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The Beliefs, Values, and Commitments of the L.A. Catholic Worker

The Catholic Worker

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2023

Retrieved on March 30, 2025 from <https://catholicworker.org/the-beliefs-values-and-commitments-of-the-l-a-catholic-worker/>
The following statement of beliefs, values, and commitments from the June 2023 Catholic Agitator (newspaper of the L.A. Catholic Worker) offers another take on how different Catholic Worker communities frame what they do.

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2023

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Celebration

We commit to treasuring joy, seeking out beauty, celebrating with each other, sharing in happiness. We commit to honoring the events, abilities and achievements of those we know, celebrating the seasons and community landmarks, paying attention to the people around us and looking for reasons to celebrate, play, and create.

Stewardship

We commit to managing our resources with wisdom, taking care of the things entrusted to us for upkeep and distribution. We commit to acting in such a way that we are ready to give an account of the stewardship of these resources at any time to God, to those we seek to serve, and to those who gifted the resources.

Beliefs and Values

Eucharistic Spirituality · Mystical Body · Incarnation · Catholicism · Redemptive Suffering · Prayer · Reconciliation · Seamless Garment · Gospel · Beauty · Resistance · Prophetic Witness · Nonviolence · Pacifism · Biblical Anarchism · Radical Discipleship · Community · Celebration · Stewardship · Hospitality · Service · Work · Personalism

Community Commitments

Simple Living

In partnership with each other, the Holy Spirit, and spiritual advisors, we commit to examining our material lifestyle and exploring ways in which we can more freely share our resources, rebel against decadence, and be free to nurture personal, ecological, and societal health and relationships.

Resistance

We commit to striving to exist in the world in a nurturing and nonviolent way, to examining ourselves and disarming ourselves, to study, relationship building, and preparation. We commit to learning from those directly experiencing injustice. We commit to seeking wisdom and counsel, to being “as wise as snakes and as harmless as doves,” and to naming and confronting accurately, with wisdom, in a spirit of humility, evil and injustice in ourselves and in our world.

Community

We commit to spending time together, supporting and assisting each other, listening, learning, and growing together. We commit to accountability and conflict resolution, and to offering and

accepting forgiveness. We will constantly seek to compost the divisions and categories we develop for each other, and for everyone else we encounter, and to build new relationships that widen our experience and understanding of community. We commit to participating in the weekly and yearly cycle of events and activities within the community, living out our values together, to honoring our past, and being open to the future.

Works of Mercy

We commit to practicing the Works of Mercy as a core component of our life together. We also commit to discerning and addressing the root causes of injustice. We commit to encouraging each other and supporting each other in this work.

Spirituality

We commit to studying and understanding the Catholic-inspired spiritual roots of the Catholic Worker movement. We commit to exploring the tension of being a group borne of a particular faith perspective, and striving to be inclusive of those with a different or no faith identity. We commit to growing in understanding of how our spiritualities allow us to understand, critique, communicate, disrupt, and love. We commit to holding our faith traditions and institutions accountable to the values they espouse. We commit to the community value of holding prayer and liturgy together. We commit to our own mystical development, and to studying oppressed people's theological teaching.

Clarification of Thought

“Workers should be scholars and scholars should be workers” (Peter Maurin). We commit to preparation, learning, and work, as seamless parts of one way of being. We commit to setting aside time for all of these activities, and seeking to find a balance among

them. We commit to being responsible and informed to explain our actions to anyone who asks. We commit to finding creative and consistent ways to educate ourselves, respecting the old and the young.

Personalism (Anarchism)

We commit to both personal and communal accountability, to “growing a new society in the shell of the old” (Peter Maurin), to the golden rule, to anarchism, and to radical responsibility. We commit to personal and human-scale solutions and to rejecting anything that masks or deflects personal responsibility to help one's neighbor and live out one's values. We commit to growing all of our own food in agronomic universities.

Accountability

We commit to being accountable at the individual and community level to people we meet in our work, to each other, to volunteers, donors, and God. We commit to honesty and transparency, to regular communication, to conflict resolution (Matthew 18:15–17).

Nonviolence

We commit to resisting physical, verbal, psychological, and emotional violence in all of our relationships, in how we interact with those we try to serve, and with each other. All people have inherent inestimable value, as created by God, and this should be our guide for all of our relationships. We commit to refraining from activities that would result in more violence, and to noncooperation with violent systems, at the same time loving our enemy. We commit to learning if and how we are implicated in systemic violence, and to disarming. We commit to being disciplined by the Sermon on the Mount.