

## Opening Prayer

Thank you, God, for making us citizens of a country where we can discuss national priorities and make our voices heard about decisions our government makes. Thank you for the abundance we have in this country; make us wise in discerning how to use our resources.

Thank you for the guidance that Catholic Social Teaching provides for us in making decisions and taking positions as citizens; open our ears and our hearts to your Church's wisdom. Thank you for the time to reflect on important issues; challenge us to grow through reflection and prayer.

Amen.

## Reflection

“The responsibility for attaining the common good belongs to individuals and to the State, since the common good is the reason that political authority exists.” (#168)

“To ensure the common good, the government of each country has the specific duty to harmonize different interests with the requirement of justice. Those responsible for the government are required to interpret the common good of the country not only according to the guidelines of the majority but also according to the effective good of all the members of the community, including the minority.” (#169)

“God gave the earth to the whole human race for the sustenance of all its members, without excluding or favoring anyone. This is the foundation of the universal destination of the earth's goods. The human person cannot do without the material goods that correspond to their primary needs and constitute the basic conditions for existence, to feed oneself, grow, communicate, and attain the highest purpose to which each is called.” (#171)

“The universal destination of goods requires a common effort to obtain for every person and for all peoples the conditions necessary for integral development and a fully human life, so that everyone can contribute to building a more human world.” (#175)

*The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Vatican City, 2004

## Closing Prayer

May the Holy Spirit enlighten us so we may act as discerning and responsible citizens.

May the Holy Spirit give us a passion for justice and for the values of the social teaching of our Faith.

May the Holy Spirit give us the confidence to challenge injustice wherever we recognize it.

May the Holy Spirit guide us, our fellow citizens, our lawmakers and the our President to construct a budget that truly reflects the values that support the dignity and rights of all human beings.

Amen.

## A Budget Based on Values

### Activities

1. Look at the Catholic Social Teaching (CST) principles and list of rights on this page and the previous page. If you were creating a country budget from the perspective of Catholic Social Teaching, to which areas would you allocate the most funds? Why?
2. Look at the budget statistics on pages 4, 5, and 6.
  - a. What do the budgets tell us about the priorities of those countries?
  - b. Compare the percentages of nation's budgets spent on the areas of education, health, military spending, and development in developed countries, developing countries and the United States. Which of the countries give the most, average, and least amounts to the different areas of spending?
3. Look at the U.S. Budget categories on page 6. What does cutting particular categories mean for a family receiving welfare as they go through the day, from breakfast, to school and to work? How about for a small country in need of development funds?
4. Study the U.S. budget categories on page 6. Which categories have grown the fastest? The slowest? How have people in the U.S. and in other countries been affected by spending trends in each budget area?
5. What does the CST value of participation call you to do in regard to the newly proposed U.S. budget for 2006?

“As pastors, we believe that a fundamental moral measure of our nation’s budget policy is whether it enhances or undermines the lives and dignity of the most vulnerable members of our society. The needs of poor children and families of modest means are often overlooked. They deserve priority as you allocate economic resources and burdens.”

Letter of Bishop Wilton D. Gregory, President of the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops, to the House and Senate Budget conferees, April 26, 2004

## Values in Catholic Social Teaching

- The *dignity of every human person*, whatever her/his race, class, gender, age, status, etc.
- *Authentic human development*, which is greater than economic development and embraces the social, cultural, political and spiritual dimensions of human life. It supports the development of everyone's skills and talents for service to the common good, not simply for profit.
- The *dignity of work*: work is essential for the development of the human person. "Work must be organized to serve the worker's humanity, support their family life, and increase the common good of the human community."
- *People should always take priority* over products, profits and production systems.
- The *common good*, a challenge to the pursuit of the individual good; the common good supports all of the conditions of social living through which each and every person can be enabled to achieve the authentic human development God intends for them.
- *Participation* in decision making, through democratic processes, in all levels of government (local, state, national) and in international bodies.
- Sharing in the *responsibilities* of creating the common good and of government.
- *Human Rights*, both political and civil rights, and also economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to education, food, health care, decent housing, etc.
- *Subsidiarity*, which places a proper limit on government by insisting that no higher level of organization should perform any function that can be handled efficiently and effectively at a lower level of organization by human persons who, individually or in groups, are closer to the problems and closer to the ground.
- Special concern for those in poverty; the *preferential option for the poor*.
- *Solidarity*, which means promoting the rights and development of all people across communities, nations and the world.
- *Peacemaking* and supporting cooperation rather than conflict.
- *Care for creation*, respecting and sharing the resources of the earth and promoting environmentally and socially sustainable patterns of consumption.

## Rights Set Forth in Catholic Social Teaching

In his encyclical *On the Condition of Labor* (1891), Pope Leo XIII affirms that the human person has "the rights to food, clothing, shelter and a living wage."

In his encyclicals in the 1930s, Pius XI focuses on the right to live, the right to the economic means to live with dignity, the right to follow one's path marked out by God, the right to free association and the right to possess and use property.

Pope Pius XII, in 1942, emphasized the right to maintain and develop one's life in all ways, the right to work and freely choose one's path in life, the right to marry and have a family.

In 1963, in *Peace on Earth*, Pope John XXIII calls for civil, political, social and cultural rights for every human person, including the right to life and bodily integrity; the right to food, clothing, shelter, rest, medical care, education and social services; the right to respect; the right to freedom in searching for the truth, expressing one's opinion and worshipping freely; the right to work for a just wage in a safe environment.

Pope Paul VI, in his encyclical, *The Development of Peoples* (1967), focuses on economic rights and the economic well-being of every human person.

In 1975, The Vatican publishes *The Church and Human Rights*, supporting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and calling attention to the rights of women and of minorities.

In 1991, Pope John Paul, in his encyclical marking 100 years of Catholic Social Teaching, declares the right to ownership must be balanced with the common good of all and affirms the right to share in work than makes wise use of the earth's resources.

In 2000, Pope John Paul II reminds us that food, health care, education and work are "fundamental rights," and calls for support of the UN in promoting human rights.

Source: *Catholic Social Teaching, Our Best Kept Secret*, Orbis Press



## Budgetary Spending in Developed Countries

|                | Education - % of GDP | Health - % of GDP | Military Spending - dollar amounts | Military - % of GDP* | Development Aid - % of GNP** |
|----------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Australia      | 6.0%                 | 6.0%              | \$11.39 billion (FY02)             | 2.9% (FY02)          | .25%                         |
| Canada         | 5.7% (1998)          | 6.6% (1999)       | \$7.861 billion (FY01/02)          | 1.1% (FY01/02)       | .28%                         |
| Denmark        | 7.7%                 | 6.9% (1999)       | \$2.47 billion (FY99/00)           | 1.4% (FY99/00)       | .96%                         |
| France         | 7.3% (1999)          | 7.3% (1999)       | \$46.5 billion (2000)              | 2.57% (2002)         | .36%                         |
| Israel         | 6.9%                 | 6.0%              | \$8.97 billion (FY02)              | 8.75% (FY02)         | not available                |
| Japan          | 5.7%                 | 5.7%              | \$39.52 billion (FY02)             | 1% (FY02)            | .23%                         |
| Spain          | 5.4%                 | 5.4%              | \$8.6 billion (2002)               | 1.15% (2002)         | .25%                         |
| United Kingdom | 4.7%                 | 5.8% (1999)       | \$31.7 billion (2002)              | 2.32% (2002)         | .3%                          |
| United States  | 0.6%                 | 9.2%              | \$447.4 billion                    | 3.5%                 | 0.2%                         |

Sources: [www.nationmaster.com](http://www.nationmaster.com) and [www.OCED.org](http://www.OCED.org)

\* **GDP** means **Gross Domestic Product**. This is the value of everything (goods and services) produced in a country. For example, the GDP of the U.S. in 2003 was \$10.4 trillion dollars. So, if all the goods and services produced by all the companies and producers in the U.S. in 2003 were added together, the total would equal \$10.4 trillion dollars.

\*\* **GNP** means the **Gross National Product**. This is similar to the GDP, but includes the value of goods and services produced overseas as well, instead of just those produced within the country.

## Budgetary Spending in Developing Countries

|           | Education - % of GDP                    | Health - % of GDP | Military Spending - dollar amounts | Military - % of GDP    |
|-----------|---|-------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Cuba      | 6.7%                                    | 7.6% (1995)       | not available                      | roughly 4% (FY95 est.) |
| Honduras  | 3.5%                                    | 3.9%              | \$35 million (FY99)                | 0.6% (FY99)            |
| Hungary   | 4.9%                                    | 5.2%              | \$1.08 billion (2002 est.)         | 1.75% (2002 est.)      |
| India     | 3.3%                                    | .13%              | \$11.52 billion (FY02)             | 2.3% (FY02)            |
| Indonesia | 2.4%                                    | 0.8% (1999)       | \$1 billion (FY98)                 | 1.3% (FY98)            |
| Nicaragua | 2.6% (Not including tertiary education) | 8.5%              | \$26 million (FY98)                | 1.2% (FY98)            |
| Uganda    | 2.4%                                    | 1.9%              | \$124.7 million (FY02)             | 2.1% (FY02)            |
| Zimbabwe  | 0.6%                                    | 3.0% (1999)       | \$625.1 million (FY02)             | 3.2% (FY02)            |

Source: [www.nationmaster.com](http://www.nationmaster.com)

## U.S. Budget - Sample Categories\*

|                                    | 2002          | 2003          | 2004          | 2005 estimate | 2006 estimate | Percentage of 2006 expected GDP | Percentage of Expected Budget Outlays 2006 |
|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------------------------|--|
| National Defense                   | 348.6 billion | 404.9 billion | 455.9 billion | 465.9 billion | 447.4 billion | 3.5%                            | 17.4%                                      |
| Natural Resources and Environment  | 29.5 billion  | 29.7 billion  | 30.7 billion  | 31.0 billion  | 31.2 billion  | 0.2%                            | 1.2%                                       |
| Education and Vocational Training  | 54.2 billion  | 65.5 billion  | 70.5 billion  | 77.9 billion  | 71.0 billion  | 0.6%                            | 2.8%                                       |
| Social Services                    | 14.9 billion  | 15.6 billion  | 15.9 billion  | 16.7 billion  | 16.1 billion  | 0.1%                            | 0.6%                                       |
| General Health Care Services       | 172.6 billion | 192.6 billion | 210.0 billion | 226.3 billion | 236.0 billion | 1.8%                            | 9.2%                                       |
| Medicare for senior citizens       | 230.9 billion | 249.4 billion | 269.4 billion | 295.4 billion | 345.7 billion | 2.7%                            | 13.5%                                      |
| Housing Assistance                 | 33.0 billion  | 35.3 billion  | 36.6 billion  | 37.3 billion  | 38.4 billion  | 0.3%                            | 1.5%                                       |
| Development Aid to Other Countries | 7.8 billion   | 10.3 billion  | 13.8 billion  | 14.7 billion  | 21.3 billion  | 0.2%                            | 0.8%                                       |
| Net Interest on Federal Debt       | 332.5 billion | 318.1 billion | 321.7 billion | 347.9 billion | 392.4 billion | 3.0%                            | 15.3%                                      |

**\*NOTE: The budget amounts reflected here do *not* include the additional \$81 billion the Bush administration requested for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan soon after submitting the budget to Congress.**

Source: U.S. Government Printing Office, <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/usbudget/fy06/sheets/hist03z2.xls>

“All aspects of society, including government, should work together to secure adequate resources to assist those trying to escape joblessness or move beyond welfare, educate their children, gain health care coverage, or overcome hunger or homelessness. Our nation also has international responsibilities that require continued increases in international development assistance that will allow us to improve dramatically our nation’s response to the tremendous development and health needs in Africa, to provide additional relief for the poorest people in other underdeveloped parts of the world, and to provide assistance and protection to refugees worldwide. Preserving an adequate safety for the poor and vulnerable is a fundamental moral obligation of a responsible society that must be balanced along with priorities like homeland security and military expenditures.”

Letter of Bishop Wilton D. Gregory, President of the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops, to the House and Senate Budget conferees, April 26, 2004