resources like fertile land.

“You have been told what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: Only to do the right and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God.”

-Micah 6:8