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*“A Vital Christian Presence in Social Work”*

**SOCIAL WORK FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE:  
STRENGTHENING SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE THROUGH THE  
INTEGRATION OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING**

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**Introduction**

During the past decade, there has been a trend in higher education to reflect upon and encouragement to articulate and demonstrate the primary commitments of institutional mission. At the College of St. Catherine and University of St. Thomas (CSC/UST) School of Social Work (St. Paul, Minnesota), this has provided an opportunity to consider how the social work program responds to and reflects the Catholic identity and mission of its sponsoring institutions. This has presented both opportunity and challenge. A few faculty have long recognized Catholic Social Teaching as a valuable resource and incorporated it into courses (particularly those addressing social policy) in a meaningful but unsystematic matter. At the same time, there has been an unspoken assumption/belief on the part of some faculty that religion does not belong in the classroom. This belief in secularism is reinforced by key ‘flash point issues’ which readily emerge when one simultaneously considers social work values and Catholic doctrine. Tensions related to important issues such as gender equality and gay rights surface immediately.

This is the story of how the CSC/UST School Social Work has embraced this ‘opportunity-challenge.’ Recognizing Catholic Social Teaching (CST) as rich resource of social justice, the School has made a commitment to strengthen the social justice content of our programs through the integration of Catholic Social Teaching. This is a comprehensive project which addresses faculty development, student engagement and curriculum development. Much more than a series of tasks, this process has been a transformative journey focused on our School’s commitment to social justice and its identity as a program sponsored by Catholic institutions.

**What is Catholic Social Teaching?**

“...Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world...”  
Synod of Catholic Bishops, Rome, 1971

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) represents a comprehensive tradition of social ethics which derives from multiple sources within Catholic Church tradition including scripture, papal encyclicals, episcopal statements and writings of theologians. Catholic Social Teaching, which addresses the challenges of economic and political life and global harmony, defines standards that universally apply to all human beings and provide guidance as to how people should interact and treat one another within the economic and political spheres of our communities and world. As such, these social teachings provide direction on how to live out the Judeo Christian mandate ‘love one another.’ The first Church document addressing social teaching, *Rerum Novarum* (*On the Condition of Labor*), was issued by Pope Leo XIII in 1891. Twelve key documents, published since (and including) *Rerum Novarum*, are commonly recognized as the primary sources of Catholic Social Teaching. (Massaro, 2000) The concerns addressed in these various documents correspond to the time of publication and include world peace, progress, poverty, equality, the environment and global justice. These timely social concerns were not addressed/intended for Catholics alone. Rather, the teachings were issued with a global perspective and address universal human needs of our global community. The Office of Social Justice of the St. Paul/Minneapolis Archdiocese has identified ten key principles which emerge from Catholic Social Teaching: ([www.osjspm.org/cst](http://www.osjspm.org/cst))

1. Human Dignity: “...human life is sacred and ... the dignity of the person is the foundation of a moral vision of society...”
2. Community and the Common Good: “... how we organize society – economics and politics, in law and policy – directly affects human dignity and the capacity for individuals to grow in community....the role of government and other institutions is to protect human life and human dignity and promote the common good.”
3. Rights and Responsibilities: “...every person has a fundamental right o 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.”
4. Option for the Poor and Vulnerable: “... a basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring... our traditions...instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.”
5. Participation: “All people have a right to participate in the economic, political and cultural life of society. It is a fundamental demand of justice and a requirement for human dignity that all people be assured a minimum level of participation...”
6. Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers: “...the economy must serve people, not the other way around. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected – the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to organize and join unions, to private property and to economic initiative.’
7. Stewardship of Creation: “...We are called to protect the people and the planet.”
8. Solidarity: “...we are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers, wherever they live. We are one human family... Solidarity means that “loving our neighbor” has global dimensions in an interdependent world.’
9. Role of Government: “... the state has a positive moral function. It is an instrument to promote human dignity, protect human rights, and build the common good....According to the principle of subsidiarity, the functions of government should be performed at the lowest level possible...”

10. Promotion of Peace: "...There is a close relationship between peace and justice. Peace is the fruit of justice and is dependent upon right order among human beings."

While there are numerous interpretations of Catholic Social Teaching, each typically identifying some number of emergent themes, there is consistency across the various articulations that speak to the principles listed above.

Upon examining the numerous source documents as well as the various analyses and summaries of Catholic Social Teaching, an over-arching theme of social justice is readily apparent. This, in a nutshell, is what Catholic Social Teaching is all about: social justice. While *human dignity* and *the common good* emerge as the two most fundamental cornerstones of Catholic Social Teaching and are consistently evident in each and every principle/theme, social justice is the resilient and unifying message throughout. This two-pronged vision of social justice (human dignity and the common good) is relevant to all social settings (family, workplace, economy, and government) and all levels of human relationship (community, nation, world). It is in this way, as a comprehensive framework for the articulation and pursuit of social justice, that Catholic Social Teaching presents a solid foundation for social work education and practice.

### **Rationale: Why is Catholic Social Teaching Relevant for Social Work?**

#### Rationale from the Social Work Perspective: The NASW Code of Ethics

Social work is a regulated profession in the United States. In addition to state laws that establish boards of social work which, in turn, set policies for social work practice, the primary auspices of regulation of social work practice is the National Association of Social Work (NASW).

Perhaps the most important leadership function provided by NASW is the provision of the code of ethics. The *NASW Code of Ethics* is "...a guide to the everyday professional conduct of social workers." (NASW, 1999) The *Code of Ethics* identifies two overarching purposes of the social work profession: service and justice. In relation to justice, the *Code* states that "social workers challenge social injustice" as follows:

*Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers' social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, service and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision-making for all people.*

(NASW Code of Ethics, 1999, p. 5)

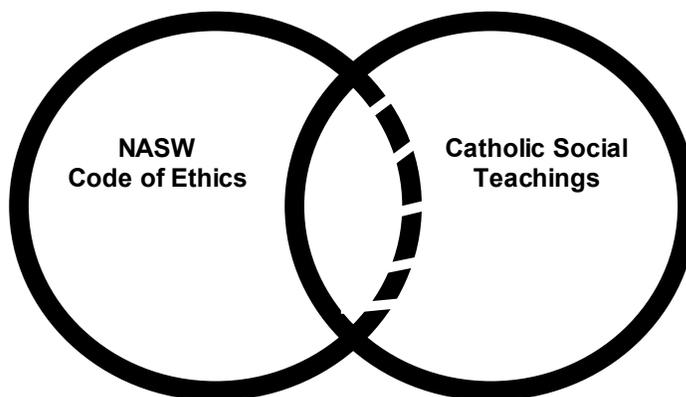
The *NASW Code of Ethics* is twenty-seven pages in length. Of those pages, approximately one-half pages are devoted to "social workers' ethical responsibilities to the broader society" i.e. to the social justice function of the profession. The following responsibilities are specified in relation to social justice: (*NASW Code of Ethics*, pp. 26 – 27)

- **General Welfare:** Social workers should promote the general welfare of society, from local to global levels, and the development of people, their communities, and their environments...
- **Participation:** Social workers should facilitate informed **participation** by the public in shaping social policies and institutions.

- **Public Emergencies:** Social workers should provide appropriate professional services in public emergencies to the greatest extent possible.
- **Social and Political Action**
  - Social workers should engage in **social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have equal access** to the resources, employment, services, and opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully....
  - Social workers should act to **expand choice and opportunity for all** people with special regard for the vulnerable, disadvantaged, oppressed, and exploited people and groups.
  - Social workers should promote conditions that **encourage respect for cultural and social diversity**....
  - Social workers should act to **prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination** against any person, group, or class on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, or mental or physical disability.

The remaining twenty-five plus pages of the *Code* are dedicated to social workers' responsibility to clients, colleagues, practice settings and the profession. While the ethical principles set forth on these pages support the profession's commitment to human dignity, they do not specifically address social justice and the common good. Thus, while the *Code* very specifically identifies detailed standards of ethical practice in relation to its service function, ethical standards related to its social justice function are limited, brief and general in nature.

It is important and useful to step back and examine the profession's historical track record relative to its two overarching purposes, service and justice. While social work has a rich history in both areas, the profession's priority and strength, over the past 100 years, has been clearly to service. While we have shining moments relative to our justice functions, such as the Settlement Movement, Progressive Era reforms, extensive contributions to the New Deal and the War on Poverty, our preferential focus has consistently been that of service. (Specht & Courtney, 1994; Reisch & Andrews, 2001) The 'chicken and egg' conundrum presents itself. Has the profession been more attentive to its service function because of the stated values and ethics (first articulated at the Milford Conference in 1929 and then codified by NASW for the first time in 1960) which are so heavily focused on service? Or, does our Code merely reflect our actual professional priorities as evidenced in our history? The answer to this question is outside the scope of this paper. However, that social work is in need of and stands to benefit from more specific direction as to how to pursue our responsibilities for advancing social justice is clear. Catholic Social Teaching is a rich resource that lends itself to this use particularly in the context of an educational program that is sponsored by Catholic institutions. The diagram below depicts the manner in which Catholic Social Teaching expands and further delineates the social justice perspective of the NASW Code of Ethics. The *Code* clearly identifies the profession's commitment to social justice and specifies related responsibilities. Drawing upon the rich resources of Catholic Social Teaching introduces a clearly articulated framework for the way in which justice is to be pursued and supported within the political and economic structures of society thus expanding the social justice scope of the social work profession.



Enriching Social Work's Commitment to Social Justice through Catholic Social Teaching

**Rationale from the Catholic Perspective:**

**Ex Corde Ecclesiae and Institutional Mission/Identity**

Social work education programs sponsored by Catholic colleges and universities are strategically positioned to employ and build upon the rich tradition of Catholic Social Teaching. The characteristics of the Catholic tradition of higher education present an environment well-suited to social work education. Catholic-sponsored education has historically placed a strong dual emphasis on the liberal arts and the helping professions. Accordingly, social work's foundation in the liberal arts makes a Catholic host institution a natural fit for social work. Furthermore, Catholic higher education has a legacy of linking education to moral and ethical considerations. Social work's strong emphasis on ethics makes a Catholic institution a logical and fitting 'host' for such a value-centered professional enterprise such as social work.

In recent years, the Church has called upon Catholic institutions of higher education to more clearly articulate and demonstrate their Catholicity. Pope John Paul II regarded Catholic colleges/universities as primary players in his vision of world transformation and he articulated this in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, the Apostolic Constitution issued in 1990. Social justice and service to those who are vulnerable are just two of the compelling calls put forth to Catholic higher education in this document. (Trainor, 2006)

The contemporary 'mission-driven' culture facing American business, not-for-profits and education poses yet another prompt for colleges/universities to articulate clear vision and mission statements. In an environment which is competitive for both resources and students, institutions can gain and maintain their niche in the marketplace only if they clearly articulate who they are and if they ensure that their 'walk matches this talk.' Articulating and consistently demonstrating one's Catholic identity is essential for institutions that wish to maintain relationships of vitality with their alumnae base and other Catholic constituents in the community.

Catholic Social Teaching is a rich resource which comes to us from the larger Catholic intellectual tradition and presents a valuable legacy to inform and provide specificity to the social

justice goals of social work education and practice. Catholic Social Teaching, which addresses the challenges of economic and political life and global harmony, provides direction on how to live out the Judeo Christian mandate ‘love one another.’ Thus, Catholic Social Teaching is relevant to all people, not just Catholics. While all faith traditions make a contribution to social justice, the words of Brian Rusche, Executive Director of Minnesota’s Joint Religious Legislative Coalition (JLRC) articulate the gift rendered by Catholic Social Teaching:

*Catholic Social Teaching is the most systematic and thorough attempt by a religious faith to articulate its positions on social policy. For JRLC's interfaith work, it provides a first lens to look at nearly every social justice issue and seriously influences all our position statements. Catholic Social Teaching is a gift to the world and people of all faiths.*

The Catholic Church’s tradition and expectation in relation to the pursuit of justice is three-fold: seeing, judging and action. ‘Seeing’ entails the study of social problems. ‘Judging’ involves the use of ethics to discern an alternative to the problem. ‘Action’ is the step that follows in which problems are addressed utilizing the insights gained through judgment and change (transformation) is pursued. (Kammer, 2004) This model interfaces effectively with social work’s planned change process with identifies the steps of: engagement, assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation/termination. (Kirst-Ashman, 2003) Catholic Social Teaching provides a framework of ethical principles of social justice that enable social workers to fulfill their professional responsibilities and social work education programs an opportunity to continue the rich legacy of social justice outlined by Church leaders and thinkers of the last century.

The Church’s commitment to social justice is evident in the mission statement of both of our host institutions. The institutional commitments to “...*preparing students to demonstrate ethical leadership grounded in social responsibility*” (CSC) and “*To educate morally responsible leaders who think critically, act wisely, and work skillfully to advance the common good*” (UST) are addressed in the strategic plan of each institution. In its strategic plan, St. Catherine articulates a commitment to making its “...*core mission elements – Catholic, women and liberal arts – explicit throughout the curriculum and co-curriculum*” by “...*integrating the Catholic intellectual tradition and social teaching.*” Likewise, the University of St. Thomas, commits to engaging “...*its Catholic identity by exploring the meaning and heightening the understanding of Catholic intellectual traditions throughout its curricular and co-curricular activities*” through “...*the integration of Catholic tradition, ethics and social justice...*”

The mission of the School of Social Work reflects its sponsors’ missions in its pledge to educate social workers to “...*promote social justice and human rights.*” The School’s strategic plan further explicates this with a commitment to “...*make explicit the central components of the SSW [School of Social Work] identity – Catholic, joint, liberal arts, generalist and clinical*” through the “*integration of Catholic Social Teaching into all aspects of the School of Social Work.*”

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The connectedness and flow between and among the mission and strategic goals of the program's host institutions and those of the School is evident in the chart below.

College of St. Catherine	University of St. Thomas	School of Social Work
<p><b>Mission:</b> The College of St. Catherine educates women to lead and influence. Founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet in 1905, the College integrates liberal arts and professional education within the Catholic traditions of intellectual inquiry and social teaching. Committed to excellence and opportunity, the College engages students from diverse backgrounds in a learning environment uniquely suited to women. Education at the College of St. Catherine prepares graduates to demonstrate ethical leadership grounded in social responsibility.</p> <p><b>Vision:</b> To be the world's pre-eminent Catholic college educating women to lead and influence.</p> <p>Strategic Direction: Make St. Catherine's core mission elements – Catholic, women and liberal arts – explicit throughout the curriculum and co-curriculum.</p> <p>Integrate the Catholic intellectual tradition and social teaching within the curriculum and co-curriculum.</p>	<p><b>Mission:</b> To education morally responsible leaders who think critically, act wisely, and work skillfully to advance the common good.</p> <p><b>Vision:</b> To be a recognized leader in Catholic higher education that excels in effective teaching, active learning, scholarly research and responsible engagement with the local community as well as with the national and global communities in which we live.</p> <p>Strategic Priority: Catholic Identity The University of St. Thomas will further engage its Catholic identity by exploring the meaning and heightening the understanding of Catholic intellectual tradition throughout its curricular and co-curriculum activities.</p> <p>In curricular and co-curricular activities, evidence of the integration of Catholic tradition, ethics, and social justice is prized.</p> <p>New employee and student orientations include information on Catholic identity with special emphasis on ethics and social justice.</p> <p>Search committees provide information on the Catholic identity and mission of the University to candidates and consider their potential contributions to the mission of the University.</p>	<p><b>Mission:</b> Drawing from the Judeo-Christian traditions of social caring, we prepare students to use social work knowledge, values and skills to demonstrate the intrinsic value of all human kind as they serve those in need and promote social justice and human rights.</p> <p><b>Vision:</b> To be a premier Catholic School of Social Work offering outstanding BSW and MSW programs while maintaining close connections to the practice community.</p> <p>Strategic Direction: Through the curriculum and co-curriculum, strengthen and make explicit the central components of the SSW identity – Catholic, Joint, Liberal Arts, Generalist and Clinical.</p> <p>Integrate Catholic Social Teaching into all aspects of the School of Social Work.</p>

### Conceptual Framework: Project Components

This project is focused on the integration of Catholic Social Teaching into BSW and MSW curricula. Project goals/ outcomes include the following:

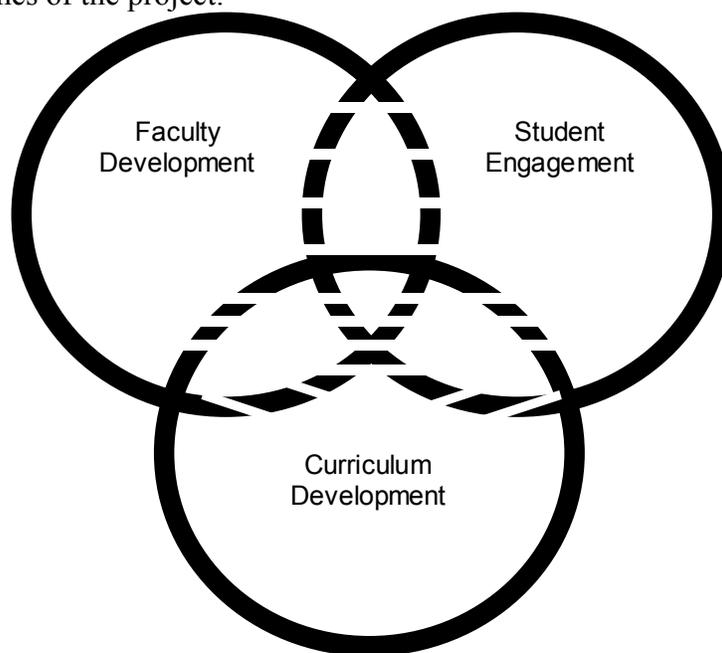
- Enhance social work faculty understanding of/commitment to institutional religious identity and mission and particularly of Catholic Social Teaching.
- Increase faculty and students' understanding of the complementarity of Catholic Social Teaching and values and ethics of the social work profession.
- Strengthen the social justice component of the social work curricula in order to prepare and empower students to effectively pursue justice in their social work practice.
- Increase students' understanding of the difference between faith-based and secular social work education and practice and provide an environment which encourages

- them to clarify and incorporate their personal values, including faith-based values, into their lives and social work practice.
- Enhance faculty and student understanding of social work as a call to service/vocation.
  - Publication of a curriculum guide to share with all social work programs sponsored by Catholic colleges and universities in the United States (fifty-eight undergraduate and thirteen graduate programs).

Increase support for Catholic-based Schools of Social Work to integrate content on Catholic Intellectual Tradition and Catholic Social Teachings into their curricula and programs.

The project is comprised of three primary components: faculty development, student engagement and curriculum development. Each of these three arenas of activity has been critical to the project and each has informed the others. The activities in each component have generated insights/findings and the convergence of these insights/findings constitute the outcomes of this project. It should be noted this is a work in progress characterized by a strong emphasis on both process and task. It has been a transformative process that has left its mark on faculty and student participants as well as curricula. The activities and experiences of each of the primary components (faculty development, student engagement and curriculum development) will be described in detail below.

The diagram below depicts the manner in which the three components are integral parts of the project and how the insights and findings of each of the three converge to define and determine the outcomes of the project.



Social Work for Social Justice:  
3 Components

## Faculty Development

Faculty development has been a crucial centerpiece of this project. This component has engaged faculty in: becoming familiar with the Catholic Intellectual Tradition and the origin and themes of Catholic Social Teaching (CST); discovering the complementarity between CST and social work ethics; and recognizing CST as a rich resource for curriculum development which enhances content addressing social justice.

Two faculty development retreats were undertaken to lay the foundation for this project. In January, 1999 and 2005 respectively, the social work faculty convened to explore the *Catholic Intellectual Tradition and Social Work* and *Social Work: Called beyond Career to Vocation*. Both of these programs were important in setting the context for the present project and preparing faculty to understand and appreciate Catholic Social Teaching. Through a series of readings and discussions, the first retreat familiarized faculty with the Catholic Intellectual Tradition and facilitated an understanding of how the social work program articulates and serves the institutional missions of its Catholic sponsors. This experience was instrumental in helping faculty to recognize attributes of our institutional culture (such as emphasis on teaching, liberal arts, values/ethics and service) as distinctive characteristics related to the institutions' Catholic identity. The second retreat focused on social work as a calling/vocation and provided an opportunity for faculty to reflect on the development of their own personal 'call' to the profession, the definition and evolution of their 'vocation of social work' over time, and the way in which we, as professors and advisors, support and encourage our students to recognize and respond to their own personal calling to the profession. This retreat was a highly spiritual experience for faculty as they reflected on the role the social work profession has played in their personal development and the important role we, as faculty play, in the formation of students as they explore and discern their own professional calling/vocation.

While this project is focused on utilizing the long and rich tradition of Catholic Social Teaching, it is important to recognize that all faith traditions espouse beliefs and teachings addressing love of other and social justice. In order to acknowledge and celebrate the diversity of faith-inspired justice teachings, our faculty participated in a series of faculty development seminars featuring various traditions and their social teaching including the Muslim, Jewish and Protestant perspectives. The executive director of the Minnesota's Joint Religious Legislative Coalition also spoke with the faculty about his multi-denominational agency's experience of utilizing principles of Catholic Social Teaching to evaluate proposed social policy legislation and determine lobbying priorities and strategies. (See the director's quote referencing the use of CST earlier in this paper.) These experiences enhanced faculty understanding of the diverse religious perspectives about social justice and reinforced the universality of the themes of Catholic Social Teaching. An interest in developing course activities which provide students with an opportunity to learn about social justice perspectives of diverse faith traditions also emerged from this component of our work.

In order to launch the segment of this project directly focused on the integration of Catholic Social Teaching into the curriculum, a retreat format was used once again. To prepare for this program, the faculty read *Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action* by Thomas Massaro S.J. This primer provides an overview of the sources, methods and themes of CST as well as an articulate discussion of the application of CST to contemporary times. This text inspired the title

and theme of our retreat: *Teaching Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action*. A local Catholic pastor shared his wisdom and expertise through a keynote presentation which engaged and inspired the faculty in this introductory experience. The retreat provided an opportunity for faculty to examine various ‘versions’ of CST and to consider potential contributions of CST to the social work curriculum through the identification of *barriers & obstacles* and *opportunities & avenues* related to integrating CST into the BSW and MSW curricula. Faculty participated in a preliminary brainstorming session about ways in which Catholic Social Teaching might be integrated into the various content areas of the BSW and MSW curriculum.

Perhaps the most inspiring activity of the retreat involved the faculty sharing stories about individuals who have inspired their own passion for justice. This activity culminated in the establishment of the *CSC/UST School of Social Work Social Justice Hall of Fame* (Appendix I), which will be prominently displayed in the School, features 24 individuals including Jesus, Gandhi, Dorothy Day, Jane Addams, Paul Wellstone as well as local heroes/heroines. While the retreat afforded an opportunity for the faculty to launch this project and garner understanding, momentum and commitment for the work ahead, it is important to acknowledge that it also included struggle. Ours is a diverse faculty across numerous dimensions including religion, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation and practice expertise. Despite the preceding discussions addressing the Catholic tradition and faith links to social justice, some aspects of the dialogue were challenging and difficult. This was the case especially in relation to Church practices that are inconsistent with social work values (such as those related to inequality of women and discrimination against GLBT persons) and experienced as incongruent with the social justice principles of Catholic Social Teaching. This struggle, we were to discover, would be encountered through all stages of the project. An important outcome of the retreat, especially in light of this struggle, was the articulation of the following points of consensus by the faculty:

- Catholic Social Teaching (CST) has potential as a framework/tool for teaching social justice content in the social work curriculum. CST is a fluid, not static, statement of values principles. Since the first encyclical informing CST was written (*Rerum Novarum*, 1891), CST has evolved over time to address concerns of the times.
- By virtue of our Catholic sponsorship, it is logical to use CST to inform the curriculum. In doing so, it is important to acknowledge its origins in Church history.
- As there are numerous and varying statements of CST, it is crucial that we clearly articulate a statement of CST principles that informs our curriculum. This statement of principles must be informed by and congruent with the NASW Code of Ethics. This statement of principles must be approved by the faculty and used consistently for purposes of integration.
- As we as social work educators, bound by the NASW Code of Ethics, teaching within Catholic institutions of higher education integrate CST into our curriculum, it is incumbent upon us to carefully and clearly delineate the convergence and divergence between the two commitments (CST and the Code of Ethics). These points of convergence and divergence must be clearly articulated in a way that demonstrates the challenges faced and the opportunities for us to ‘assist’ in living out the values presented in CST.
- The integration of CST principles into the curriculum will recognize and acknowledge the universality of these principles across numerous other faith

traditions. Likewise, we recognize that the NASW Code of Ethics, while bedrock principles for the profession, are particular expressions that emerge from greater universal ethical principles that speak to how all people should interact and treat each other.

- As social work educators, we are bound by the NASW Code of Ethics and therefore responsible to teach our students to become professionals dedicated to service and justice. Principles of CST provide a framework for strengthening the way in which we educate for justice, a link that has been historically weak in social work education and in the profession.

Beyond the insights that they contain, these points of consensus were an important outcome of our work in that they helped us to realize and acknowledge that difficult dialogues, despite their inherent struggles, can be avenues of discovery of common ground and shared insights. It became clear to us that even challenging discussions, which may seem to focus on divergent perspectives, hold the potential for the discernment of consensus.

The next faculty development activity following the *Teaching Justice* retreat focused on a comparative analysis of the NASW Code of Ethics and Catholic Social Teaching. The social work faculty was divided into 10 subgroups and each subgroup was assigned one of the CST themes identified by the Office of Social Justice, Archdiocese of St. Paul-Minneapolis (listed above). Each subgroup was asked to examine their assigned principle in relation to the *NASW Code of Ethics* and to identify convergence and divergence between the two. After thorough consideration, each subgroup reported their findings. The results of this work can be found in Appendix II: *Catholic Social Teaching and Social Work: How Do They Line Up?* For each CST principle/theme, the faculty identified points of convergence, points of divergence and emergent ‘flashpoint’ issues. Generally, a greater number of points of convergence were found which led to a realization that there is much common ground between social work professional ethics and Catholic Social Teaching. The primary ‘flashpoint’ issues were sexism/equality of women, reproductive policy and homophobia/gay rights. Their emergence surprised no one; tension related to their existence had been lurking since very early stages of the project. Naming the issues was important for this acknowledged the reality that there are instances when social work values and Catholic Social Teaching collide and completely diverge. Nor was there surprise when the discrepancy between Church teaching and Church practice emerged particularly in relation to the Church’s Social Teaching relating to human dignity and the Church’s practice of less than equal treatment of women and lack of full affirmation of GLBT persons. There was surprise, however, when it became clear that the social work profession also has a record of disparity between its ethics and its practices as evident in its historical role in relation to social control and its stronger commitment to service over justice. This parallel insight relating to the Catholic Church and the social work profession and ways in which the ‘walk’ falls short of the ‘talk’ in both provided food for thought especially to faculty members who saw the inconsistencies of the Church as a barrier to using Catholic Social Teaching as a resource for the curriculum.

This examination and discernment of the convergence/divergence between social work ethics and Catholic social teaching led to a synthesis and the formulation of a statement entitled *Social Work for Social Justice: Ten Principles*. (Appendix III) This amalgamation of social work ethics with Catholic Social Teaching has become the focus of our integration project. It represents the convergence of both our identity, as a social work program sponsored by Catholic institutions, and the social justice commitments of the Church and the profession. The faculty has

felt strongly about distinguishing between the parts that are informed by Catholic Social Teaching (connoted by italics) and those which represent social work perspective (connoted by non-italics or 'regular' print). This statement evolved naturally out of continuous faculty dialogue and without premeditation i.e. we did not set out to develop such a statement. The statement represents, however, a milestone in our project as it has become the heart of our work and the defining focus of our project. Now, when we talk of *the integration of Catholic Social Teaching into the curriculum*, we are speaking of the integration of these principles. The **Ten Principles** define our program's 'brand' of social justice--- one that is informed both by social work ethics and Catholic social ethics. They have become our hallmark of social justice. Formulation of the justice principles created a component essential for curriculum development, another integral aspect of this project which is explored below.

As faculty development continued through the activities described above, considerable progress was apparent. The faculty was discussing social justice in new and deeper ways and forging a new familiarity with and appreciation of the Catholic heritage of its host institutions. At the same time, it is once again important to acknowledge that the process is complex and that, at times, the dialogue is difficult and tense. It is clear that oppressive practices of the Church in relation to women and gay persons has resulted, for some, in a reluctance, and, at times, a resistance, to integrate Catholic social ethics for fear that this would simultaneously engender the incorporation of attitudes of oppression and/or discriminatory practices. The challenges of embracing the complexity of this discussion were, at times, monumental and overwhelming. There were times when it was difficult to know how to dialogue about these difficult topics and maintain forward momentum. In order to address these challenges, the *Catholic Common Ground Initiative Principles of Dialogue* outlined in *Called to be Catholic: Church in a Time of Peril* were adapted to the purposes of this project to guide faculty interaction and set norms of communication for the challenging discussions at hand. (National Pastoral Life Center) Our **Finding Common Ground Guidelines** are presented in Appendix IV. While these *Guidelines* have been described as *ingenious* and *inspired* by those with whom we have shared our work, what we have learned is that introducing the *Guidelines* is the easy task. Retraining ourselves as a faculty to think and interact differently, in ways that depart substantially, if not radically, from conduct typical of academe constitutes the substantial challenge to which we remain committed and continually humbled. This is a story onto itself which begs to be told at another time.

### Student Engagement

In order to engage student participation in this project, all undergraduate and graduate social work students were invited to participate in focus groups to explore and discuss the proposed integration of Catholic Social Teaching into the curricula. In order to strengthen the student perspective of the focus group, an MSW student employed as a research assistant played a primary role in planning, convening and recording the findings of the student focus groups. The process used for the student focus groups is presented in Appendix V. The following summary is an abbreviation of a summary written by the graduate research assistant, Stephanie Spandl, SSND. The author is grateful to Sr. Stephanie for her fine work and contribution to this project.

A total of 31 individuals participated in the focus groups or, when unable to do so, provided input via email: 6 BSW students, 20 MSW students, 2 MSW students who are also

alumnae of the CSC/UST BSW program, 3 MSW alumnae. Student response to the proposed integration of Catholic Social Teaching (CST) into the social work curriculum reflected three areas: perceived advantages, concerns and ideas about how to go about integration.

### **Advantages of integrating Catholic Social Teaching into the social work curriculum**

Students identified a number of potential advantages to integrating CST into the social work curriculum. Five themes emerged: the congruence between CST and social work values and ethics, the Catholic identity of the schools, the need for greater emphasis on social justice, the importance of integrating spirituality in social work education and practice, and an increased attractiveness of the program to prospective students.

**Congruence between CST and Social Work Values and Ethics.** All of the students except two concurred that there is a high degree of congruence between CST and social work values and ethics. Several students initially confused CST and Catholic doctrine. However, once they received clarification they were quite enthusiastic about its inclusion due to its strong connection to social work values. The students spoke of the CST principles as “universal to all people,” and as able to “provide a universal base/common frame of reference for ethical/moral considerations for social workers.” Related to the observations regarding the universality of CST were comments connecting CST to the NASW Code of Ethics. Several students noted that CST can potentially enrich the Code of Ethics with “more depth, specificity and richness.”

**Catholic Identity of the Schools.** Numerous students agreed that the Catholic identity of the institutions makes CST a desirable addition to the social work curriculum, while several others acknowledged that its inclusion is logical and appropriate for this reason. Some students indicated that they came to a Catholic institution specifically for a values-based education in which spirituality and faith are considered both legitimate and important. Given the Catholic identity of CSC and UST, several students felt that marketing the integration of CST in the social work curriculum would enhance the attractiveness of the program for many students seeking “to integrate the richness of spirituality and faith traditions into their practice of social work.” They felt that CST “could serve to further differentiate the CSC/UST program from other Twin Cities social work programs,” just as the clinical focus does.

**Emphasis on Social Justice.** The participants expressed the importance of social workers participating in efforts for justice and were enthusiastic about the ways CST could enhance this awareness and effort. On a practical level, students of color believed that use of these principles in the curriculum would prepare students to work more effectively with diverse populations and at risk groups. Another response, typical of the student discussion observed, “It [CST] would broaden a social worker’s perspective of what they can do for a client as well as how to work with and empower a client. It would increase awareness of how social workers can advocate for their clients at many levels in society.”

**The Importance of Integrating Spirituality into Social Work Education and Practice.** Although the topic was Catholic Social Teaching, numerous students brought up the integration of CST as a means to increase the inclusion of spirituality in general in the social work curriculum and social work practice. Students recognized, “[The] principles [as] a ‘bridge’ to the discussion of religious/spiritual beliefs in the classroom and practice setting [that] could help students become more comfortable talking about religious beliefs/spirituality, important because many clients have religious/spiritual beliefs that need to be considered.” Students also noted that spirituality is becoming more and more a part of social work/therapy and that the inclusion of CST would better prepare graduates “to see their clients as whole persons and meet

their needs – body, mind, soul, spirit – as a person in an environment and in relationship to family, neighbors, etc.”

**Increased Attractiveness of the Program to Prospective Students.** Several students felt that marketing the integration of CST in the social work curriculum would enhance the attractiveness of the program for many students seeking “to integrate the richness of spirituality and faith traditions into their practice of social work.” They felt that CST “could serve to further differentiate the CSC/UST program from other Twin Cities social work programs,” just as the clinical focus does. At the same time, other students noted that the “Catholic” label might deter some students who might misunderstand what CST is all about. In response to the concern, one student pointed out, “While we might fear losing some students due to such integration, it is important to consider that we might also be losing students for not having it.”

### **Concerns about integrating Catholic Social Teaching into the Social Work Curriculum**

Three primary concerns were identified in regard to the proposed integration: the importance of the distinction between CST and other aspects of Catholic doctrine, the potential risk of alienating or excluding non-Catholic and/or non-Christian students, and the importance of faculty ‘buy-in’/consistency. Several students expressed the opinion that, “it is very important to distinguish between Catholic Social Teaching and [other] Catholic doctrine to avoid student resistance” observing that, “. . .some people have allergic reactions to anything that comes from a church” and noting that “the political environment is very volatile in relation to religion right now.” The majority of students named potential feelings of alienation or exclusion by non-Catholic and/or non-Christian students a concern. There was much discussion about this issue and it was clear that students are aware of the diversity of the student body. However, with the exception of one student, students expressing this concern did not suggest that this should prevent the school from integrating CST, but rather that it should be done with care. Students offered the following insight about the inclusion of values in general, “Any place you go to school there will be a values set. I prefer to know them up front. This [CST principles] could identify our values/philosophy. The principles are universal. They are not about conversion.” Another noted, “At a Muslim university, I would expect to discuss Islam content in my classes. One doesn’t have to believe everything that is said. CST gives you something to respond to.”

While some students suggested that the integration of CST might attract students and assist in marketability of the program, other students noted that the “Catholic” label could deter some students who might misunderstand what CST is all about. They noted that it would be crucial to be absolutely clear in any program promotional materials that it is Catholic social ethics that are addressed and to distinguish this from other aspects of Catholic teaching/doctrine.

Student also noted that it is especially important that all faculty be “on board” with this project if it is implemented and noted that faculty development will be very important. Presentation/integration of the principles consistently throughout the curriculum was considered essential for it to be effective in strengthening the program. One student noted that faculty will need to be truly invested in the process and comfortable with “facilitating the emotions and variety of opinions that are likely to come up in discussion.”

In summary, there was substantial support and even enthusiasm for integrating Catholic Social Teaching into the social work curriculum and some specific concerns that need to be addressed if it is to be done. Students are especially enthusiastic about the strong social justice component of CST as well as its potential to deepen exploration of professional social work values. While enthusiastically supporting integration, students feel strongly that the integration

be done so as to avoid the alienation or exclusion of non-Catholic/non-Christian students. They suggest that it be sensitively and carefully done, respectful of both non-Catholic/non-Christian students as well as of the Catholic tradition and Catholic students. They expect a classroom climate that would allow for open discussion and exploration of potential conflicts between CST and social work values. They also indicate that the program should be careful in how it advertises this given the potential to confuse CST with other aspects of Catholic doctrine. Students identified consistency amongst the faculty and faculty development as strategies to minimize these potential risks. Overall, students consider the richness that CST could bring to their social work education greater than potential risks. They believe that the potential risks can be addressed and they supported the program in moving forward with this endeavor.

### **Curriculum Development**

Formulation of our hallmark *Social Work for Social Justice: Ten Principles* and faculty development laid the groundwork necessary for the curriculum development component of this project which includes two phases: curriculum review/analysis and integration.

#### **Curriculum Review and Analysis**

Consistent with the social work commitments of “starting where the client is,” curriculum development began with an assessment of present practices. This process focused on the questions, “What are we presently doing? How is social justice presently addressed in the BSW and MSW curriculum?” Standing committees exist within the BSW and MSW program which are responsible for curriculum in each of the following content areas: policy, human behavior and the social environment, research, practice and fieldwork. Each of these ten content committees (5 BSW and 5 MSW) reviewed the present curricula and identified ways in which social justice/injustice content was already addressed through readings, class activities, assignments, etc. Each and every course of the curriculum was reviewed and an inventory was completed outlining present content and activities related to justice.

The predictable faculty reticence was quickly assuaged and efforts were rewarded as this process resulted in a litany of strengths i.e. ways in which social justice was already being addressed in the classroom and through assignments. Committee discussions tended to be animated. Once current examples were shared, awareness was raised and faculty were surprised with more content than they initially anticipated. This discussion also ‘got the juices flowing’ in that it generated ideas and creativity for new opportunities to incorporate content on social justice.

Next each committee was asked to consider the *Social Work for Social Justice: Ten Principles*, the goals and objectives of the content area, and to select the *Justice Principles* that relate to their specific content area. This exercise was framed as an opportunity to build upon present strengths of the curriculum. A grid summarizing the *Justice Principles* which relate to each content area was compiled for the BSW and MSW programs and are presented in Appendices VI and VII. Another important outcome of this phase of the process was a detailed inventory of current practices addressing justice content.

### **Integration of Social Justice Content**

Once faculty had completed the assessment of current practices, compiled an inventory of current inclusion of social justice content and identified the *Justice Principles* pertinent to each curricular content area, the stage was set for comprehensive integration of social justice content. This phase of the process includes three components. The first has been completed and the second and third are underway.

The first step in the integration process asked curriculum content committees to creatively brainstorm in response to the following question: “Considering the *Justice Principles* identified as relevant for the content area, what are logical points of intersection where the *Justice Principles* could be integrated into a current activity or assignment to enhance how ‘justice’ is taught in this content area?” While the emphasis of this exercise was to integrate our *Justice Principles* into existent course activities, faculty also generated innovative ideas of new ways to both broaden and deepen the integration of justice content related to the identified *Justice Principles*. These brainstorming sessions were creative discussions in which faculty were encouraged to think big about transforming the curriculum to balance and reflect both the service and justice functions of the social work profession. This exercise resulted in lists of ideas about how to enhance and integrate justice content in course syllabi through integration in existent activities as well as adding new activities. These lists serve as ‘resource menu’ for the next phase of integration, revision of course syllabi.

Courses have been identified in the BSW and the MSW programs as starting points for the integration of social justice content and this process of integration is currently underway as syllabi are being planned for the fall term. Over the past months a series of instructional modules have also been developed to serve as resources for faculty as they go about integrating the *Justice Principles* into course syllabi. Many of the modules are assignments and class activities that have been used in BSW and MSW courses and have had the *Justice Principles* integrated into them. These instructional modules have been made available to serve as ideas/models or for actual use or adaptation, according to faculty preference.

### **Accessing Campus and Community Wisdom and Support: Forming an Advisory Committee**

An advisory committee was formed to support and guide this project. Membership includes experts on Catholic Social Teaching from the CSC and UST faculty/staff, a staff person from the Archdiocesan Office of Social Justice, a parish priest, and a representative of the Minnesota Joint Religious Legislative Coalition. (Appendix VIII) These individuals have generously made themselves available as consultants and have been an invaluable source of wisdom and support as they have been called upon through the various components and phases of this project. Their wise insights and strategic advice have been invaluable throughout our work.

## Concluding Reflections

As we step back and take stock of the progress of our efforts to strengthen the social justice content of our program through the integration of Catholic Social Teaching, it is clear that much has been accomplished... and that much work remains. It is, as the dean insightfully observes, “The end of the beginning.” While the many tasks of integration lie ahead, it is important to note, and to celebrate, the progress made. The faculty, student and curriculum activities we have experienced have resulted in:

- **A renewed commitment to social justice**, our profession’s commitment to it and an increased awareness of social justice content in our BSW and MSW curricula. We have assessed our curricula, inventoried present practices related to the inclusion of social justice content and identified opportunities as well as strategies to systematically integrate social justice content throughout the curricula.
- **A keener sense of understanding of our host institutions’ Catholic identity** as well as their respective missions and strategic commitments for the future.
- **A deep appreciation for Catholic Social Teaching** and the rich resource that it presents to social work education and practice.
- **Humility** in response to the struggles endured through difficult dialogues that have compelled us to embrace complexity.
- **Resolve** as we commit to the tasks which lay ahead.

What was initially seen as primarily a task and project, a curriculum integration project, has been recognized as a process... a transformative process which has had a profound impact on our faculty and our program. The affect on faculty has been at both the personal and collective level. Each individual faculty member has been called upon to consider at a newer, deeper level, what it means to be a faculty member at Catholic institutions and how being Catholic informs our roles as educators and social workers. We are building a new vocabulary as we talk with one another and begin to introduce these discussions to students in the classroom.

Along with increased awareness of and connection with our Catholic identity, this project has also heightened faculty awareness of and commitment to the social justice commitment of social work. We have had the opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the extent to which we are already ‘teaching justice’ and we have responded to a call to strengthen our program and more effectively prepare students to ‘practice justice.’ We have developed a keen sense of appreciation for our Catholic heritage and the incredibly rich resource of social justice found in Catholic Social Teaching.

As for the curriculum, it has just begun to reflect the outcomes of this project. As faculty move forward, some with reticence and some with eagerness, to undertake the next steps of the integration process, there is a sense of both accomplishment and anticipation. Our work has generated many outcomes – some tangible such as discussion guidelines and *Justice Principles*-- and others intangible, such as a deeper sense of our Catholic mission and renewed commitment to social justice. These accomplishments are accompanied by a sense of anticipation and the knowledge that the next steps are likely to be as transformative, satisfying and challenging as those already accomplished.

## Appendix I

College of St. Catherine/University of St. Thomas  
 School of Social Work

Social Justice Hall of Fame

04/05/06

**Honorary Members:**

*Fr. Steven Adrian*  
*Sr. Catherine McNamee CSJ*  
*Sr. Amata Miller IHM*  
*Mr. Brian Rusche*  
*Sr. Katarina Schuth*  
*Ms. Kathy Tomlin*

*Jane Addams*  
*Dorothy Day*  
*Gandhi*  
*Thich Nhat Hanh*  
*Hubert Humphrey*  
*Jesus*  
*Charlie Keffer*  
*Martin Luther King Jr.*  
*McDonald Sisters*  
*R. David Nesheim*  
*Mother Theresa*  
*Rosa Parks*  
*Francis Perkins*  
*Eleanor Roosevelt*  
*Dorothy Van Soest*  
*Paul Wellstone*  
*Bill Wilson & Dr. Bob Smith*

## Appendix II – p. 1

**CSC/UST School of Social Work**  
**Teaching Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action**

Catholic Social Teaching & Social Work: How Do They Line Up?

<b>CST Principle</b>	<b>Possible Convergence: CST and SW Code of Ethics</b>	<i>Possible Divergence/ Practice Inconsistent with Values?</i>	Issues
<i><b>Human Dignity</b></i>	dignity and worth of all persons self-determination respect for diversity commitment to client's well-being clients interests regarded as primary intolerance of oppression and discrimination commitment to service capital punishment	Church: institutionalized sexism intolerance of homosexuality  Profession: mechanism of social control falls short on action for change	abortion contraception gay rights equality for women
<i><b>Community and the Common Good</b></i>	CST: person sacred & social community important in people's lives politics important government responsible to protect life & dignity  SW Code: access to resources & services development of people and community importance of human relationships social action/political action important	CST emphasis on 'sacred' person  CST protection of human life ( may conflict with self-determination.  Profession: falls short in advocacy and policy development for community development places less emphasis on power of community & institutions places emphasis on individual	abortion oppression which denies human dignity of individuals and groups common good includes all belief in growth through community—what happens when you can't be authentic in community

## Appendix II – p. 2

**CSC/UST School of Social Work**  
**Teaching Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action**

Catholic Social Teaching & Social Work: How Do They Line Up?

<b>CST Principle</b>	<b>Possible Convergence: CST and SW Code of Ethics</b>	<i>Possible Divergence/ Practice Inconsistent with Values?</i>	<b>Issues</b>
<b><i>Rights &amp; Responsibilities</i></b>	<p>worth &amp; dignity of person  social workers behave in a trustworthy manner  competence  cultural sensitivity  discrimination unacceptable  promote general welfare of society</p>	<p>CST addresses total life experience; Code addresses professional life  CST addresses individual, family, society; Code does not address family</p>	<p>When does life begin?  Gay rights  Definition of family  Privacy issues (in social work confidentiality and privacy overlap)  Contraception,  overpopulation and healthy communities  Disease (HIV, STDs)/use of condoms</p>
<b><i>Option for the Poor and Vulnerable</i></b>	<p>Enhancement of person's/ client's capacities  Challenging economic and social injustice  Promoting access of all to information, resources, etc.  Dignity &amp; worth of the person  Rights of all to an adequate life (food, clothing, shelter, etc)  Promote education about oppression, poverty, unemployment and discrimination; promote efforts to address and eradicate these  Pursue change on behalf of the vulnerable  Elimination of exploitation &amp; discrimination</p>	<p>Church:  lack of common understanding of CST  greater focus on structure (buildings) than on personal need  intolerance of some groups</p> <p>Profession:  focus on services vs. change/justice  'fallen angels'  voice vs. service (Micro focus vs. macro focus)</p>	<p>beginning/end of life decisions  capital punishment  dignity &amp; respect:  affirmation vs. tolerance</p>

## Appendix II – p. 3

**CSC/UST School of Social Work**  
**Teaching Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action**

Catholic Social Teaching & Social Work: How Do They Line Up?

<b>CST Principle</b>	<b>Possible Convergence: CST and SW Code of Ethics</b>	<i>Possible Divergence/ Practice Inconsistent with Values?</i>	<b>Issues</b>
<i><b>Participation</b></i>	self-determination client transfer (p. 20) discrimination labor/management disputes social & political action	Church: maltreatment/exclusion (active & passive of GLBT persons benign neglect—treating GLB persons as ‘invisible’  Profession: passive abandonment of various minority groups despite explicit language/policy to contrary institutional oppression in schools of social work & public and private social agencies	gay marriage travel policies health insurance benefits acknowledgement of GLBT service and contributions to public life
<i><b>Dignity of Work/ Rights of Workers</b></i>	self-determination of workers/clients responsibility to provide work training (including continuing education) right to organize to influence working conditions; workers/clients should have a say on their work conditions recognition of the general welfare of workers/clients recognition of the importance of social and political action value social justice advocacy for social change on behalf of vulnerable/ oppressed addresses issues of poverty and unemployment	Church: ??  <u>CST says organizations            (economy) should behave            ethically (??)</u>  Profession: commitment to organization needs to make organizations ethically responsible	<u>Should we separate            workers from clients?</u>  <u>What about work of            unpaid workers such as            parents?</u>  <u>Welfare state vs. paid            work</u>

## Appendix II – p. 4

**CSC/UST School of Social Work**  
**Teaching Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action**

Catholic Social Teaching & Social Work: How Do They Line Up?

<b>CST Principle</b>	<b>Possible Convergence: CST and SW Code of Ethics</b>	<i>Possible Divergence/ Practice Inconsistent with Values?</i>	<b>Issues</b>
<i>Stewardship of Creation</i>	<p>Ecological model: systemic interconnection extends beyond individual relationships</p> <p>Environmental justice; discrimination is a social problem (access to basics; protection)</p> <p>Relates to self-determination, human dignity and diversity</p> <p>Integrity requires openness (i.e environmental impact of industry)</p> <p>Foraging cultures offer values consistent with environmental preservation</p> <p>All people should access to resources to meet their living needs</p>	<p><u>Church:</u>  <u>Does not seem very involved n environmental issues</u></p> <p><u>Profession:</u>  <u>May be outside SW's domain, language, change efforts</u></p>	<p>Conflicts between human wants/desires/ profit motive/capitalism and environmental preservation</p> <p>Limits to self-determination; putting the common good first</p> <p>Global perspective vs. community issues</p> <p>Need to sorting our competing priorities such as jobs vs. endangered species</p> <p>Diversity of cultural values (materialism vs. simplicity)</p> <p>Needs of developing nations/competition for scarce resource</p> <p>What is the common good? How do we find consensus?</p>
<i>Solidarity</i>	<p>Importance of human relationships</p> <p>Social justice</p> <p>Commitment to serve</p> <p>Ethical responsibility to the larger society to promote general welfare</p> <p>Global perspective</p> <p>Diversity</p> <p>Political action for equality</p> <p>Education</p>	<p><u>Church:</u>  Patriarchal treatment  Historical 'track record' of solidarity lacking</p> <p><u>Profession:</u>  Sometimes an agent of social control</p>	<p>Sex outside of marriage</p> <p>Same-sex relationships</p> <p>Contraception</p> <p>Respect for cultural differences (e.g. genital circumcision)</p> <p>Should social workers be making profit?</p> <p>How do we discontinue socially controlling practices in SW?</p>

## Appendix II – p. 5

**CSC/UST School of Social Work**  
**Teaching Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action**

Catholic Social Teaching & Social Work: How Do They Line Up?

<b>CST Principle</b>	<b>Possible Convergence: CST and SW Code of Ethics</b>	<i>Possible Divergence/ Practice Inconsistent with Values?</i>	<b>Issues</b>
<b><i>Role of Government</i></b>	Commitment to and ethical responsibility of larger society People have the right to participate in government/ politics at all levels (subsidiarity) Laws and policies should ensure that social needs are met Responsibility to engage in political action (self-determination & advocacy) Responsibility to mobilize individuals/families at the grass roots to engage in civic life	Laws that pertain to morality and/or discriminate/oppres	Laws which legislate morality or discriminate/oppres (e.g. those pertaining to abortion, gay marriage) Welfare Medicare
<b><i>Promotion of Peace</i></b>	Promotes general welfare and advocating for the basic humans needs of all at the global level Consistent with values of human worth Respect for the dignity of all Self-determination Informed consent Avoidance of conflict of interest	<u>Church:</u> History of complicity and passive bystanding of war/ international conflicts  Profession:	Colonialism, capitalism, international elitism, exploitation, torture & abuse Oppression of women, GLBT people and other vulnerable groups; institutionalized –isms Intolerance of diversity Laws that perpetuate/fail to eradicate violence against women

College of St. Catherine/University of St. Thomas School of Social Work  
***Social Work for Social Justice: Ten Principles***

Sources: (1) NASW Code of Ethics  
 Catholic Social Teaching as articulated by (2) U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops  
 (3) Office of Social Justice, Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis

<p>Human Dignity</p> <p><i>Dignity of the human person is the ethical foundation of a moral society. The measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.</i> Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of all individuals. Social workers treat each person in a caring, respectful manner mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers seek to promote the responsiveness of organizations, communities and social institutions to individuals' needs and social problems. Social workers act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person or group on any basis.</p>	<p>Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers</p> <p><i>In a marketplace where profit often takes precedence over the dignity and rights of workers, it is important to recognize that the economy must serve the people, not the other way around. If the dignity of work is to be protected, the basic rights of workers must be respected – the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to organize and join unions, to private property and to economic initiative.</i> Social workers challenge injustice related to unemployment, workers' right and inhumane labor practices. Social workers engage in organized action, including the formation of and participation in labor unions, to improve services to clients and working conditions.</p>
<p>Community and the Common Good</p> <p>All individuals by virtue of their human nature have social needs. Human relationships enable people to meet their needs and provide an important vehicle for change. <i>The family, in all its diverse forms, is the central social institution that must be supported and strengthened. The way in which society is organized -- in education, economics, politics, government -- directly affects human dignity and the common good.</i> Social workers promote the general welfare and development of individuals, families and communities. Social Workers seek to strengthen relationships among people at all levels to promote the well being of all.</p>	<p>Solidarity</p> <p><b><i>We are our brother's and sister's keeper. We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. An ethic of care acknowledging our interdependence belongs in every dimension of human experience -- including the family, community, society and global dimension. Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process and seek to strengthen relationships among people to promote well being at all levels.</i></b></p>
<p>Rights and Responsibilities</p> <p>People have a right and a responsibility to participate in society and to work together toward the common good. <i>Human dignity is protected and healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met.</i> Accordingly, every person has a fundamental <i>right to things necessary for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are responsibilities – to family, community and society.</i> Social workers, mindful of individual differences and diversity, respect and promote the right of all individuals to self-determination and personal growth and development. Social workers provide education and advocacy to protect human rights, and to end oppression. Social workers empower individuals/groups to function as effectively as possible.</p>	<p>Stewardship</p> <p><b><i>It is incumbent upon us to recognize and protect the value of all people and all resources on our planet. While rights to personal property are recognized, these rights are not unconditional and are secondary to the best interest of the common good especially in relation to the right of all individuals to meet their basic needs.</i></b></p> <p>Stewardship of resources is important at all levels/settings: family, community, agency, community and society. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation for all people. Social workers promote the general welfare of people and their environments.</p>
<p>Priority for the Poor and Vulnerable</p> <p><i>A basic moral test of any community or society is the way in which the most vulnerable members are faring. In a society characterized by deepening divisions between rich and poor, the needs of those most at risk should be considered a priority.</i> Social workers advocate for living conditions conducive to the fulfillment of basic human needs and to promote social, economic, political, and cultural values and institutions that are compatible with the realization of social justice. Social workers pursue change with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups to: address poverty, unemployment, discrimination and other forms of social injustice; and to expand choice and opportunity.</p>	<p>Governance/Principle of Subsidiarity</p> <p><i>Governance structures in all levels/settings have an imperative to promote human dignity, protect human rights, and build the common good. While the principle of subsidiarity calls for the functions of government to be performed at the lowest level possible in order to insure for self-determination and empowerment, higher levels of government have the responsibility to provide leadership and set policy in the best interest of the common good. Social workers engage in social and political action in order to promote equality, challenge injustice, expand opportunity and empower individuals, families and groups to participate in governance structures at all levels.</i></p>
<p>Participation</p> <p><i>All people have a right to participate in the economic, political and cultural life of society. Social justice and human dignity require that all people be assured a minimum level of participation in the community. It is the ultimate injustice for a person or a group to be excluded unfairly.</i> Social workers strive to ensure access to equal opportunity and meaningful participation for all. Social workers empower individuals and groups to influence social policies and institutions and promote social justice. Social workers advocate for change to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources and opportunities required to meet basic needs and develop fully.</p>	<p>Promotion of Peace</p> <p>In light of the human dignity and worth of all and the ethical imperatives of solidarity and stewardship, we are called to promote peace and non-violence at all levels -within families, communities, society and globally. <i>Peace is the fruit of justice and is dependent upon the respect and cooperation between peoples and nations.</i> Social workers promote the general welfare of society from local to global levels.</p>

# ***Finding Common Ground...***

***as we work together to build a program and a profession  
which more strongly articulate a commitment to social justice***

1. We will recognize that no single voice/view has a monopoly on the truth. We will remind ourselves that solutions to our challenges will emerge from dialogue that embraces diverse perspectives.
2. We will not envision ourselves or anyone as ‘having all the answers.’ No one person/group will judge itself alone to be possessed of enlightenment or spurn others as wrong or misguided.
3. We will test all ideas/proposals for their truth, value and potential impact on our program, on our students and on the clients they will serve. This is our responsibility as ethical social work educators.
4. We will presume that those with whom we disagree are acting with good intentions. We will extend civility, courtesy and genuine effort to understand their concerns. We will not diminish nor trivialize their ideas or concerns with labels, abstractions or blanket terms (such as she/he ‘just doesn’t get it’, ‘is a sellout’, ‘has been led astray’, ‘is misguided’, etc). Instead, we will embrace the complexity of the realities we face and examine their various and multiple dimensions.
5. We will put the best possible construction on differing positions, addressing their strongest points rather than seizing upon the most vulnerable aspect in order to discredit them. We will detect the valid insights and legitimate worries that may underlie even questionable arguments.
6. We will be cautious in ascribing motives. We will not impugn another’s motives, loyalties, opinions or comprehension. We will not rush to interpret disagreements as conflicts of starkly opposing principles rather than as differences in degree or in prudential judgment about the relevant facts.
7. We will embrace the realities of our institutional cultures, not by simple defiance nor by naïve acquiescence, but acknowledging both their valid achievement and real dangers.

Adapted from *Called to be Catholic: Church in a Time of Peril*  
Published by the National Pastoral Life Center, New York, NY.

## Appendix V

### College of St. Catherine/University of St. Thomas Teaching Justice: Integrating Catholic Social Teaching into the Curriculum Student Focus Group Discussion Plan Spring Semester, 2006

**Invitation:** All BSW and MSW students received an email invitation telling them about the project, the need for student input and inviting them to participate in the focus group discussion. Prior to the focus group meeting, the handout *Social Work for Social Justice: Ten Principles* was distributed to responding students with a request to read it in advance.

Note: If students were unable to attend one of the two meetings, they were sent the handout *Social Work for Social Justice: Ten Principles* and invited to provide input in a phone interview or via email questionnaire.

**Focus Group:** 1½ hour session

- 5-10 minutes gathering, getting food, etc.
- 15 minute presentation: (MAB)
  - Welcome and thank you for coming
  - Goal of the project: to enhance social justice content of curriculum
  - *Social Work for Social Justice: Ten Principles* (distributed to participants in advance)
  - Purpose of the focus group
- Setting of discussion ground rules (SAS) – 5 min.
  1. Sharing the time so that everyone is heard. (Important to hear diversity of thought)
  2. Respectful and nonjudgmental response to one another. (Important that everyone feels safe.)
  3. In discussions outside of this setting, claim your own ideas, but do not include the names of others if/when expressing other viewpoints shared in this context.
  4. Keep the discussion curriculum focused. How do these principles serve the curriculum?
  5. Others?
- Discussion using following focus questions (40 minutes– Facilitated by SAS; participants are asked approval for their ideas to be recorded ideas without source names. They are assured that all information will be kept anonymous. MAB will record.)
  1. What do you see as potential positive outcomes from the integration of CST into the social work curriculum?
  2. What concerns would you have about integrating CST into the social work curriculum?
  3. How might you envision CST being integrated into our social work curriculum?

Consider content areas.

- 15 minute wrap up

#### Recording/Summaries of Discussion/Findings:

- Focus group discussion input was recorded (by MAB). Ideas, suggestions, concerns, etc were recorded without names.
- All student input received at focus group discussions was compiled into a summary by recorder (MAB) and reviewed and revised for accuracy and thoroughness by facilitator (SAS) within one week of the discussion.
- SAS followed up with students wishing to provide input via phone interview or email questionnaire and summarized the input in a report.
- SAS drafted the findings. MAB and SAS discussed them. SAS revised the draft to produce the list of findings.

Appendix VI  
*Teaching Justice: Social Work for Social Justice*

Social Justice Principle	B S W Curriculum (May, 2006)							
	HBSE	Policy	Practice	Research	Field	Values/ Ethics	Soc/Econ Justice	Diversity
Human Dignity	X	X	355/385/ 401/402	X	X	Each of the social justice principles is a values statement. Thus, the integration of these principles results in the integration of values & ethics.	Each of the principles is a statement of social justice. Thus, the integration of these principles results in the integration of socio-economic justice.	Each of the social justice principles articulates the importance of diversity and/or inclusion of all. Persons. Thus, the integration of these principles results in the integration of diversity.
Community/ Common Good	X	X	385/ 401/402	X	X			
Rights and Responsibilities	X		355/385/ 401/402	X				
Option for the Poor/Vulnerable	X	X	402	X	X			
Participation			355/385/ 401/402					
Dignity of Work/ Workers' Rights			402					
Stewardship			402					
Solidarity	X		385/402					
Governance/ Subsidiarity		X	402					
Promotion of Peace			402					

**Appendix VII**  
***Teaching Justice: Social Work for Social Justice***

<b>Social Justice Principle</b>	<b>MSW Curriculum (May, 2006)</b>							
	<b>HBSE</b>	<b>Policy</b>	<b>Practice</b>	<b>Research</b>	<b>Field</b>	<b>Values/ Ethics</b>	<b>Soc/Econ Justice</b>	<b>Diversity</b>
<b>Human Dignity</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Hist/Sup/Pol</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Each of the social justice principles is a values statement. Thus, the integration of these principles results in the integration of values &amp; ethics.</b>	<b>Each of the principles is a statement of social justice. Thus, the integration of these principles results in the integration of socio-economic justice.</b>	<b>Each of the social justice principles articulates the importance of diversity and/or inclusion of all. Persons. Thus, the integration of these principles results in the integration of diversity.</b>
<b>Community/ Common Good</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Hist/Sup/Pol</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>			
<b>Rights and Responsibilities</b>		<b>Hist/Sup/Pol</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>			
<b>Option for the Poor/Vulnerable</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Hist /Pol</b>	<b>501/502</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>			
<b>Participation</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Hist/Sup/Pol</b>	<b>501/502 603/604</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>			
<b>Dignity of Work/ Workers' Rights</b>		<b>Hist/Sup/Pol</b>	<b>501/502</b>		<b>X</b>			
<b>Stewardship</b>		<b>Hist/ /Pol</b>	<b>501/502</b>					
<b>Solidarity</b>		<b>Hist/ /Pol</b>	<b>501/502</b>		<b>X</b>			
<b>Governance/ Subsidiarity</b>		<b>Hist/ /Pol</b>	<b>501/502</b>		<b>X</b>			
<b>Promotion of Peace</b>		<b>Hist</b>	<b>501/501</b>					

## Appendix VIII

College of St. Catherine/University of St. Thomas School of Social Work

# *Social Work for Social Justice: Strengthening Social Work Practice through the integration of Catholic Social Teaching*

Advisory Committee

(Spring 2006)

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