



Our history

Caritas in Aotearoa New Zealand grew out of Catholic concern in the 1950s and 1960s for justice and a fairer distribution of the world's resources.

Committed lay people and New Zealand's Catholic bishops have a long history of working for justice, peace and development, stretching back to the 1950s. Caritas carries on this role as the agency set up by the New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference to respond to poverty and injustice in the world.

Our values and principles

Caritas' work for justice and peace is inspired and guided by Scripture and Catholic social teaching. We also seek to uphold and live by the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi - the Treaty of Waitangi.

Catholic social teaching

Caritas draws inspiration for all its work from Catholic social teaching, a body of thought on social issues that has been developed by the Church over the past hundred years.

Catholic social teaching applies Gospel values such as love, peace, justice, compassion, reconciliation, service and community to modern social problems. It continually develops through observation, analysis, and action. It is intended to guide not just Catholics, but all people of goodwill in responding to social problems of our ever-changing world.

Catholic social teaching is founded in scripture and includes statements and letters written by popes and bishops. It shows how Catholic faith can guide our responses to modern day issues.

Our world so often seems ruled by greed and corruption. But Catholic social teaching undermines self-interest. Gaudium et Spes #69 states that

"God intended the earth with everything contained in it for the use of all human beings and peoples...goods should be in abundance for all in like manner." In even more strident terms, it reminds us to "Feed the man dying of hunger, because if you have not fed him, you have killed him". We have a clear duty actively to share resources and strive for justice for our brothers and sisters. Neutrality is not enough.

Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Populorum Progressio* quotes St Ambrose: "You are not making a gift of what is yours to the poor man, but you are giving him back what is his...The earth belongs to everyone, not to the rich."

This vision is key to Catholic social teaching and to our work. Since we believe each person is made in the image and likeness of God and has inherent dignity, we work with those living in poverty to have access to food, water, housing and other basic amenities which many of us can often take for granted.

Our people

Caritas is served by a staff of 16 in our main Wellington office, and a regional coordinator and a social justice educator based in Auckland.

Volunteers

Caritas is supported by a strong group of volunteers throughout the country and overseas. From those that sit on our committees to the people that give up eight weeks every year to help process the Lenten appeal, to those involved at the parish and school level. We and the many communities that we are able to help are indebted to all those that give their time and effort to help Caritas provide justice, peace and development.

Caritas Internationalis

In both emergency response and long-term development, Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand often partners with other members of the Caritas Internationalis confederation. This international network consists of 168 Catholic agencies working together around the world for justice, peace, and authentic human development.

Caritas represents God's love for all humanity.