

## **Common Good Missoula and Catholic Social Teaching: Building a Just Community**

At the heart of Common Good Missoula is a commitment to fostering a society where all individuals are treated with dignity, have access to affordable housing, and are empowered to shape the future of their communities. This mission aligns closely with the principles of Catholic Social Teaching (CST), a rich tradition grounded in scripture and centuries of theological thought. CST provides a framework for understanding how our faith calls us to respond to the needs of our neighbors including core principles like the dignity of the human person, the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable, the pursuit of the common good, and the importance of solidarity. For Common Good Missoula, these principles are not just guiding ideals—they're lived realities that shape our work in housing, economic equity, and community empowerment.

Common Good's commitment to housing equity, affordability, and inclusive land use policy reflects the CST principle of the common good. The common good goes beyond individual benefit, calling us to create conditions that enable all community members to thrive. Campaigns, like "Residents Not Resorts," focus on ensuring Missoula's land use policies remain aligned with affordability and accessibility, resisting trends toward deregulation that could undermine housing security. This is one way we seek to create lasting change that benefits the whole community, especially those most in need.

Another CST tenet central to our work is the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable. This challenges us to place the needs of the most marginalized at the forefront of our efforts, and Common Good Missoula's work on housing justice exemplifies this priority. Affordable housing is not simply an economic issue but a moral one; it directly affects people's ability to live with dignity, care for their families, and fully participate in community life. Through our advocacy for a strengthened Housing Trust Fund and creative housing solutions, we aim to create policies that support Missoula's most vulnerable residents.

The CST principle of solidarity—standing with others and affirming our interconnectedness—also guides our approach. Common Good Missoula works to unite people from various backgrounds, faiths, and interests in a shared vision for our community's future. In solidarity, we recognize that issues like housing affordability and environmental stewardship are interwoven and building a healthy community requires the involvement and commitment of all. Our team's ongoing work with faith communities, including those inspired by Catholic Social Teaching, unions, neighborhoods and non-profits strengthens our collective impact and ensures that diverse voices are part of the solution.

Common Good Missoula's work has been made possible in part by a grant from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD). On November 17th, your contributions to CCHD will support this work and other community-driven efforts to build a more just, inclusive Missoula. We invite all to join us—whether by volunteering, attending public meetings, or spreading the word. Together, through the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and a commitment to the common good, we can shape a compassionate, thriving future for all Missoula residents.