

You Did It For Me

Care of Your Neighbor As A Spiritual Practice

Kevin E. McKenna

For those already acquainted with Catholic Social Teaching (CST) and for those unfamiliar, this book serves as an invitation to use CST as a spiritual practice. Including a thoughtful introduction to what has been called the best kept secret of the Catholic Church, Kevin McKenna invites us to incorporate it into our daily spirituality.

Catholic Social Teaching is not often spoken of from the pulpit, and has remained in the background of Catholicism in this country. Its central documents, which McKenna refers to extensively in this work, have been studied in academia and largely been left there. Now is the time to unleash its power!

As Christians we are called to follow Christ—the ultimate life coach. We are called to seek truth while being God’s presence on earth. As McKenna writes in the Introduction, “The Good News of Jesus presents a path of life often quite different from the way of the world.” In addition to cultivating a personal relationship with Christ, we must recognize our connection and responsibility to others and live out of it. Being Christian is about living the Gospel, which we can do through incorporating these teachings into our prayer life.

You will find here amazing, eloquent quotes from church documents; perhaps you will copy some to use in your reflection time, for this book is not primarily about mere knowledge of CST. Use it to break open CST in order to live it. Each chapter begins with a personal story of someone who embraces and lives a life based on CST. We must first attend to ourselves to expand our knowledge and understanding of the Church’s social teaching, teachings based on those of Jesus and the Hebrew prophets. Once we have experienced conversion of heart, firmly rooted in the gospel, we can better reach out to others as Christ did.

Spirituality and social justice go hand in hand. Use the thoughtful reflection questions at the end of each chapter for journaling and discussion.

Explore CST

- If your diocese has an office of Social Justice or Social Concerns, contact them for informational materials and CST-related events in your area.

- The author includes an extensive list of suggested readings at the back of the book. A good place to start to is the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, online at <http://www.usccb.org/cchd/index.shtml>. Consider using one of their faith sharing booklets in your small faith community. Their statements should be available through your local diocese.

- Read the gospels through a new lens, finding the basis of CST noted here. Let this be your foundation. Using the reflection questions Fr. McKenna has provided at the end of each chapter, you can strengthen this foundation in Christ.
- An excellent website covering all aspects of CST is published by the Office for Social Justice of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis at <http://www.osjspm.org/cst/>. Click on Social Teaching Documents for brief summaries of the major documents with links to the full text.
- If you feel the need for a further exploration of CST in a small faith community, consider joining or helping to bring *JustFaith*, a faith formation program focusing on spirituality and action, to your parish. Contact Catholic Charities USA or visit <http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/justfaith/>.