

What is Advocacy?

THE ACT OR PROCESS OF SUPPORTING A CAUSE OR PROPOSAL

Advocacy means influencing decision-making at local, national and international levels (usually to address a specific problem). Advocacy can include using media to influence public opinion, educating decision-makers, organizing events, researching issues and coordinating groups. Effective advocacy requires an understanding of the problem or issue, a good grasp of the political environment, and a coherent solution to the problem. It includes educating other people in your community so that they can become involved in developing and promoting policies they care about.

ADVOCACY FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Solidarity, or our persevering commitment to be responsible for the well-being of our neighbors, is an ethical imperative in Catholic social teaching. Genuine solidarity requires us to remove barriers and create an environment in which relationships can flourish. Our relationships with our brothers and sisters, particularly those who are poor and marginalized, are affected by many interconnected structures and systems. Catholic social teaching calls us to assume responsibility, along with others for shaping a more just and compassionate social order.

The principles of **Catholic social teaching** provide a vision for what a just world could look like. To achieve justice and solidarity, we must strive to uphold systems that promote justice and peace—and likewise change systems and practices that do not respect the rights of everyone. To accomplish this, we must encourage full participation in economic, social and political life, which includes taking part in the process of advocacy described above. We can advocate for changes in existing unjust policies and for the creation of new policies that benefit the common good.

Learn more about policy issues affecting our brothers and sisters around the world in order to advocate for changes to existing unjust policies and for the creation of new policies promoting the common good. One way to do this is by joining CRS in our issue-focused campaigns, joint initiatives of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services; learn more at crs.org/leadtheway.

“A prayer that does not lead you to practical action for your brother—the poor, the sick, those in need of help, a brother in difficulty—is a sterile and incomplete prayer.”

Pope Francis, Angelus, July 21, 2013