



Veritatis Gaudium:

Multidisciplinary Journal of Postgraduate Studies

College of Postgraduate Studies,

Veritas University, Abuja, Nigeria

ISSN: 3043 - 5285

Volume 1, Number 2, June, 2026

DOI:10.13140/RG.2.2.17243.12321

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH: CREATING SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC PATHWAYS FOR NIGERIA

Philip Chika Omenukwa, PhD

Catholic Institute of West Africa, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

frphilipchika@yahoo.com

&

Henry Chukwuebuka Ezeala, PhD

University of Bonn, Germany

ezeala_h@yahoo.com

Abstract

*Nigeria typifies the contradictions of countries in the Global South: rich crude oil reserves, vast and fertile agricultural land, and a majority youth population. However, the country is plagued with multidimensional poverty, especially in Northern Nigeria, environmental devastation by oil companies in the Niger Delta, over 40% youth unemployment, and growing emigration of professionals. Recent economic initiatives by the Nigerian government, often supported by global financial organizations and multinational companies, have failed to deliver economic sustainability and industrialization. These initiatives have been criticized by papal documents such as *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013) and *Laudato Si* (2015), and this has to be furthered by a vigorous social action by the Church in Nigeria. Indeed, the Catholic Social Teaching (CST) avers an efficacious moral and humanistic foundation for responding to the multiple challenges of poverty, violence, environmental exploitation, inequality, and political instability, which are endemic in the Global South. This paper investigates the application of CST principles, such as human dignity, solidarity, subsidiarity, fundamental option for the poor, right of workers, and integral ecology, to reflect on how they could create sustainable economic pathways in Nigeria. It specifically addresses the question: how can Catholic social teaching engender sustainable economic pathways in Nigeria? The paper recommends CST frameworks as an actionable path for socio-economic growth in Nigeria. These include: (i) Complete reordering of Nigeria's political structure, beginning with a reformulation of the constitution consistent with the principles of social justice and common good, (ii) industrialization and aggressive agro-production to curb poverty and unemployment, and (iii) ethical resistance by Catholic leaders to Nigerian politicians and parties currently oppressing and exploiting Nigerians.*

Keywords: Catholic Social Teaching, Global South, Poverty, Neo-Colonialism, Liberation Theology, Decolonization

Introduction

Nigeria currently ranks #147/166 on the Sustainable Development Goals Index (Sachs et al., 2025) and has been ranked as #7 in the top ten countries with the highest number of Christian persecution, ahead of Islamic countries like Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan (Open Doors, 2026). The implications of these statistics for Nigeria's Christians are horrendous and call for instant action. Beyond the contemporary concerns of Christians in the global north, the Nigerian Church is faced with an urgent need to address basic concerns such as feeding and security. A new theological pathway that fights oppressive systems, promotes human dignity, sustains economic progress, and engenders social justice is needed. This paper specifically investigates how CST translates into sustainable action plans for economic and political stability in Nigeria.

The foundation for this social action is present in the Scripture {Is.58:9; Jer. 22:3& James 5:4}, and has been formulated in the Catholic Social Teachings. From the *Rerum Novarum* (1891) of Leo XIII to the *Dilexi Te* (2025) of Leo XIV, the Church has remained firm in its call for justice and the economic growth of poor nations. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis criticized the “economy of exclusion and inequality” (Francis, 2013), which has bedeviled nations in the Global South. Consequently, CST provides a theological foundation for Christians in the global South to engender progressive economic and political praxis that is faith-grounded.

This Paper explores practical ways for the application of the principles of CST in Nigeria. This is inspired by the conviction that a deeper application of CST principles, such as solidarity, subsidiarity, and fundamental option for the poor, would engender a sustainable path towards national development, which is the most embodied form of evangelization needed in Nigeria and other countries of the global south. This research employs a mixed-methods research design to provide a holistic view of the research problem. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed concurrently and combined during the interpretative phase to enable triangulation and validation of findings. The paper relied specifically on secondary sources from academic literature, peer-reviewed journals, and online sources. The selection criteria followed a purposive sampling of mixed secondary sources relevant to the topic. A thematic analysis was used to demonstrate how quantitative data translates into actionable points for CST in Nigeria in a way consistent with practical theology. A notable limitation is the use of sole secondary sources; future arguments incorporating primary data will significantly benefit studies on implementing CST in Nigeria.

There is already in existence a large ideological pathway and discussion on the application of CST principles in Nigeria. Ilo (2021) argues that the ‘African palaver,’ which stands for African socio-economic challenges, constitutes important discussion points for the synod. On this view, still, Okonkwo (2025) argues that integrating CST into Nigeria's political discussion could facilitate actionable pathways towards reducing corruption in Nigeria. Abalogu and Nwokedi (2024) opine that CST discussions in Nigeria should specifically target the younger population by equipping them with intellectual and pragmatic skills that will sustain poverty reduction in the country. This paper follows the already existing discussion among scholars on the need to integrate CST principles in Nigeria in order to stem the increasing tide of poverty, corruption, and injustice.

Catholic Social Teaching, Scripture and Magisterium

The principles of Catholic social teaching are rooted in Scripture and the Magisterium. The Creation of Adam in Gen. 2:7 typifies the inherent dignity of man as created in the image of God. Through the call of Abraham and the divine election of prophets, the image of a divine social contract is created. The Old Testament prophets emphasized God's disdain for any form of injustice, exploitation, or marginalization. Isaiah (3:14-15) prophesied divine condemnation on those who

grow rich by unjustly acquiring the land and wealth of the poor. Is (1:17) exhorts to a practical religiosity consequent on doing good, seeking justice, correcting oppression, bringing justice to the fatherless, and pleading the widows' cause. Is. (58:6-7), portrays true religious observance as losing the bonds of wickedness, undoing the straps of the yoke, letting the oppressed go free, sharing bread with the hungry, and providing a home for the homeless. Other prophets, including Amos (2:6-7), Hosea (10:13), Micah (3:1-3), Jeremiah (22:16), Ezekiel (45:8-9), Zechariah (7:9-10), and Malachi (3:5), emphatically and specifically denounced economic injustice.

In the New Testament, Jesus' first official teaching in Mathew 5 contains a special message to those who are poor, mourning, hungry and thirsty, peacemakers, humble, and persecuted. These are images easily identifiable with those crushed by systemic oppression. Furthermore, Jesus in Luke (4:18-19) explained his missionary mandate as a call to "preach the gospel to the poor, heal the brokenhearted, bring deliverance to captives, give sight to the blind, and set free those in captivity." Again, we see another imagery representative of those in systemic oppression. Finally, in Matthew (25:31-46), Jesus described the last judgment; it will be based on the ability to provide food, shelter the stranger, clothe the naked, and visit the sick or imprisoned. The strategic and repeated presentation of these scriptural passages points out that caring for the oppressed and marginalized is not merely an aspect of the Christian faith but at the core of it. Consequently, Catholic Social Teaching seeks to buttress the message that the Church is not indifferent to the economic and political situation of her members. It demonstrates the Church's option in speaking the language of mercy in concrete and dynamic forms. This is because certain sinful and unjust social structures constitute a problem to authentic evangelization and a danger to *salus animarum* (Grenier, 2023).

The Basic Principles of Catholic Social teachings include:

- a) The inherent dignity of the human person: Every human person is created in the image of God, thus every life is valuable irrespective of external circumstances (Second Vatican Council, 1965). This pivotal doctrine underlies the core logic and theology of Catholic Social Teaching. As individuals created in God's image, human beings are therefore inherently endowed with basic rights and responsibilities, which are meant to foster the human connection with the divine. Systems which diminish the inherent dignity of the human person in any form, or try to reduce human worth to a utilitarian end, are ungodly and unchristian (Dicastrey for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2024).
- b) The fundamental options for the poor: The poor are victims of exploitation and marginalization in a world inclined to utilitarianism (Francis, 2013). Consequently, Catholic social teaching prioritizes the recognition and promotion of the poor in society. The "poor" represent those who are economically disadvantaged, but also all who lack the abundance of God's benevolence in any form. This principle is anchored in God's own divine revelation through the scripture of his proximity to the poor, oppressed, widowed, and orphans (Ex. 22:22-23 & Luke 4:18). Furthermore, the height of Christian revelation is the fact that an omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent God, chose to reveal himself in the most vulnerable manner (Phil. 2:6). St Paul further explains, that God embodied poverty to show concrete solidarity with those who are poor (2 Corinthians 8:9). Therefore, a Church that pays attention to the poor seeks to find God in the most concrete ways through which He has revealed himself (Francis, 2013).
- c) Solidarity and the common good: Considering the economic disparity between the global north and South, this principle reminds all about the unity of the human family, and the responsibility that comes with wealth. This is meant to balance the injustice often meted out on poor societies, as a consequence of greed and consumerism from the rich. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (1939-1941) speaks of 'human and Christian brotherhood'. This brotherhood imposes a responsibility on privileged groups and persons to promote and contribute in concrete and practical ways to the common good of others. This is based on the

understanding that the resources of the world are given by the Creator for the good of all humanity (John Paul II, 1987).

- d) **Subsidiarity:** This principle provides the moral framework through which solidarity ought to be exercised. In order to avert the tendency of turning philanthropy and solidarity into dominance and control, smaller nations and organizations must retain their socio-political autonomy even in the face of external support. Bigger nation-states or international organizations should not usurp the place of smaller nations in directing their socio-political affairs while offering aid. The aim of external aid remains the support of the smaller body towards full and authentic autonomy. This principle underscores human beings as active agents, endowed with freewill and responsibility, as against a mindless statistic vulnerable to totalitarian control and globalist bureaucracy (Pius XI, 1931).
- e) **Integral ecology:** This principle gained theological prominence with the encyclical *Laudato Si* of Pope Francis. In alignment with recent global calls for environmental sustainability, integral ecology avers that there is an intrinsic unity in the entire order of creation. This implies that human beings cannot sustain economic and political progress while engendering environmental abuse. The divine mandate from God to Adam to ‘subdue and have dominion over all creation’ requires man to always relate with creation integrally and responsible stewardship (Francis, 2015).
- f) **Dignity and Right of workers:** This principle is closely tied to the inherent dignity of the human person. It emphasizes the right of employees to enjoy just remuneration for their work. In light of the 19th-century industrialization and its attending economic theories, Pope Leo XIII published the *Rerum Novarum*, often considered the seminal document of Catholic Social Teaching. This document stated that emerging economic ideologies such as Marxism, socialism, and capitalism must avoid treating workers as tools in their pursuit of an economic system (Leo XIII, 1891). During the great depression, Pius XI condemned the excessive exploitation of human beings in order to generate labor (Pius XI, 1931). St. Pope John Paul II reiterated the spiritual value of work as a means of transformation and growth for the human person, the inherent dignity of every legitimate work (John Paul II, 1991), while denouncing unemployment as an evil which harms development (John Paul II, 1981).

Poverty in the Global South: Nigeria as a Case Study

Nigeria is an erstwhile British colony that gained its political independence in 1960. Like most colonized countries, Nigeria’s political journey after independence was chaotic. Musa, Awudu, & Elijah (2025) argue that this is partly because the British, at the end of their colonial rule, deliberately left a fractured and unjust nation-state to sustain a country that could be easily manipulated politically and economically. This unjust national structure is part of the reason for the Nigerian-Biafran civil war seven years later (Ogbonna, 2025). Confavreux (2022), while expounding the decolonizing thoughts of Achille Mbembe, sustains the argument that the systemic inequalities left behind by the Colonialists continue to hinder contemporary efforts at development, consequently necessitating a critical review of these systems in the light of progressive ideologies.

At the end of the Nigerian Civil War in 1970, successive Nigerian leaders failed to deploy the country's resources for equitable development or unite the homogenous tribes that make up the Nigerian state. After several military coups, Nigeria began an uninterrupted democratic government in 1999 under President Olusegun Obasanjo. The democratic governments of the PDP were innovative in certain sectors such as telecommunication, Agriculture, education, and transportation. But they largely failed in laying the foundation for Nigeria to become a successful country, through a restructuring of the state, in a way that reflects equity, justice and inclusivity (Bakare et al, 2026). Also, the PDP government was alleged to be heavily characterized by corruption, during which state government officials embezzled public resources, using them to open private businesses (Omotola and Abayomi, 2025).

In 2015, another party named APC, mainly formed by erstwhile members of PDP, coalesced to form an opposition against the incumbent PDP government. This opposition led by Muhammadu Buhari, a Northern-Muslim, defeated Goodluck Jonathan, a Southern-Christian, during the 2015 general elections. The APC opposition was alleged to have been largely aided by the powerful countries like the United States and the United Kingdom due to vested interests in Nigeria (Ozden and Onapajo, 2019). Okolie, Enyiazu & Nnamani (2021) support this view by arguing that foreign propaganda was deployed by foreign countries in order to achieve their vested interests. Also, Owen & Usman (2015) argue that the deployment of the US political strategist David Axelrod by the APC is instrumental to the loss of the PDP and evidences a political relationship between the APC and the US Democrats. However, Public data shows that the Nigeria has drastically deteriorated since the inception of the APC administration; rising inflation, heightened terrorism and insecurity across various regions, blatant corruption, growing unemployment, massive departure of international businesses, increasing government apathy, increased hunger and poverty, increasing emigration of young professionals, deterioration of public institutions and sectors, stifling and intimidation of oppositions, increasing homelessness and the co-opting of religious elites as political acolytes (Chioke et al, 2025). A presentation of Nigeria's political and economic history, as made above, is necessary because it evidences Nigeria's current state and why it is in need of CST. Like other countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia marked by violence, exploitation, corruption, injustice, poverty, unemployment, and rising immigration, the experience of people from these places in the global south is significantly different from that of those in the global north.

Martins (2020) argues that these experiences are orchestrated by powerful governments and individuals from the global north, with the intention of undermining the stable development of countries in the global south. The National Security Council document (1974) by the US Security Council under Henry Kissinger argues for population and industrialization control in less developed countries like Nigeria in order to maintain a stable flow of raw materials to the United States. Considering the prolific economic and political instability in Nigeria, those who hold the aforementioned arguments regard it as having succeeded.

In light of how these ideologies contradict the core message of Christian evangelization and the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. The Church in Nigeria should emulate other countries in the global south like Brazil and Peru, where theology has been deployed as a tool to fight economic oppression, since to do so is to speak in very concrete terms the language of mercy, which fittingly suits the Church's constitutive embodiment and responds adequately to her missionary option. At a time when the Nigerian social class is so openly divided between the opulently rich and abysmally poor, a faithful Church must insist on identifying with the poor and oppressed rather than the rich and oppressors. This would offer the Church the privilege of birthing an economic revolution that is deeply Christian. Identifying with the poor and oppressed should be done not through mere words of exhortation and constant prayers, but as is seen in South America, through the public denunciation of persons and systems who sustain the economic quagmire in Nigeria. It is no longer practicable for religious leaders to hide under the guise of being apolitical or under the freedom of political choice.

The evils of Nigerian politicians and their parties are documented and verifiable public facts; they deserve public repudiation. The inability of many Christian leaders to specifically confront politicians remains a blight on the face of Christian leadership in Nigeria. It begs the question of whether political leaders are no longer morally answerable to religious authorities. Furthermore, many young Nigerians feel that the Church, through preaching and prayers, continues to keep the Nigerian populace docile and pliable to a leviathan system that gores and guts them into abject poverty and death. (Etobe et al, 2025). This regrettable reality calls into question the efficacy and

validity of Christianity as it is practiced in Nigeria today. Consequently, there is an urgent need to emphasize a theology of decolonization in Nigeria (Zembylas, 2025). This theology should be anchored on the principles of Catholic social teaching. It should focus on how to free Nigerians from the structures of colonialism, which currently sustains spiritual and physical oppression (Turner, 2025). The goal is to engender holistic freedom while destroying structures of sin (Benedict XVI, 2009). A theology of decolonization should promote inculturated methods of evangelization, encourage cultural awareness and sensitivity, promote Nigerian civil and religious history, and champion issues of social justice (Forster, 2025). A neglect of these wrecks causes psychological damage to the entire constitution of both the individual and the community at large. Already Fannon (2004) affirms that there are psychological consequences of institutional systems of oppression, like colonization, on the individual and the nation. He makes a case for the wide social, cultural, political, and economic implications contained in systemic and institutional oppression. Thereby, creating a need for a social movement of decolonization, which would include a return to linguistic analysis for meaningful social and cultural growth (Omenukwa, 2025). Following the path of South American theologians, it should seek to establish socio-political freedom through unequivocal support of politicians who advance Christian ideals.

A Comparative Analysis of Liberation theology in South America and theology of decolonization in Nigeria

Liberation theology is a theological perspective that emanated from South American theologians such as Leonardo Boff, Jon Sobrino, Oscar Romero, Gustavo Gutierrez, and Helder Camara. Following the palpable poverty, and political tyranny of their nations, these theologians argued in line with Catholic social teaching that an authentic Christian theology in their society should reflect (i) a fundamental option for the poor, (ii) a practical approach to theology (iii) the systemic nature of sin and, (iv) a clear path of liberation for the oppressed (Harwanto & Edgar, 2025). Though the South American bishops would define this theological pathway in 1968, it received a lot of pushback from the Vatican. Despite being criticized for being overly Marxist, and as such potentially atheistic, liberation theology contained at its core the message of Jesus Christ who declared his mission in Luke's gospel in the following manner: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; wherefore he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of reward (Luke 4:18-19)." This is because, at the foundation of liberation theology is the vision to do justice by giving voice to the voiceless (Herwanto and Edgar, 2025). The theology of decolonization is a Christian reflection on the contemporary effects of neo-imperialism in African countries like Nigeria (Turner, 2025). Following the awareness of a greatly unjust global order, it questions the structures of globalization that sustain oppression, poverty, violence, and exploitation, especially amongst black people (Igboin, 2025). Consequently, it advocates for radical epistemic decolonization and the empowerment of black identity and emphasizes Christian praxis in a way that benefits the oppressed (Anthony, 2025). By and large, it demonstrates in a very concrete manner the impact of language in the emancipatory mission of the Church. Language, as a matter of fact, controls a force that can either be exploited negatively or positively, and because it is a tool that is inevitable in the dissemination of the gospel message, its positive impact must be duly explored for a bountiful harvest in the Church's missionary task (Odei et al, 2025). Fanon (2004) draws attention to the impact that colonialism, imperialism, and racism have on the personal and social mental health of citizens in the midst of a wretched and deranged society. He demonstrates how language could be manipulated for the establishment of images of oppression. He therefore upholds that it is within this space that the work of the theologian or philosopher or even of any intellectual at all becomes inevitable in freeing the mind of the oppressed from their mental slavery and bondage. Omenukwa (2025, 53) concurs with Fanon by submitting that "every form of oppression or slavery must first of all take root in the mind before it begins to become manifested in other structures of the society."

A comparative analysis of liberation theology and the theology of decolonization understands that the common principle in both theologies is the liberation of oppressed people (Masoga, 2025). However, unlike in liberation theology, it recognizes that Nigerian theologians and the Episcopal conference have more to do in terms of acknowledging the systemic oppression being faced by Nigerian Christians. While acknowledging the efforts of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria, Caritas Nigeria, and the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria in promoting social justice, there is still a lack of aggressive movement and proclamation from the Catholic Church in Nigeria in matters of social justice. Furthermore, the 'decent' relationship that seems to exist between the Church and the state in Nigeria could be interpreted as being scandalous when analyzed from the perspective of the structural and personal failures of the Nigerian government. For example, while the allegation of a Christian genocide in Nigeria has gained foreign momentum, there seems to be very little effort and almost a timid response by the Christian leadership in Nigeria to sustain this call (Ezekiel, 2025). This is more concerning, considering Nigeria's ranking as one of the highest countries with Christian persecution in the world. Moral ways of sustaining such political objection include: abstaining from public identification with state officials, refusing state awards, deploying church media and resources in publicizing the ongoing violence, consistently speaking on specific issues such as tribalism, electoral malpractice, nepotism, educating the faithful on their civil rights to self-defense, and publicly denouncing Catholic politicians who sustain the ongoing structure of exploitation and oppression in Nigeria.

CST and Economic Sustainability in Nigeria

The principles of CST could offer Nigeria practical solutions to economic, environmental, and political sustainability. First of all, in line with CST's principle of the inherent dignity of the human person, there should be an underlying recognition of human dignity and equality in Nigeria's guiding document, which is the constitution. (Agbo et al., 2025) argues that the current Nigerian constitution does not grant full dignity and equality to all Nigerians. This explains the imbalance in Nigeria's current political structure and the various political agitations across various regions. In line with the principles of subsidiarity, a return to regionalism in Nigeria promises political stability and effective regulation of the over-centralized power in the present federal government (Ogele, 2025).

Secondly, in line with the CST principle of fundamental option of the poor, an economic model flowing from Catholic social teaching would seek to liberate the Nigerian market from dependency on international financial agencies such as the multinational companies (Isiani et al, 2021). This approach promises significant economic liberation for the vast majority of Nigerians currently living in poverty. Thirdly, following the CST principle of solidarity and common good, there should be a review of Nigerian laws and structure which sabotage or disenfranchise specific regions in Nigeria. Furthermore, the new tax laws by the Nigerian federal government ought to be repealed until the citizens are significantly engaged in terms of employment. Fourthly, as per CST's principle of subsidiarity, James and Akyar (2025) argue that a return to regional autonomy could help checkmate the excesses of the current Nigerian federal government as currently structured, while facilitating regional developments across the nation. Furthermore, intra- and inter-regional trade could build strong political and structural links within Nigeria and with other countries across West Africa. This would encourage production and industrialization across Nigeria as a pathway to economic stability (Joseph, Callistus, and Princewill). Following the principle of the dignity and rights of workers, the Federal government should increase the current minimum wage in order to enable workers to earn an income that could sustain basic living. This is because, as argued by Adebajo et al (2024), discussions on minimum should take cognizance of the present economic situation in Nigeria.

Finally, in line with the principle of integral ecology, significant attention ought to be given to the Niger Delta region in Southern Nigeria, whereby proceeds from oil revenue should be reflected in structural and systemic development. Further attention should equally be given to the methods of oil drilling in such a way as to preserve their natural environment and avoid damaging their ecological habitats (Elekwachi et al, 2019). Catholic parishes in the rural Niger Delta areas affected by oil spillage should be encouraged to document stories on the effects of oil spillage and environmental hazards on parishioners. Based on these stories, Catholic Bishops and theologians from these regions could formulate actionable suggestions and plans with which to engage the Niger Delta Development Commission on sustainable actions for environmental preservation.

Challenges to CST in Nigeria

Challenges to the implementation of CST principles in Nigeria are expected to be internal and external. Like liberation theology, there is the overt fear that theological perspectives that blatantly address class struggles are Marxist and atheistic; however, this does not invalidate the urgency of the Nigerian experience and the foundations of this theology in the gospels (McIntosh and Ranawana, 2024). A proper interpretation of synodality, as is being promoted by the recent Popes, Francis and Leo XIV (Okoye, 2024), ought to necessarily involve the legitimate concerns of Nigerians as part of the Catholic family. These concerns reflect that Nigerian Christians are still held down by vicious structures of violence and poverty, and there is an urgent need for a practical Christian response beyond prayer calls, inspiring sermons, and pastoral platitudes. Therefore, failure to address the structural problems of Nigeria aggressively implies imminent danger to the bodies and souls of Nigerian Christians.

An expected external challenge to the implementation of CST in Nigeria should be from the Muslim population. However, this should not deter one from action. The existence of Sharia law in Northern Nigeria, Islamic banking, and other forms of privileges reveal that the Nigerian Muslim elite already enjoy more benefits than Christians in Nigeria. A significant problem, which needs to be addressed, is the valid fear of Islamizing Southern Nigeria and the radical persecution of Christians in Northern Nigeria. Engendering CST principles seeks to question Nigeria's unjust political structure, which places more power in the North. Wherefore it might be seen as a direct attack on the Northern political structure. This does not in any way mitigate the urgency or validity of social justice in Nigeria. Justice as a principle of social justice recognizes the human freedom of religion, and as such demands the same be accorded to all, whether Muslims or Christians.

Finally, the greatest challenge to pragmatic CST implementation in Nigeria is expected to come from foreign interference, because this might threaten their economic interests. However, for the gospel message to be advanced, Christians ought not to avoid being offensive or fear persecution. The Nigerian Church should not shy from active political support of ideas and principles that advance the cause of poor people, even if it offends international organizations. The important principle is that such a support is rooted not just in the scripture and the Magisterium but obviously serves the interest of humanity irrespective of religious affiliations or otherwise.

Conclusion

Applying the key principles of catholic social teaching in Nigeria promises a practical and effective path towards integral sustainability. CST principles like the inherent dignity of every life, solidarity, subsidiarity, environmental protection, just wage, and fundamental option for the poor are manifestly lacking in Nigeria today. Though the Catholic Church has been at the forefront of the call for social justice, current data indicate the need for a more aggressive approach to avert the possibilities of civil war or complete economic collapse that lies on the horizon. The Church in Nigeria should be more intentional and aggressive in addressing issues of social justice. There

should be constant Episcopal condemnations on issues such as the recently passed electoral act by the legislature and speedily signed into law by President Ahmed Tinubu (Adeyemi et al, 2026). This is the most recent electoral act signed by the Federal government, which contains several controversial issues, such as allowing for the manual collation and transmission of electoral results, allowing for imposing or consensus candidates by political parties, and was hastily passed by the legislature without proper public consultation and despite significant criticism from activists. Others include state tribalism, tax laws, stifling of opposition, increasing poverty, failure of public institutions, unemployment, and emigration of young professionals. These condemnations should not be limited to communiqués collectively issued after plenary assemblies on specific occasions. Following the steps of Oscar Romero and Gustavo Gutierrez, social justice remains the most urgent challenge that faces the Nigerian Catholic bishops, priests, theologians, and indeed all Christians of today, and it sincerely calls for immediate action.

References

- Abalogu, D. M., & Nwokedi, G. O. (2024). Contemporary Trends of youth empowerment and employment in Nigerian society: A Socio-Christian perspective. *Journal of Religion and Human Relations (JORAHR)*, 15(1), 172-190.
- Adebanjo, S., Banchani, E., Mishiwo, S. H., & Sanusi, I. (2024). Determinants of workers' new minimum wage in Nigeria: Incorporating Nigeria's current economic situation. *Sri Lankan Journal of Applied Statistics*, 25(2).
- Adeyemi, A., Olubukola, F., Bisi, O., Fadekemi, N., & Peter, A. (2026). Legislative Contingency and Electoral Transparency in Nigeria: Media Framing, The Electronic Transmission Provision, and Public Trust under the Electoral Act 2026. *Impact International Journals and Publications*, 2(1), 1609-1623.
- Agbo, H. C., Odibo, S. M., Atu, C. O., & Odeh, E. E. (2025). Illiberal Democracy and Civil Disobedience in Nigeria: The Resurgence of Civil Protest in Nigeria, 2020-2025. *South East Journal of Political Science*, 11(1).
- Anthony, I. (2025). Re-imagining ecumenical theology in Africa: Toward promoting the African Union Agenda 2063. *Journal of religious & Theological information*, 24(3), 110-132.
- Bakare, K. N., Usman, M., Mohammed-Yinusa, N. F., Ugwunze, G. O., & Madu, D. Y. (2026). Internal party democracy and democratic norm-setting in West Africa: A comparative analysis of Nigeria's PDP and Ghana's NDC, 2011–2025. *African Research Reports*, 2(4), 341-350.
- Benedict XVI. (2009). *Encyclical letter Caritas in veritate of the Supreme Pontiff Benedict XVI*: Available at: https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html Accessed: (27 February 2026).
- Catholic Church (2000), *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (2nd ed). Available at: <https://dn790005.ca.archive.org/0/items/catechismofthecatholicchurch/Catechism%20of%20the%20Catholic%20Church%20-%20USCCB.pdf> Accessed (23rd March 2026).
- Chioke, S. C., Umunna, B. I., Okeke, Q. C., Mbamalu, K. U., & Udeoba, C. E. (2025). The APC change mantra and governance challenges in Nigeria: A change on the contrary. *SN Social Sciences*, 5(3), 28.
- Confavreux, J. (2022). Decolonial anxieties in a postcolonial world: An interview with Achille Mbembe. *Postcolonial Studies*, 25(1), 128-135.

- Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith. (2024). *Declaration “Dignitasinfinita” on human dignity*. Available at: https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_dof_doc_20240402_dignitas-infinita_en.html (Accessed: 24 February 2026).
- Elekwachi, W., Nwankwoala Hycienth, O., Ocheje Johnmark, F., & Onyishi, C. J. (2019). Oil spill incidents and wetland loss in the Niger Delta: Implications for Sustainable Development Goals. *International Journal of Environment and Pollution Research*, 7(1), 1-20.
- Etobe, E. I., Ojong-Ejoh, M. U., Okpa, J. T., Enweonwu, O. A., Onyejebu, D. C., John-Okpa, P. A., ... & Igwe, I. (2025). Religious fanaticism and its impact on the socioeconomic development of Nigeria. *African Journal of Religion, Philosophy and Culture*, 6(2), 177.
- Ezekiel, F. N. (2025). Pathways to Harmony: Bridging Nigeria's Intercultural & Interreligious Divides (A case study of Christian genocide in Nigeria). *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)*, 9(11) 17-26.
- Fanon, F. (2004) *The Wretched of the Earth*, (R. Philcox, trans), Grove Press, New York, 88.
- Forster, D. A. (2025). Un-Thinking the West? On African Christianities and the Future of Global Public Theology. *SvenskTeologiskKvartalskrift*, 101(4), 363-373.
- Francis (2013), *Evangelii Gaudium*, Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel. Vatican Press, Rome, 53.
- Francis. (2015). *Laudato si’: On the care for our common home*. Available at: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html Accessed (24 February 2026).
- Grenier, M. (2023). The Theological Transformation of Original Sin: Theology a la Gutierrez. *International Journal*, 10(1), 54-65.
- Harwanto, B., & Edgar, T. (2025). Liberation Theology Perspective toward Political Involvement of the Church: A Theological Evaluation. *Jurnal Koinonia: Fakultas Filsafat Universitas Advent Indonesia*, 17(2), 48-58.
- Isiani, M. C., Anthonia Obi-Ani, N., Obi-Ani, P., Chidume, C. G., & Okoye-Ugwu, S. (2021). Interrogating the International Monetary Fund (IMF) policies in Nigeria, 1986–2018. *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, 8(1), 23-30.
- Igboin, B. O. (2025). The Future of the Study of Religions in Africa: Decolonial-Pluriversal Directions. *Utambuzi: Journal for the Study of the Religions of Africa and its Diaspora*, 8(1), 9-20.
- Ilo, S. C. (2021). Exploring the possible contributions of the African palaver towards a participatory Synodal Church. *Exchange*, 50(3-4), 209-237.
- James, O., & Akyar, S. (2025). Regional Autonomy in Nigeria: Influence on Dynamics of Governance and National Integration. *Social Sciences*, 14(9), 565.
- Joseph, A. O., Callistus, O., & Princewill, A. U. (2026). Industrialization and Economic Growth in Nigeria. *International Journal of Integrative Research*, 4(1), 987-1004.
- John Paul II. (1991). *Centesimusannus*. Available at: https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus.html Accessed (24 February 2026)
- John Paul II. (1981). *Laborem exercens* [Encyclical Letter]. Available at: https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html accessed (24 February 2026)
- John Paul II. (1987). *Sollicitudo rei socialis* [On social concern]. Available at: https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html Accessed (24 February 2026)
- Kanu, I. A. (2025). “Metaphysics of Business: Core Concepts and Organizational Identity”. In Kanu, Ikechukwu A.; Adidi T. D; Kanu, C. C., & Isanbor, P. O. (Eds). *Philosophy of*

- Entrepreneurship: Intersections and Insights* (pp. 96-111). Abuja: Veritas University Press. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.31535.85925
- Kanu, I. A. (2025). "The Intersection of Philosophy and Entrepreneurship." In Kanu, Ikechukwu A.; Adidi T. D; Kanu, C. C., & Isanbor, P. O. (Eds). *Philosophy of Entrepreneurship: Intersections and Insights* (pp. 1-16). Abuja: Veritas University Press. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.22308.39045
- Kanu, I. A. (2025). "Igwebuikpreneurship: Towards an African Social Capital Model." In Kanu, Ikechukwu A.; Adidi T. D; Kanu, C. C., & Okpokwasili, O. A. (Eds). *Ethics, Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Development: Converging Perspectives and Insights* (pp. 126-140). Abuja: Veritas University Press. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.31535.85925
- Leo XIII. (1891). *Rerumnovarum*; on Capital and Labor. Available at: https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html Accessed (27 February 2026),
- Martins, A. (2020). Reimagining equity: redressing power imbalances between the global North and the global South. *Gender & Development*, 28(1), 135-153.
- McIntosh, E., & Ranawana, A. M. (2024). Silence is Complicity: Theological Failure in the Face of Genocide. *International Journal of Public Theology*, 18(4), 463-487.
- Masoga, M. A. (2025). Black Theology and Africa: Liberation, justice and the African context-special issue. *HTS Theological Studies*, 81(1), 1-2.
- Musa, A. A., Awudu, A. D., & Elijah, E. (2025). Neo-Colonialism and Dependent Development in African Countries: A Critical Analysis of Nigeria's Neo-Colonial Status. *Kashere Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 3(1), 283-295.
- National Security Council. (1974, April 24). *Implications of worldwide population growth for U.S. security and overseas interests* (National Security Study Memorandum No. 200). *Nixon Presidential Library and Museum*. Available at: www.nixonlibrary.gov. Accessed (20 March 2026)
- Odei, M. A., Popoola, T. O. E., Ajewole, E. S., & Dada, J. (2025). Reimagining theological education for the modern world: Roles, challenges, and prospects. *GAS Journal of Education and Literature (GASJEL)*, 2(3), 35-41.
- Ogbonna, M. (2025). The Nigerian civil war and the question of genocide. *Nigerian journal of arts and humanities (NJAHA)*, 5(2).
- Ogele, E. P. (2025). The Hegemon's Role: Nigeria's Foreign Policy and Its Impact on West African Regional Security and Cooperation. *International Journal Pedagogy of Social Studies*, 10(1), 43-56.
- Okolie, A. M., Enyiazu, C., & Nnamani, K. E. (2021). Campaign propaganda, electoral outcome, and the dynamics of governance in the post-2015 presidential election in Nigeria. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 7(1), 1922180.
- Okonkwo, P. I. (2025). Building A Just Society: Integrating Catholic Social Teaching (CST) Into Nigerian Government Public Policies to Combat Corruption. *Ajap-Amamihe Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 23(4), 43-51.
- Okoye, J. C. (2024). *Understanding the Synod on Synodality, 2023 Session: A Community of Mutual Empowerment*. Wipf and Stock Publishers.
- Omenukwa, P. C., Meaning in Wittgenstein's Philosophy: Implications for Nigeria National Narrative, Abuja, Veritas University Press, 2025, 51.
- Omotola, J. S., & Abayomi, K. Q. (2025). It's Just 16, Not 60: Explaining the Rise and Fall of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in Nigeria. *The African Review*, 1(aop), 1-22.
- Open Doors (2026) World Watch List 2026; where following Jesus costs the most. Available at: <https://www.opendoorsus.org/en-US/getinvolved/resources/wwl-booklets/2026-wwl-booklet-digital> Accessed (23 March 2026), 15.

- Owen, O., & Usman, Z. (2015). Briefing: Why Goodluck Jonathan lost the Nigerian presidential election of 2015. *African Affairs*, 114(456), 455-471.
- Ozden, K., & Onapajo, H. (2019). Fighting the scourge from abroad: anti-corruption war in Nigeria's foreign policy under the Buhari Administration, 2015 to 2019. *African Renaissance*, 16(4), 157.
- Pius XI. (1931). *Quadragesimo anno*: On reconstruction of the social order. Available at: https://www.vatican.va/content/pius-xi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xi_enc_19310515_quadragesimo-anno.html Accessed (24 February 2026).
- Sachs, J.D., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., & Iablonovski, G. (2025). Sustainable Development Report, 2025; Financing Sustainable development to 2030 and mid-century, Dublin University Press, Dublin,
- Second Vatican Council (1965). Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: *Gaudium et Spes*. Pauline Books & Media, London. Accessed (24 February 2026)
- Turner, C. (2025). Decolonization and the Inward Journey: Theological Reflections from the African Caribbean. *The Ecumenical Review*, 77(1-2), 76-87.
- Zembylas, M. (2025). Rethinking the decolonization of higher education through political theology: Enrique Dussel's liberation theology and pedagogy. *Critical Studies in Education*, 3(2), 1-20.