

Table of Contents

Introduction to Study Guide.....	2
Chapter 1.....	4
Chapter 2.....	8
Chapter 3.....	14
Chapter 4.....	20
Scripture and Tradition References.....	25
Bibliography.....	29

Introduction to Study Guide

Just Church: Catholic Social Teaching, Synodality, and Women explores the issue of justice within the Catholic Church by presenting the Church's teaching on social issues and synodality. It uses these teachings as a framework to probe the question of women in the life of the Church. Specifically, it asks if the role that women have in the Church meets the standards of justice defined by Church teaching.

The purpose of this Study Guide is to help readers learn the information presented in *Just Church* and to compare it to their own experiences with the Catholic Church. The Study Guide identifies key points and insights from each chapter and presents questions which allow readers to further analyze and reflect on the material.

Just Church is an informative and accessible book which is appropriate for readers in parish settings, or for college or later secondary school theology courses on Catholic Social Teaching, ecclesiology, social justice, and the history of women in the Catholic Church. This Study Guide can be used by individual readers or by facilitators leading class or small group discussions of the book.

Just Church has four chapters, and the Study Guide has a section for each chapter. Each section of the Study Guide has the following parts:

- *Key Points*: These highlight for the reader or facilitator a few of the key takeaways from the chapter.
- *Chapter Outline*: This gives a general overview of the information contained in each chapter, with its main themes and corresponding page numbers.
- *Review and Discussion Questions*: These are meant to reinforce learning and retention of important ideas from the chapter. They are particularly geared toward teachers seeking to help students retain key ideas. They are meant to encourage critical thinking on the reading material and are appropriate for group discussion or for written responses in a classroom setting.
- *Scripture and Tradition*: These sections present passages from Sacred Scripture and Tradition which relate to the topic covered in the chapter of *Just Church*. They are

intended to help a reader see how *Just Church* is building on doctrine as expressed in Scripture and in authoritative Church documents.

Introduction:

“There are two main categories in the discussion of a ‘just Church.’ The two – ecclesiology (theology applied to the Church’s organizational structure) and Catholic Social Teaching – are the framework for analyzing the possibilities for ‘justice’ within the Church. Together, they can point to a new reality that describes ‘Church’ as the entire people of God, not simply the hierarchy” (p. xix).

Chapter 1: “Catholic Social Teaching” (pp. 1-26)

Key Points

1. Introduction to Catholic Social Teaching and its seven themes.
2. Catholic Social Teaching (CST) is not only doctrine to apply to issues outside the Church, but a way to evaluate the Church’s own structures and activities.
3. Ways in which the Church possibly creates categories of the “poor” among its own members by excluding and silencing voices among Catholics.

I. Chapter Outline

- a) Growth and development (pp. 1-6)
 - i) The foundational documents on Catholic Social Teaching are
 - (1) *Rerum Novarum* by Pope Leo XIII (“New Things,” 1891)
 - (2) *Quadragesimo Anno* by Pope Pius XI (“In the Fortieth Year,” 1931)
 - (3) *Mater et Magistra* by Pope John XXIII (“Mother and Teacher,” 1961)
 - (4) Additional documents are listed on page 3 and in Appendix I.
 - ii) Modernism and the development of doctrine (Modernism presented as the late 19th and early 20th century reinterpretations of Catholic teachings [doctrine] in the light of contemporary theories of philosophy, history, and psychology.)
 - (1) Some individuals in the Church proposed that Catholicism could be reconciled with the changes of society. Fearing this might call some Church pronouncements

into question, Pope Pius X sought to slow the development of these beliefs by requiring all clergy, religious superiors, officials of the Roman Curia, and seminary professors to affirm the “Oath against Modernism.” “The Oath thereby appears to reject the notion of the development of doctrine...” (p.4).

b) Seven themes (pp. 6-26)

i) Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers

(1) *Rerum Novarum* defends the rights of workers in the age of the Industrial Revolution. Sustenance by living off the land was often replaced by unsafe working conditions and the preference for capital and profit over labor. All women were affected by the mistreatment of workers, either directly or indirectly (pp. 6-8).

ii) Life and Dignity of the Human Person

(1) It harms women’s dignity to argue that they cannot image Christ. Arguments for why men and women are equal (pp. 8-11).

iii) Solidarity

(1) Zagano explains how the economy can be more just in the distribution of wealth and resources, and how women can be part of the solution. “...not only the Church, but the entire world is one family” (p.13).

iv) Care for God’s Creation

(1) Zagano discusses Pope Francis’s *Laudato Si’* (2015) addressing care for the planet and environment and the responsibility we have to protect it. As Pope Francis reminds us, the earth is our common home. What can we do to heal and protect it? (pp. 13-16). (Since this book appeared, Pope Francis has released the apostolic exhortation *Laudate Deum* (2023).)

v) Call to Family, Community, and Participation

(1) Pope Francis has not changed Church teaching, as many believe, but has called for understanding and forgiveness. It seems on the surface that Church teaching

excludes those in what he considers “irregular” unions, those who are using contraception, those who have suffered an abortion, or who affirm distinctive beliefs regarding sex and gender. However, it appears it is the view of Pope Francis that it is the duty of all to attempt to understand differences and in some cases to forgive transgressions (pp. 16-17).

- (2) Many people are divided over the meaning of the term “equality.” Church teachings on abortion, politics, birth control, marriage, sexuality, and gender issues contribute to this division. Catholic Social Teaching excludes no one (pp. 17-20). Clericalism has contributed to the sense of privilege for the ordained and skewed the weight of their participation in decision-making.

vi) Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

- (1) The term “preferential option for the poor,” is rooted in the teachings of Jesus. The phrase was used at CELAM in 1968 in Medellín, Colombia; in 2002 the Conference met in Aparecida, Brazil and added the concern for environmental challenges. The Church’s efforts for the care of the poor are historically linked to diaconal service (*diaconia*) (pp. 20-22).
- (2) Environmental abuses have affected the livelihoods of many, forcing them to flee their habitats and migrate to cities, where minimal employment prospects endanger their lives. Often times, these people are women (p. 20).
- (3) Zagano asks: Who exactly are the poor in the Church in our times? How are women treated by the Church? Do they receive just salaries and the respect they deserve for the contributions that they make? Are their voices often stifled or ignored due to “clericalism”? (Clericalism is a feeling of superiority among priests and other clerics based solely on their ordained status.) (p. 22).

vii) Rights and Responsibilities

- (1) Catholic Social Teaching teaches that all persons have the right to be respected, yet women and girls are the largest group abused and ignored in the world. Pope John Paul II’s apostolic exhortation *Familiaris consortio* (“The Fellowship of the

Family,” 1981) explains the many ways in which the dignity of women is attacked and defends their right to public involvement (pp. 23-24).

(2) Women are fully human persons deserving of their rights and dignity. In too many places in the Church, clericalism has stifled their ability to serve, make decisions, or hold positions of authority equal to their male counterparts. Not all clerics can work with women. Too often, even women in positions of authority in the Church only appear to have input in decision-making. While the roles of wife and mother are important and necessary, they are not and must not be considered the only options for women to contribute to the Church (pp. 24-26).

Review and Discussion Questions

1. What are some specific practices named in Chapter 1 by which the Church can improve its own fidelity to Catholic Social Teaching? (pp. 8-9, 13, 15-16)
2. What are some of the ways that the principles of Catholic Social Teaching challenge the *status quo* of women’s roles in the Church and in societies around the world? (pp. 8-9, 19, 22, 24-26)
3. How has Catholic Social Teaching been taught, preached about, and/or discussed in your experience? What issues has it focused on?
4. Have you experienced (or seen others experiencing) your opinion, beliefs, or ideas being marginalized, ignored, or dismissed in Church settings?
5. Drawing from your experience and the content of the first chapter, how have you seen the Church succeed or fail at living out an example of justice?
6. How do the principles of Catholic Social Teaching help us to avoid showing partiality for the powerful? (pp. 7-8, 13-16, 21, 22)
7. What are some ways that the Church community, in the way it treats its own members, either embodies or violates principles of Catholic Social Teaching?
8. What are concrete steps your local community can take to better live up to the principles of Catholic Social Teaching? (pp. 8-9, 13, 15-16, 22, 24)

Chapter 2: “Synodality” (pp. 27-51)

Key Points

1. While synods offer a chance for different parts of the global Church to give input to decisions, they are historically led and controlled by men only.
2. Synodal documents do not overturn law but provide important pastoral guidance. In documents following recent synods, Pope Francis has not suggested that morality changes with a situation, but that to minister to each individual calls for pastoral care and understanding of their particular circumstances.
3. The (2021-2024) Synod on Synodality is meant to foster dialogue on the topics of communion, participation and mission. Because its implementation is entrusted to diocesan bishops, the opportunities for listening and dialogue have varied from diocese to diocese.

I. Chapter Outline

a) Brief history of synods (pp. 28-31)

- i) There have been synods in the Church since the beginning of Christianity. “Synod” literally means “walking together.” The Church has taught through the ages that a synod requires the consensus of the bishop, his council of priests and deacons, and the people (pp. 28-29).
- ii) While the practice of synodality slowly faded in the West over time, popes in the 20th century, and especially at Vatican II, have spoken about the need for this collaboration. However, up until the papacy of Pope Francis, this collaboration took place only among clerics (pp. 29-31).

b) Synod on the Family (2014-2015) (pp. 31-36)

- i) Zagano gives the history of and describes the preparatory process for the Synod on the Family, including the topics that the Church wished to study (pp. 32-33).

- (1) The preparatory document gives the purpose of the meeting: to describe the “*status quaestiones* [current situation] and to collect the bishops’ experiences and

proposals in proclaiming and living the Gospel of the Family in a credible manner” (p. 32).

- (2) The preparatory document for the Synod on the Family provided a basic catechesis and asked the bishops of the world to comment on nine questions about pastoral care for marriages and families: “(1) evidence of the dissemination of Church teaching; (2) marriage and natural law; (3) pastoral care of the family in general; (4) and those in ‘certain difficult marital situations’; (5) same-sex unions; (6) education of children in ‘irregular marriages’; (7) openness to parenthood; (8) relationship between families and their individual members; (9) and other challenges the bishops wish to present” (pp. 32-33). Francis’s subsequent response to some of the issues sheds light on his role: he was now seen as a pastoral figure, not just a “law enforcer.”
- (3) The *Instrumentum Laboris* or working document for the Synod laid out the platform for discussion and commentary. It stated that the synod would “thoroughly examine and analyze the information, testimonies, and recommendations received from the particular Churches [dioceses] in order to respond to the new challenges of the family” (p. 33).
- (4) The synod meetings led to Pope Francis’s post-synodal apostolic exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia* (“The Joy of Love,” 2016). The word “dignity” appears thirty-one times in this document, often in defense of the dignity of women. The document does not overturn law but provides guidelines on the application of the law in light of the charity and mercy of the gospel (pp. 33-35).
- (5) Canadian Archbishop Paul-André Durocher’s synod intervention in 2016 pointed out that “there has been no dogmatic statement saying that women cannot be ordained deacons” (pp. 35-36).

c) Synodality today (pp. 36-38)

- i) In 2018, Pope Francis modified synodal procedures so that the voices of all the faithful could be heard. He wrote that the bishop “is a teacher who proclaims the Word.” He is also a disciple who “listens to the voice of Christ speaking through the

entire people of God...” (p. 37). Zagano asks about a wider synodal participation. (pp. 36-38).

d) Synod on Young People (2018) (pp. 38-41)

- i) Preparation for this synod demonstrated that Pope Francis wanted to hear from more than only bishops. Synod preparatory documents drew from more than 100,000 responses of young people (p. 38).
- ii) Zagano describes how the synod’s final document expressed the need to value women in the Church and society, rejecting exclusion and discrimination. It called for greater attention to be given to the diaconate as a permanent vocation. Could this also include women? (pp. 38-39).
- iii) Francis’s response to the final document noted that the Church’s structures in and of themselves may present the greatest threat to the rights of women. This is a call to reject clericalism that has its roots in these structures (pp. 39-40).
- iv) Zagano describes the roles of conscience and discernment in the Church. She also notes the inclusion of biblical women in the synod’s final document. Several women from the Old Testament are named and, although the women who followed Jesus in Luke’s Gospel are mentioned, there is no mention of the women in the Acts of the Apostles, nor is the deacon Phoebe named. (Romans 16) (pp. 40-41).

e) Synod on the Amazon (2019) (pp. 42-46)

- i) Focus on the connected issues of environmental destruction and poverty
 - (1) Evangelization is difficult in this region due to large populations, enormous territories, many different languages, and extreme poverty. The planning for this Synod drew from the seven major goals of *Laudato Si’* (“Praise be to You: On Care for Our Common Home,” 2015) (pp. 42-43).
 - (a) Seven goals: (1) care for the environment; (2) response to the needs of the poor; (3) analysis of ecological economics; (4) recommendations for simple lifestyles; (5) ecological education; (6) ecological spirituality; (7) an emphasis on community involvement and action (pp. 42-43).

ii) Raising the question of women deacons

(1) Rather than report on issues such as the Amazonian people, the environment, or the application of the Gospel to the region, media focused on married priests and women deacons. The final document revealed that among voting members (no women), the majority favored married priests and installing women as lectors and acolytes. There was a leaning toward women deacons (p. 43).

(2) Study Commissions on the Diaconate of Women

(a) According to the final Document of the Amazon Synod, the first Study Commission (2016) arrived at partial findings regarding the reality of the diaconate of women in the early centuries of the Church. Pope Francis said that he would recall the original Commission, perhaps adding a few members (p. 45).

(b) However, in 2020, Pope Francis created a new commission to study the issue of women deacons, and at least two meetings were held (September 2021 and July 2022). While he approved the installation of women lectors and acolytes (canon 230), the issues of married priests and women deacons remained unsettled (pp. 44-46).

f) Synod on Synodality (2021-2024) (pp. 46-51)

i) Difficulties in implementing the Synod on Synodality

(1) Two problems occurred: First, national episcopal conferences were involved in the preliminary phase only after the diocesan bishops were contacted. Second, it was difficult to manage: "...different things were occurring in different places around the world, each in its own way" (pp. 46-47).

(2) Some dioceses did not participate in a meaningful way, and some parishioners never heard about the Synod (p. 47).

(3) Many who feel marginalized, including women, refused to participate due to their lack of trust in the process (p. 48).

ii) Reveals issues of clericalism

- (1) The Final Document for the Youth Synod states that women must have a presence in ecclesial bodies at all levels, including in the decision-making process, while still “respecting the role of the ordained minister” (p. 50). This can be read as either exclusive or inclusive of women.
- (2) If clericalism continues unabated, those on the peripheries of the Church will continue to feel “unheard, unincorporated, and unable to gain genuine respect” (p. 51).

Review and Discussion Questions

1. What clarifications and/or further questions regarding the roles of women in the Church have come from the recent synods (Synod on the Family, Synod on Young People, Amazon Synod)?
2. What are some difficulties that have arisen in the implementation of and/or response to the recently completed synods, as well as the ongoing Synod on Synodality?
3. In your experience with the Church, where have you seen effective examples of listening and dialogue?
4. After reading this chapter, what is your understanding of synodality? How is it, or how could it be, expressed in concrete ways?
5. Where has the Church exemplified or failed at living out the pastoral guidance of ministering individually with love to each person, acknowledging the particular realities of their lives and experiences?
6. How can the experience of discussing difficult issues lead to joy within the Church, as seen in Acts 15, rather than being a source of strife?
7. Have the recent and ongoing synods within the Church helped to foster the sense of “co-responsibility” of the laity for which Pope Benedict XVI called? How can this co-responsibility be realized within local church communities?

Chapter 3: “Women and the Church” (pp. 53-77)

Key Points

1. *Praedicate Evangelium*, Pope Francis’s document which outlines the reorganization of the Roman Curia, has expanded opportunities for women’s participation in the governance of the Church.
2. However, canon law states that non-ordained Catholics only cooperate in the governing power of ordained clerics, rather than possess that power themselves (can. 129).
3. The problem of clericalism arises when ordination is associated with greater honor, prestige, and/or privilege. It can lead to clerics behaving as if they are masters of their community, able to make decisions without collaboration and communication with others.
4. Historically, there have been Catholic women in the Church who were deacons. Dispute exists whether these women were ordained sacramentally (as male deacons are today), or if they were lay women participating in a ministry without receiving the Sacrament of Holy Orders.
5. The diaconate is separate from the priesthood; thus, the questions of whether women can be ordained to the diaconate and to the priesthood must be treated separately.

I. Chapter Outline

- a) *Praedicate Evangelium* (“Preach the Gospel,” 2022) (pp. 54-59)
 - i) This apostolic constitution reorganized the papal Curia, renaming the sections of the Curia previously called Councils, Commissions, or Congregations as “dicasteries” (pp. 54-55).
 - ii) There is an emphasis on preaching and the “missionary conversion” of the Church and Curia – one that is “outward looking” (pp. 56-57).
 - iii) The reorganization asserts that any Catholic is eligible to serve in any of the curial offices. Pope Francis has appointed or advanced both secular women and women religious to positions of increasing authority in various dicasteries. Examples of these appointments are given on pages 56-57.

- iv) Many curial bodies have been combined, reducing the number and allowing tasks to be better coordinated (pp. 58-59).
- b) Ecclesiology and Participation (pp. 59-61)
- i) While the 1983 revised Code of Canon Law “affirms the rights, duties, and equality of all Christians, important caveats inserted into some canons negate that possibility” (p. 60).
 - ii) Approximately one per cent of Catholics are ordained clerics. Few parishes and even fewer dioceses include the laity in decision-making. While certain managerial and staff positions are being opened to laypersons, the Church’s ordering and governance are restricted to clerics. The new apostolic constitution does not change this. (p. 60).
 - iii) Regarding women in the Church, it is important to remember that women’s religious orders were historically led by consecrated abbesses who were often ordained as deacons (p. 61).
 - iv) A key word in the revised 1983 Code of Canon Law (can. 208) is “cooperate.”
 - (1) “...All the Christian faithful...cooperate in the building up of the Body of Christ according to each one’s own condition and function” (p. 61).
- c) Governance and Jurisdiction (pp. 59-61)
- i) “In the years during which the 1917 Code of Canon Law was under revision, there were some recommendations that laypersons participate in governance and jurisdiction, at least in situations that did not require sacred orders” (p. 62).
 - ii) Government in the Church is different. As canon 129 was being drafted, the initial proposed language stated that laypersons could “share” (*partem habere*), as opposed to “cooperate” (*cooperari*) in the exercise of power (*potestas*). “Cooperate” was chosen, ruling out laymen and laywomen from exercising power or governance (p. 62).
 - iii) During the 2002 Australian Plenary Council, some bishops who favored discussing women deacons agreed to discuss a non-ordained female diaconate not equal to the

present ordained diaconate. Eventually, the council passed a resolution saying they would accept the determinations of Rome. (pp. 62-64).

d) Governance, Clerics, and Clericalism (pp. 64-67)

i) Barriers to the incorporation of women into positions of authority

(1) Canon 129 eliminates the possibility of laypersons sharing governance and jurisdiction (p. 64).

(2) Ordination to sacred orders qualifies an individual for the “power of governance,” with which laypeople may only “cooperate” (p. 65).

ii) The root of the problem of clericalism is the ongoing presentation in seminaries of the prospect of an ontological change at ordination, which leads some priests to believe that they are superior to the ordinary Christian (p. 67).

iii) Pope Francis sees clericalism as a “perversion” and “the root of many evils in the Church” (p. 67).

c) Women’s Roles in the Church (p. 68)

i) Zagano asks in this chapter: “Can the hierarchical Church recover the attitude of Jesus toward women? Jesus is known to have had many women among his disciples” (p. 68). History demonstrates that women were increasingly pushed aside as the Church grew and formalized its ministerial and managerial positions, restricting ministry to men and practically eliminating women from influence in the Church (p. 68).

d) History of Women Deacons (pp. 69-72)

i) History proves that women deacons existed in the Church in the past. The question is whether they were sacramentally ordained. Zagano responds: “...it is entirely possible some were not ordained; it is more likely that many others were sacramentally ordained” (p. 70).

- (1) Scripture proves that many women performed ministry. The only individual in Scripture specifically named deacon is Saint Phoebe, though we hear little if anything about her today (Romans 16:1-2) (p. 70).
- (2) Some contemporary scholars attempt to connect the priesthood and diaconate, thus making sacramentally ordained women deacons impossible due to papal statements about the impossibility of women priests. However, *Lumen Gentium* (the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Church) defined the diaconate as an ordained ministry separate from the priesthood, detailing the duties of a deacon. Zagano asks: If women deacons ministered only to women and children in the past, then who ministers to women today? (pp. 70-72).

e) Women in Lay Ministry (pp. 72-75)

- i) Women are currently involved in ministry in a variety of ways (in schools, hospitals, social services, parishes, etc.). There is a need for more ministry in our times – to the poor, the outcast, and those on the peripheries of society. How can the Church accommodate the women who are ministering right now, and plan for a future that incorporates women into ministry? (p. 73).
- ii) In January 2021, Pope Francis modified canon 230 to allow all laypersons, not just men, to be installed as lectors and acolytes with the apostolic letter *Spiritus Domini*. A few months later, he established the new lay ministry of catechist. Zagano asks: “Does the trajectory of thought - [of Pope Francis on lectors and acolytes, and on catechists; and Paul VI on the suppression of the minor orders] open or close possibilities for the restoration of women to the ordained diaconate?” (pp. 73-74).

f) Women Deacons and the Future (pp. 75-77)

- i) Any request to change disciplinary practices in the Church must be evaluated and decided upon at the papal level. The main argument on behalf of restoring women to the ordained diaconate is that there is no doctrine that prevents it. Historical

ordinations of women are documented, so the current restriction is a disciplinary matter (pp. 75-76).

- ii) The diaconate preceded the development of the priesthood as a distinct office. Over time, the *cursus honorum* (“course of honor” – a series of stages or steps through which a man went on the way to priesthood) took hold, and the various distinct offices were collapsed into this series of stages for future priests. Thus, the diaconate was tied to the priesthood and there was no distinction between the two in canon law (can. 1024) (pp. 76-77).
- iii) The Church has issued documents (listed on p. 77) stating that women cannot be ordained validly as priests. In 2009, Pope Benedict XVI added a third paragraph to canon 1009 stating that the mission of bishops and priests is different from the duties of deacons. Zagano concludes from this addition: “That is, the diaconate is not part of the priesthood” (p. 77).

Review and Discussion Questions

1. What are some of the ways that Pope Francis has expanded the governing bodies of the Catholic Church to enable women to participate in leadership and governance?
2. Why is it important to investigate and understand whether women deacons in the Church’s history were sacramentally ordained?
3. In your experience, how has power in Church communities been shared among ordained ministers and lay Christians?
4. Is Pope Francis’s opening of positions in the Roman Curia to women relevant or significant for ordinary Catholics? Why or why not?
5. Christ entrusted his apostles with the charge to lead others as well as to serve others. Where have you seen examples of leaders within the Church embodying this servant leadership?
6. This chapter discusses the difference between “cooperating” in the governing power of ordained ministers and possessing that power for oneself. How does this distinction impact the day-to-day life and organization of Church communities?

7. What concrete actions can be taken by priests, deacons, and laypersons to achieve the Second Vatican Council's vision of laypeople and ordained ministers working together to build up the Body of Christ?

Chapter 4: “Conclusions” (pp. 79-95)

Key Points

1. Catholic Social Teaching reminds the Church of the need to support the rights of those on the peripheries.
2. The Church is growing in the practice of synodality, but the application and implementation of synodal principles is often inconsistent.
3. The questions of ordaining women as deacons and as priests are separate issues. Strong historical evidence exists for the practice of ordaining women as deacons, but not as priests.

I. Chapter Outline

a.) Catholic Social Teaching (pp. 80-85)

i) Catholic Social Teaching calls attention to the need to support the rights of those on the peripheries

(1) The trajectory of Catholic Social Teaching since *Rerum Novarum* demonstrates that the Church has increasingly recognized the rights of those who make up the peripheries. During the papacy of Pope Paul VI, the Church became less regal and less detached from the faithful, embracing poverty, simplicity, and inclusivity (p. 80).

ii) Historically, the Church has often failed to apply the principles of Catholic Social Teaching to its own structures of governance.

(1) Clericalism is still embedded in many areas of Church life. Laypeople “still find themselves on a different rung of the ladder of influence” (p. 80). This is partly due to an ingrained memory of the problems of modernism as they were understood in the early 20th century, which led to Pope Pius X’s “Syllabus Condemning the Errors of the Modernists.” This document supported the notion that “nothing in the Church is subject to development or change” (p. 81). The “Syllabus” was not rescinded, but was replaced in 1967 with the Creed and an

additional statement of acceptance of the Church's teaching on the doctrines of faith and morals...sacraments, papal primacy, and the Church itself" (p. 81).

- (2) While *Rerum Novarum* is an example of the Church applying Catholic Social Teaching by siding publicly with the poor, it does not mark a time when the Church (the hierarchy) turned its gaze inward. The Church must "rethink policies regarding women that hinge on the statement that women cannot image Christ" (p. 82).
 - (3) Do we believe that women are equally human and made in the image and likeness of God? If all clerics believed in the dignity of women, then their profession of solidarity with the poor would focus on the women of the world who suffer from poverty in many ways: fire, drought, war, and general disregard for the environment (p. 83).
 - (4) Zagano asks: "Can the Church recover its dedication to the call to family, community and, most of all, participation by all its members?" (p. 83). While it is unlikely that Church teaching will change regarding homosexual relationships, "irregular marriages," and abortion, all those involved must be respected as human persons (pp. 83-84).
 - (5) Misapplication of doctrine and Catholic Social Teaching damages the poor and vulnerable. The fact that women are often paid less than their male counterparts in a parish setting is essentially stealing from the poor and shows that women are not respected or protected (pp. 84-85).
- b) Synodality (pp. 85-91)
- i) Synod membership – who is included?
 - (1) Women are the first to be "canceled" in the Church's synods. Reports from the first part of the Synod on Synodality repeat the theme that clericalism is a scourge on the Church, and that women are not respected or included in leadership (pp. 85-87).

ii) Opposition to papal leadership and efforts for synodality among members of the Church

- (1) During Pope Francis's papacy, controversies have arisen, often concerning those deemed "unworthy" to receive Holy Communion. Some individuals and groups are in denial of the primacy of the pope when he speaks on matters with which they disagree. This derides Francis's efforts at synodality (pp. 88-89).
- (2) Some forces in the Vatican have also attempted to block or stall the pope's initiatives. While *pope emeritus* Benedict XVI was still alive, there were segments of society who denied Francis's authority as pope (pp. 89-90).
- (3) Prior synods, particularly that on Young People (2018), showed that the pope is interested in hearing from the faithful, not just from bishops. Young people involved in the synod spoke about the lack of involvement of women in leadership because of their gender (p. 90).
- (4) Following the Amazon Synod, Francis's apostolic letters called specifically for married priests and implicitly for women deacons. He also emphasized the possibility for parish-life coordinators, placing the vocation to lead a parish outside the vocation to clerical status and increasing possibilities for lay ministry, without excluding the clergy (pp. 90-91).

c) Women in the Church (pp. 91-95)

i) The question of women deacons

- (1) Restoring women to the ordained diaconate is a matter of discipline, not doctrine. "The question regarding women deacons is not whether women can be ordained as deacons, but whether they should be ordained" (p. 91). Too many people in the Church confuse the question of women deacons with the question of women priests. "Epigraphical evidence of women deacons performing priestly functions is mistaken as evidence of women priests" (p. 92). The two discussions are separate (pp. 91-92).

ii) Including women's voices is one way to combat the problem of clericalism

- (1) In 2016, Pope Francis noted that he was interested in what functions women deacons performed in the past, and in later years pointed out the need for more women in management roles at every level of the Church. He also noted the need to address the danger of clericalism. He has since included women in curial offices and as actual members of dicasteries. (In 2023 he named a woman religious as secretary, or “number two” to the dicastery for religious life.) However, many clerics still find it difficult to accept women in managerial positions (pp. 92-93).
- (2) As long as the false argument continues to exist that women cannot be ordained deacons because they cannot be ordained priests, the rejection of women deacons will continue. But the treatment of women as equal persons goes beyond ordination (p. 94).
- (3) “[T]he treatment of women as equal persons both within and without Church settings and employment, goes beyond questions of ordination. Justice, whether through the lens of Catholic Social Teaching, or as discussed in synod, is a touchstone of all gospel teachings” (pp. 94-95).
- (4) “Incorporating women fully into the Church and its structures requires a cleansing of clericalism from all areas of society and acceptance of a deep recognition that all are made in the image and likeness of God, that all are icons of the living Christ” (p. 95).

Review and Discussion Questions

1. What are examples from your experience of the Church either succeeding or failing in efforts to promote the rights of those who are in some way on the margins of society?
2. The chapter discusses the tensions and disagreement between groups in the Church with differing theological positions. Have you experienced examples of how these conflicts impact the life of Church communities?
3. Can synodality and the practice of open listening be an effective way to combat the scourge of clericalism in the Church?

4. In Matthew 23, Jesus criticizes religious leaders who cultivate a righteous image but are filled with “hypocrisy and evildoing” on the inside. What examples are there in the Church today of such hypocrisy? What are examples of the Church working to “cleanse the inside” in order to more faithfully make Christ present to the world?
5. Benedict XVI suggests that openness to God necessarily calls for the establishment of justice and solidarity among men and women. In your experience, have Church communities made this connection between faithfulness to God and just treatment of others?

Scripture and Tradition References

Chapter 1

Scripture

My brothers, show no partiality as you adhere to the faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. For if a man with gold rings on his fingers and in fine clothes comes into your assembly, and a poor person in shabby clothes also comes in, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say, "Sit here, please," while you say to the poor one, "Stand there," or "Sit at my feet," have you not made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil designs? Listen, my beloved brothers. Did not God choose those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom that he promised to those who love him?... But if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors. (James 2:1-5, 9)

Tradition

"...The Catholic Church, in imitation of Christ and in fulfilment of His commandment, relies not merely upon her teaching to hold aloft the torch of charity, but also upon her own widespread example. This has been her course now for nigh on two thousand years, from the early ministrations of her deacons right down to the present time. It is a charity which combines the precepts and practice of mutual love. It holds fast to the twofold aspect of Christ's command to give, and summarizes the whole of the Church's social teaching and activity." (*Mater et Magistra*, Encyclical Letter of Pope John XXIII, May 15, 1961).

See also *Rerum Novarum*, Encyclical Letter of Pope Leo XIII on Capital and Labor (May 15, 1891), which encouraged Pope John XXIII to publish *Mater et Magistra* on its 70th anniversary.

Chapter 2

Because there arose no little dissension and debate by Paul and Barnabas with them, it was decided that Paul, Barnabas, and some of the others should go up to

Jerusalem to the apostles and presbyters about this question. They were sent on their journey by the church, and passed through Phoenicia and Samaria telling of the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the brothers. When they arrived in Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church, as well as by the apostles and the presbyters, and they reported what God had done with them...

The apostles and the presbyters met together to see about this matter. After much debate had taken place, Peter got up and said to them, "My brothers, you are well aware that from early days God made his choice among you that through my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. And God, who knows the heart, bore witness by granting them the holy Spirit just as he did us. He made no distinction between us and them, for by faith he purified their hearts. Why, then, are you now putting God to the test by placing on the shoulders of the disciples a yoke that neither our ancestors nor we have been able to bear? On the contrary, we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they." The whole assembly fell silent, and they listened while Paul and Barnabas described the signs and wonders God had worked among the Gentiles through them. (Acts 15:2-4, 6-12)

Tradition

Co-responsibility demands a change in mindset especially concerning the role of lay people in the Church. They should not be regarded as "collaborators" of the clergy, but, rather, as people who are really "co-responsible" for the Church's being and acting. It is therefore important that a mature and committed laity be consolidated, which can make its own specific contribution to the ecclesial mission with respect for the ministries and tasks that each one has in the life of the Church and always in cordial communion with the bishops. (Pope Benedict XVI, address at the Sixth Ordinary Assembly of the International Forum of Catholic Action, August 10, 2012)

Chapter 3

Scripture

Jesus summoned them and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave. Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve.” (Matthew 20:25-28)

Tradition

Priests are brothers among brothers with all those who have been reborn at the baptismal font. They are all members of one and the same Body of Christ, the building up of which is required of everyone.

Priests, therefore, must take the lead in seeking the things of Jesus Christ, not the things that are their own... Priests must sincerely acknowledge and promote the dignity of the laity and the part proper to them in the mission of the Church.... They must willingly listen to the laity, consider their wants in a fraternal spirit, recognize their experience and competence in the different areas of human activity, so that together with them they will be able to recognize the signs of the times... Likewise, they should confidently entrust to the laity duties in the service of the Church, allowing them freedom and room for action; in fact, they should invite them on suitable occasions to undertake works¹ on their own initiative. (Second Vatican Council, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, December 7, 1965)

Chapter 4

Scripture

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites. You cleanse the outside of cup and dish, but inside they are full of plunder and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee,

¹ The word “works” is mistranslated as “worlds” in the official English translation of *Presbyterorum ordinis* on the Vatican website. The word in the original Latin document is “*opera*,” and the phrase borrows from *Lumen Gentium* 37: “Let [spiritual shepherds] encourage lay people so that they may undertake tasks on their own initiative.”

cleanse first the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may be clean... Even so, on the outside you appear righteous, but inside you are filled with hypocrisy and evildoing. (Matthew 23:25-26, 28)

Tradition

Openness to God makes us open towards our brothers and sisters and towards an understanding of life as a joyful task to be accomplished in a spirit of solidarity. (Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, June 29, 2009)

Bibliography

Chapter 1

Pope Francis, *Laudate Deum* (October 4, 2023), https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/20231004-laudate-deum.html

Pope John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra* (May 15, 1961), https://www.vatican.va/content/john-xxiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_j-xxiii_enc_15051961_mater.html

Pope John Paul II, *Familiares consortio* (November 22, 1981), https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html

Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum* (May 15, 1891), https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html

Pope Pius X, *Oath Against Modernism* (September 1, 1910), <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/pius10/p10moath.htm>

Pope Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno* (May 15, 1931), https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19310515_quadragesimo-anno.html

Additional documents are listed on page 3 and in Appendix I.

Chapter 2

Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia* (March 19, 2016), https://www.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia_en.pdf

Pope Francis, *Laudato si'* (May 24, 2015), https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

Synod of Bishops, *The Amazon: New Paths for the Church and For an Integral Ecology* (October 26, 2019), https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20191026_sinodo-amazonia_en.html

Synod of Bishops, *For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission* (Preparatory Document, 2021-2023), https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/common/preparatory-document/pdf-21x21/en_prepa_book.pdf

Synod of Bishops, *Instrumentum Laboris for the First Session* (October 2023), https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/common/phases/universal-stage/il/ENG_INSTRUMENTUM-LABORIS.pdf

Synod of Bishops, *Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment* (October 27, 2018), https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20181027_doc-final-instrumentum-xvassemblea-giovani_en.html

Chapter 3

The Catholic Church, *Code of Canon Law* (1983), https://www.vatican.va/archive/cod-iuriscanonici/cic_index_en.html

Pope Francis, *Predicate Evangelium* (March 19, 2022), https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_constitutions/documents/20220319-constituzione-ap-praedicate-evangelium.html

Pope Francis, *Spiritus Domini* (January 10, 2021), https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/motu_proprio/documents/papa-francesco-motu-proprio-20210110_spiritus-domini.html

Pope Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* (November 21, 1964), https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html

Additional Documents about the ordination of women are listed on p. 77.

Chapter 4

Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum* (May 15, 1891), https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html

Synod of Bishops, *Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment* (October 27, 2018), https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20181027_doc-final-instrumentum-xvassemblea-giovani_en.html