



Catholic Praxis: SYNERGY 2026 CONFERENCE

November 3 – 5, 2026 | Toronto, ON



Synergy Toronto 2026 Conference *Call for Proposals*

CATHOLIC PRAXIS OVERVIEW

Rooted in the principles of Catholic Social Teaching such as, the value of human dignity, the common good, solidarity, subsidiarity, and a preferential option for those experiencing poverty or marginalization, the 2026 Synergy Conference brings together practitioners, researchers, faith-based leaders, community organizations, educators, and people with direct experience, from Catholic Community Services, Health and Education, to explore how Catholic Social Teaching can be applied meaningfully and creatively across diverse sectors and social challenges. This year's theme invites us to reflect deeply on how these values are lived out in concrete form. In a time marked by growing inequality, social fragmentation, and rising vulnerabilities, the conference seeks to illuminate pathways toward hope, justice, and integral human development.

INTRODUCTION

We invite practitioners, educators, researchers, community leaders, and innovators across both the Catholic and broader communities—including those in health, education, community services, as well as clergy and pastoral leaders—to share their insights, research, and lived experience at our upcoming conference on **Catholic Social Teaching (CST) in Practice**. This event is an opportunity to showcase meaningful work that advances human dignity, promotes justice, and strengthens the common good across diverse settings and communities.

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) is a set of universal moral principles developed and used by the Catholic Church to guide how individuals, communities, and societies relate to one another. It affirms the inherent dignity of every person, the importance of community and solidarity, and our shared responsibility to protect the poor and vulnerable. CST also promotes the common good, just working conditions, and care for the environment. Even for non-Catholics, these principles offer a broad ethical framework for building a more just and compassionate society.

Whether you work in hospitals, schools, colleges, universities, shelters, clinics, community agencies, or parish-based ministries, your voice and experience are essential to shaping a deeper, shared understanding of how CST comes alive across sectors.

OVERARCHING THEME: Catholic Social Teaching in Practice

We welcome proposals that illustrate how CST values—**human dignity, solidarity, subsidiarity, the common good, integral ecology, and preferential care for the vulnerable**—can transform both systems and daily practice.

SUB-THEMES

Proposals may explore one or more of the following dimensions:

- **Collaboration across sectors and communities**

How partnerships among health care, education, parishes, nonprofits, academia, government, and grassroots groups amplify impact.

- **Shared values in diverse contexts**

How Catholic Social Teaching intersects with cultural, indigenous, spiritual, and ethical frameworks.

- **Challenges facing vulnerable populations**

Innovative responses to urgent needs—especially for seniors, women facing violence, newcomers, youth, people with disabilities, migrant rights, Indigenous community supports and those navigating poverty or trauma.

- **Best practices and innovative models**

Highlighting effective programs, community initiatives, research models, or faith-based interventions.

We encourage creative interpretations that reflect your expertise—clinical care, counselling, public health, nutrition, disability services, education leadership, chaplaincy, research, or community development.

WORKING FOCUS AREAS

Submissions connected to the following areas are particularly encouraged:

- **Hunger and food security**

Sustainable responses to hunger, access to nutritious food, community food programs, and rights-based food initiatives. *Examples: School nutrition programs, community food hubs, food justice models, or clinical nutrition initiatives.*

- **Housing and homelessness**

Strategies for affordable housing, emergency shelter supports, and housing justice rooted in dignity and human rights. *Examples: Educational support for unhoused students, health outreach, shelter-based interventions, or systemic advocacy.*

- **People with disabilities**

Inclusive practices, accessibility, disability justice, and models that uphold full participation. *Examples: Accessibility in schools, inclusive health care, assistive technologies, and disability justice frameworks.*

- **Mental health and wellness**

Trauma-informed approaches, spiritual care, community supports, and holistic models of healing. *Examples: Trauma-informed care, school mental health strategies, spiritual accompaniment, community healing models.*

- **Intersectionality of poverty and injustice**

Exploring how overlapping barriers shape lived experiences, social, health and educational outcomes.

- **Integral human development**

Holistic approaches that consider the emotional, physical, social, spiritual, and economic well-being of each person.

- **Advocacy**

Empowering voices for systemic change, policy influence, and justice campaigns grounded in Catholic Social Teaching. *Examples: Policy initiatives, justice campaigns, and community organizing rooted in CST.*

PRESENTATION CATEGORIES

Papers

20-minute presentation + 10-minute Q\&A (30 minutes total). Papers may present original research, case studies, program evaluations, or conceptual frameworks.

Posters

Posters highlighting practice experiences, community programs, theories, or research findings. Presenters engage with attendees during scheduled poster sessions.

Panels

90-minute sessions organized around a shared theme. A lead presenter coordinates 3–4 speakers and facilitates discussion.

Conversation Circles

Highly interactive 90-minute sessions featuring short presentations followed by participant dialogue. Circles emphasize collaborative learning and collective reflection.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Each proposal must include:

- **Presenter Information:**

Full name, position/title, organization, mailing address, phone number, and email. Please indicate the lead presenter if applicable.

- **Abstract:**

- Papers or Posters: *250-word limit*
- Panels: *500-word limit* (including individual presentation summaries)
- Conversation Circles: *500-word limit*, outlining the topic, questions to be explored, rationale for the format, and proposed engagement strategies.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be assessed based on:

- Relevance to the conference theme, sub-themes, or focus areas
- Clarity of purpose, methods, and theoretical/practice frameworks
- Contribution to advancing Catholic Social Teaching in practice
- Integration of community partnerships, lived experience, or intersectoral collaboration
- Originality, significance, and potential impact on policy, practice, education, or service delivery

IMPORTANT DATES

- **Proposal submission deadline: July 31, 2026**
- **Notification of decisions: August 31, 2026**

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US!

This conference seeks to create a space of dialogue, collaboration, and hope — grounded in Catholic Social Teaching and committed to the flourishing of every person and community. **We welcome proposals from all backgrounds and sectors, and especially from those working directly with marginalized communities.**