The reason I support this unique effort and urge you to do the same is because John Carr and the Initiative will provide an affirmative, consistent, and faithful voice articulating an application of the Gospel to the issues of our day here in our nation’s Capital.


The Initiative has the active support of Cardinal Donald Wuerl, the Archbishop of Washington. Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, and a group of distinguished lay leaders form an Advisory Group to help with fundraising and to support Initiative activities.

For more information, contact:
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Catholic Social Thought

Catholic social teaching offers a consistent commitment to the common good through the defense of human life and human dignity; the promotion of economic justice and religious freedom; and the pursuit of peace and care for creation. The Initiative is based on the premise that Catholic Social Thought is a vital and underutilized resource for Catholics and others eager to engage in public affairs and to build common ground on pressing policy challenges, especially those that touch the poor and vulnerable.

The Work of the Initiative

In order to promote understanding and dialogue around the positive vision of Catholic Social Thought and to educate and encourage new leaders to share its contribution to the common good, the Initiative will undertake these and other strategic activities:

Dialogues on Catholic Social Thought

The Initiative will convene students, scholars, legislators, journalists, and the public for regular, lively, and substantive conversations about the implications of Catholic Social Thought on key policy questions. The first of these Dialogues on “The Francis Factor” in public life drew an overflow crowd of more than 700. Future Dialogues will focus on Catholic Social Thought and Pope Francis on poverty; the moral limitations on partisanship; and other timely topics.

Convening Young Catholic Policy Professionals

The Initiative will gather young Catholics involved in public policy in our nation’s capitol to explore connections between their faith, Catholic social teaching, and their professional lives. These sessions will include dialogue about faith and work and the principles of Catholic Social Thought as well as opportunities for prayer, reflection, and networking.

Breaking the Silence and Stalemate on Poverty

The Initiative will bring together Catholic, evangelical, and other leaders to challenge the public silence and policy stalemate on US poverty. This groundbreaking convening will cross ideological and political lines to address both economic and family dimensions of poverty. This ongoing effort will create new partnerships, directions, and urgency to address the moral imperative of overcoming poverty.

Sharing Catholic Social Teaching

The Initiative plans to work with the Vatican Council on Justice and Peace and other Catholic institutions to examine how to better communicate the message of Catholic Social Thought through convenings and online efforts to identify areas for collaboration and best practices. A priority will be working with partners to strengthen the impact of Catholic Social Thought in seminary curriculum, formation, and pastoral preparation.

Catholic Social Thought and Public Life: Why Now?

In his simple ways and powerful words, Pope Francis is creating a unique moment and new momentum for sharing Catholic Social Thought. For too many, the Church’s social teaching is unknown. Too often, Catholic voices are divided, shaped more by partisan polarization than the consistency and coherence of a shared ethical and practical vision. Too frequently, Catholic contributions to public life are misperceived as negative or narrow.

The Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life is a vision, a message, and a place:

• to educate and encourage new leaders to be “salt, light and leaven.”
• to share and discuss the principles of Catholic Social Thought.
• to bring students and leaders together in civil dialogue to advance the common good and protect the poor and vulnerable.