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Social Justice Background Information

Everyone will need a copy of these responses for their test study notes. If you type one copy, you could email it to the group at the end of class. You could also use Google Docs. One person in the group will email it to me WITH THE NAMES OF ALL THE GROUP MEMBERS in the subject title.

1. List the (Catholic) Ten Commandments. These are each (basically) a responsibility. Whenever you have a responsibility, a related human right can be found. What human right does each of the Commandments preserve? Think broadly- the right is not just the opposite of the commandment. Do not kill, means way more than just a right to life. What does a right to life encompass? Do not be repetitive.
2. What just rights are owed to a minor (child)?

Are Human Rights age-dependent? *There are two sides to this answer depending on what you have been talking about as rights. Please answer both YES and NO in your response.*

What responsibilities do you think a minor (*whatever age a society deems that to be*) has towards being just in their own actions?

1. When we fail at Charity or Justice, it is often sin. We don’t just sin as individuals; a society can sin. How can individual sin lead to social sin? Include in your response three (3) things that you consider social sins.

The following is a quote from Church teaching- *In the Catholic Church's view, human rights are not something that man creates out of whole cloth, on mere subjective whim, by social contract, or through popular vote.  Man is not the measure of human rights.  God is the measure of human rights.  In the eyes of the Church, human rights are based upon an objective moral order.  Most fundamentally, human rights are built upon human dignity, which, as we may recall, comes from the fact that man is made in the image and likeness of God and is called to communion with God.  The "roots of human rights," the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church observes, "are to be found in the dignity that belongs to each human being."*

Compendium of Social Doctrine, No. 152

1. What does it mean to say that a moral order is *objective?*
2. The opposite of objective is *subjective*. What would that moral order look like?
3. Amidst the non-stop, frequently irresponsible and noisy "rights talk," how do we distinguish true and authentic human rights from fake human rights? By the way, can you name a fake human right?

The following is a quote from Church teaching- *Laymen should take up as their own proper task the renewal of the temporal order. If the role of the hierarchy is to teach and to interpret authentically the norms of morality to be followed in this matter, it belongs to the laity, without waiting passively for orders and directives, to take the initiatives freely and to infuse a Christian spirit into the mentality, customs, laws and structures of the community in which they live.*

Populorum Progressio- “On the Development of Peoples”, Pope Paul VI, 1967 #33.

1. In your own words, what is Pope Paul telling us?

The Catholic Church, beginning from its Jewish roots, has always taught Social Justice. It began its modern writings on “human rights” in 1891 with *Rerum Novarum.* You may recall from Church History that this was a document about the Rights of Workers & Masters (Employers). By 1948, the United Nations published a declaration on Human Rights. It is still promoted today. Google it- choose the United Nations website, not Wikipedia, please. Skim the Declaration and see what kinds of things the UN considers as Human Rights.

1. Why in 1948?
2. List three (3) human rights mentioned in the Declaration. Are they being violated today? Elaborate.

What about countries that do not belong to the United Nations, would they conform/agree to this Declaration? Does it matter whether they do or not conform/agree? Matter to whom? Do any countries NOT belong to the United Nations?

1. Paradoxically (LOOK THAT UP), could **enforcing** the Declaration actually violate human rights? Discuss.