

What Does Jesus' Church Teach about Socialism?

In **Matthew 28:18-20**, Jesus states:

“All power in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”

We see from this that we have a duty to teach what Jesus teaches through His Church so as to create an environment so that people can follow Jesus. You, as part of the Church, have a duty to learn the truth and charitably correct ideologies that are disordered. This is not political, but a moral mandate from God Himself. We are to live the virtue of fortitude, and not fall into the vices of cowardice and sloth.

Below is most of a 2016 article written by David Deavel, a Catholic scholar. It is a follow-up article to the one (“**The Catholic Church on the Seven Deadly Sins of Socialism**”) in last weekend’s bulletin (March 17). Enjoy.

Three Mistakes Catholics Make Who Flirt with Socialism

In a previous article, I listed [seven ways](#) in which Catholic teaching rules out socialism as a system. Yet despite the Church’s concerns about the dangers of socialism, some politicians and other prominent Catholics have flirted with some sort of “Christian Socialism.”

Catholic social teaching does have a concern for distributive justice and does envision a limited role for the state in achieving such justice. Here are three ways in which modern Catholics have flirted with Socialism on that basis — despite the Church’s defense of private property and firm condemnation of that system which threatens it.

1. Confusing Inequality with Poverty

Socialist economic thinking is generally premised on the idea of a fixed pie of stuff from which everyone is taking. If I get more stuff (money, goods, services), somebody else must be getting less. That might be true on a lifeboat, but not in a free economy. Indeed, the whole point of economics is optimizing human cooperation through the division of labor, for the benefit of all.

Catholic teaching has never seen inequality as in itself bad, though it does insist that those who lack the means of living a decent life need to have those needs met by charitable groups and, where appropriate, government mechanisms. But the sharp distinction between *poverty* and *inequality* vanishes in the minds of too many Catholic thinkers in recent decades.

In their 1986 document, “[Economic Justice for All](#),” the U. S. Catholic bishops acknowledged this difference, but still spent three paragraphs on the growth in simple inequality in the U.S. without detailing the great material gains made by the poor in the U.S. in absolute terms. Because of that growth poor people in America are materially much better off than middle class people were just decades ago.

A 2014 [bishops conference backgrounder](#) continues this trend of worrying about relative inequalities and assuming that the gains in income for the top are the result of injustice. The paper only briefly mentions an issue that should stand at the very center of Christian concern: the tremendous progress made in reducing [global poverty](#). Even in the U. S., when we look not at income but consumption levels (do people have enough material goods?), true poverty has fallen tremendously and even the middle class has [done better](#) materially.

2. Grabbing Government Remedies

The Church warns against the state unjustly usurping the functions of civil society and local governments, but has taught that in certain cases that the federal government might have the duty to intervene, when the rights of the vulnerable are not being protected. While such a statement by itself is generally non-controversial for all but anarcho-libertarians, too many Catholics use this reasonable willingness to delegate power upward when absolutely necessary as Church approval for a sort of government-directed economy. *The Compendium of Social Doctrine* talks about the necessity for the market and the State to act in concert, one with the other, and to complement each other mutually. In fact, the free market can have a beneficial influence on the general public only when the State is organized in such a manner that it defines and gives direction to economic development, promoting the observation of fair and transparent rules, and making direct interventions — only for the length of time strictly necessary....” (353)

Those eager to grow the government can use such a statement as license for the government hijacking control over huge sectors of the economy, so long as they can cite an existing “crisis.” Intellectuals (Catholic and otherwise) tend to prefer tidy-looking, state-imposed solutions, and the politicians who gain power over the economy this way rarely if ever will admit that a “crisis” is over, and it’s time for the state to step back.

Prudence may indeed dictate some interventions, but as many observers have noted, too often Catholic bishops and thinkers look for legislative solutions to every problem. Too often those “solutions” end up harming the Church itself, as well as the common good. Initially the U. S. Catholic Bishops supported the Affordable Care Act (or “Obamacare”). They only

withdrew their support when it was clear that the federal definition of “healthcare” would be somewhat different from their own, and that conscience protections would be withheld from those who opposed providing abortion and abortifacient drugs in employer insurance plans. The Little Sisters of the Poor and many other groups have now spent years fighting the federal government on this topic.

But as Stephen Krason [noted](#), there was a deeper problem with the U. S. bishops’ initial embrace of the Affordable Care Act: the principle of subsidiarity states that larger and more distant authorities should only take over lower-level authorities when it could be shown that the lower levels could not solve their own problems. As Krason observed, in the case of health care, “Clearly, such a showing has not been made, and absent that the morality of the entire matter of a larger federal health care role must be called into question.”

3. Misunderstanding How Wages Work

This propensity to immediately jump to state-centered solutions is also present in discussion of wages. The *Catechism* states:

Agreement between the parties is not sufficient to justify morally the amount to be received in wages

and:

“Remuneration for work should guarantee man the opportunity to provide a dignified livelihood for himself and his family on the material, social, cultural and spiritual level, taking into account the role and the productivity of each, the state of the business, and the common good” (2434).

But the question is how to account for this “should.” Not every worker in low-wage jobs is capable of earning the kind of living wage called for in the *Catechism*. It is clear that employers and charities need to be involved in helping low-income workers develop the skills that will allow them to actually *earn* a wage that provides the dignified living called for rather than simply demanding that businesses give them what they need. The second might be demanded of Catholics as private persons through charity, but charity can’t be compelled from businesses.

Yet many Catholics have overlooked this issue of what wage justice really ought to mean in practice. At least since “Economic Justice for All,” the U. S. Bishops have continually advocated a federal minimum wage raise. A 2014 Catholic bishops [position paper](#) and a 2015 [letter to Congress](#) continue this tradition without acknowledging that many economists believe such wage increases, while helping some, will drive many low-skilled workers out of the job market. Businesses cease to be able to employ them, and this deprives them of opportunity the

opportunity to learn the habits and skills associated with work.

Social, Yes; Socialist, No!

Am I suggesting that the Catholic Bishops Conference or that Catholics of a more liberal bent are consistent socialists? Not at all. But many Catholics are tempted by aspects of socialist thinking when they look at the issues. This leads to muddled views and counter-productive policies that actually hurt the poor. Just look at the elaborate anti-poverty programs in Venezuela, to cite just the most recent example of socialism backfiring on society. It’s not surprising that there are dangerous edges to Catholic social thought—after all, the truth is often a matter of balancing on an edge. The trick for Catholic thinkers is to acknowledge and defend the truth that man is a social being with social needs without falling over the edge into socialism.

MTYR Jesus is God’s invitation to live an incredibly abundant and fulfilling life. Do you know Jesus? He supplies strength to the weak. He’s available for the tempted and the tried. He sympathizes and He saves. He fortifies and sustains. He guards and He guides. He heals the sick. He forgives sinners. He delivers the captive. He defends the feeble. He blesses the young. He rewards the diligent. He beautifies the meek.

Do you accept God’s invitation? Believe in Jesus and you will have abundance above measure.

Wisdom of The Dialogue of St. Catherine

Summary of Chapter 11. God the Father says, “I am pleased by few words and many works... What I want is many works of patient and courageous endurance and of the other virtues I have described to you—interior virtues that are all active in bearing the fruit of grace.”

“I want...infinitely desirous love. I want works of penance and other bodily practices to be undertaken as a means, not as your chief goal.”

“Your selfish will must in everything be slain, drowned, subjected to My will.” To do this, one needs discernment: to love neighbor, willing to bear pain (ready to die a thousand deaths) for salvation of others. Discernment is that light that dissolves darkness, dissipates ignorance, and seasons every virtue and virtuous deed, and overcomes the devil and the flesh.

Material possessions should be seen as a way to serve the physical needs of others.

Pint with a Priest

This month it is all about the sacrament of Confession. Why do we have to confess to a priest? What does the Bible say about this? How can I make my confessions better? I look forward to your questions, too.

April 2 at 6 p.m. at The Peak restaurant in Winter Park

Friday Mass, March 29

-St. Bernard, 4:30 p.m. (Traditional Latin Mass = TLM); then dinner at 5:30 and Stations at 6:30.

Friday Meatless Suppers and Stations of the Cross

-**St. Peter:** Stations, 6:30 p.m.; soup/bread supper, 7:35 March 29; April 5, 12 (Stations are bilingual)

-**St. Anne:** Soup/bread supper, 5:30 p.m. Stations, 6:30 March 29; April 5, 12

-**Our Lady:** Soup/bread supper, 5:30 p.m. Stations, 6:30 April 12

-**St. Bernard:** Meatless supper, 5:30 p.m. Stations, 6:30 March 29 (incense used)

The Movie “Unplanned”

“Unplanned” is the inspiring true story of one woman’s journey of transformation.

All **Abby Johnson** ever wanted to do was help women. As one of the youngest Planned Parenthood clinic directors in the nation, she was involved in upwards of 22,000 abortions and counseled countless others about their reproductive “choices.” Her passion surrounding a women’s right to choose even led her to become a spokesperson for Planned Parenthood, fighting to enact legislation for the cause in which she so deeply believed. But then she received a grace from God. Abby Johnson left Planned Parenthood to join her former enemies at “40 Days For Life” to become one of the most ardent pro-life speakers in America.

“Unplanned” opens in Denver theaters March 29. It is rated “R” because of subject matter and some content. You can see the official movie trailer on YouTube or click:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VctHVTri8ko>

The closest theater is: United Artist Colorado Mills 14500 W. Colfax. Showings: 12:15 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 6:45 p.m., 9:45 p.m.

A group from the Pregnancy Resource Connection (PRC) is going down for the 12:15 p.m. showing this Friday (March 29), if anyone wants to carpool.

For more information or questions, contact Pat Pulliam at 361-442-3532 or patpulliamjnj@gmail.com

Holy Thursday and Good Friday at OLS and StP

-Thu, **April 18**, Mass of the Lord’s Supper, 6:30 p.m.

(Incense to be used.)

--Confession, 7:45 p.m.; Adoration of Our Lord till 10

-Fri, **April 19**, Good Friday: Lord’s Passion, 6:30 p.m.

--Confession afterward; begin **Divine Mercy Novena**

Saturday Easter Vigil Masses at OLS and StP

-Sat, **April 20**, Easter Vigil Mass (2+ hours), 8:15 p.m.

Easter Sunday Masses, April 21

-Saint Bernard, 7 a.m. AND 9 a.m.

-Saint Anne, 8 a.m.

-Our Lady of the Snow, 9:30 a.m. (Incense)

-Saint Ignatius, 1 p.m. (Incense)

March 30 is the last Saturday evening Mass at St. Bernard until June 22. Exception: May 25 at 5:30 p.m.

Listen to Your Abba, Your Father and Mine

God the Father referring to Jesus, “By shedding both blood and water I showed you the holy baptism of water that you receive through the power of My blood.”

After Baptism, God knew we would sin, so He says, “So my divine charity had to leave them an ongoing baptism of blood accessible by heartfelt contrition and a holy confession as soon as they can confess to my ministers who hold the key to the blood. This blood the priest pours over the soul in absolution.” *Dialouge*, 75.

Calendar of Events

-**Mar 29 (Fri).** Stations of the Cross at StP and StB

-**Apr 20-21. Easter weekend**

-**Apr 27-28 (Sat-Sun).** USAFA Cadet Choir, take two!
The cadets want to try to come again.

-**Jun 16-21, (Sun-Fri).** *Totus Tuus* (VBS), at OLS

Mass Collections, Mar 16 – 17

St. Anne	\$ 1100
St. Bernard	2026
Our Lady of the Snow	1437
St. Peter	566
St. Ignatius	<u>1252</u>
Total	\$ 6381

Vocations Prayer Calendar

Please pray for our seminarians every day.

Sat—John Croghan & Tony Davis

Sun—Ryan Kent & John Stapleton

Mon—John Paul Almeida & Christopher Considine

Tue—Justin Doerr & Juan Hernandez

Wed—Christopher Marbury & Christian Mast

Thu—Daniel Wolbach & Deacon Julio Amezcua

Fri—More women to become sisters and nuns

Mass Intentions and Schedule for StA, StB, and OLS

KEY: StA = St. Anne; StB = St. Bernard;

OLS = Our Lady of the Snow

-Sat, Mar 23, StA, 5 p.m., Joseph Burbach Family

-Sat, Mar 23, StB, 4 p.m., People in our region/visitors

-Sat, Mar 23, StB, 5:30 p.m., Keith and Debbie Morrison

-Sun, Mar 24, StB, 7 a.m., Healing and reparation

-Sun, Mar 24, OLS, 9:30 a.m., Margaret Ledezma

Weekday Masses

-Mon, Mar 25, StA, 8:30 a.m., David and Laura Haber

-Tue, Mar 26, OLS, 7:30 a.m., Dollie Darrah

-Wed, Mar 27, StB, 8:30 a.m., Keith and Debbie Morrison

-Thu, Mar 28, **OLS, 8:30 a.m.**, Brian and Kim Raber

-Fri, Mar 29, **StB, 4:30 p.m.**, [TLM], Special Intention

Mass Intentions and Schedule for StP and StI

KEY: StP = St. Peter; StI = St. Ignatius (Walden)

-Sun, Mar 24, StP, 10 a.m., People in our region/visitors

-Sun, Mar 24, StI, 1 p.m., Mark and Debbie Goulette