

# Foundations of Justice: A Scoping Review of Catholic Social Teaching in Formation and Practice

Juliana Syengo

Tangaza University, Kenya

## Article History

Received: 2026-03-17

Revised: 2026-07-19

Accepted: 2026-08-03

Published: 2026-08-08

## Keywords

Education

Curriculum design

Service-learning

Theology

## How to cite:

Syengo, J. (2026). Foundations of Justice: A Scoping Review of Catholic Social Teaching in Formation and Practice. *Research Journal of Education, Teaching and Curriculum Studies*, 4(1), 211-229.

## Abstract

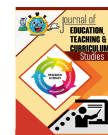
This scoping review maps how Catholic Social Teaching (CST) has been conceptualised, taught, and applied as an introductory, foundational discipline within theological, pastoral, and social-transformation formation. Following PRISMA-ScR guidance and the Arksey and O'Malley framework as refined by Levac and colleagues, a search of five databases on 8 July 2026 identified 391 records; 51 underwent full-text screening, and 14 met the inclusion criteria, with 37 excluded primarily for engaging CST's doctrinal content without addressing how it is taught, curricularised, or applied pedagogically. Inclusion instead required explicit engagement with CST's pedagogical application, formation methodology, or empirical student outcomes. Included sources span Catholic formation contexts in the United States, Nigeria, Hungary, Poland, Kenya, the Philippines, and East Africa, and comprise peer-reviewed articles, a dissertation, and a course guide. Thematic synthesis against six anticipated clusters yielded six findings of markedly varying strength: curriculum design and institutional embedding (13 of 14 sources); core principles and their pedagogical framing (12); regional and institutional variation (12); integration with practical theology, service-learning, and advocacy formation (11); key encyclicals and documents (11); and, weaker than the rest, reception and comprehension among learners (5). Introduction to CST emerges as widely and formally embedded and richly documented in curricular design and content selection, but thinly evidenced in what learners actually understand, retain, or subsequently act upon. A conceptual account of the discipline as canonically mandated, curricularly embedded, and locally adapted is proposed, foregrounding curriculum design as the field's evidentiary strength and learner reception as its central weakness, alongside gaps including scarce measurement of comprehension, no controlled or comparative evaluation designs, weak longitudinal evidence, and continuing Anglophone concentration. Screening and eligibility decisions were made by a single reviewer, without independent duplicate screening, a limitation borne in mind throughout.

Copyright © 2026



## Introduction

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) constitutes the Church's formal body of doctrine addressing human dignity, the common good, subsidiarity, solidarity, the preferential option for the poor, and the dignity of work, developed through papal encyclicals, conciliar documents, and episcopal statements since *Rerum Novarum* (1891). As an introductory field of study, it provides the foundation on which later pastoral, spiritual, and community-based social-transformation work is built, functioning as a gateway discipline that translates abstract theological and ethical principles into frameworks capable of informing pastoral practice, advocacy, education, and community organising.



Historically, the transmission of Catholic Social Teaching within formation has been debated along two axes: whether it is best delivered as systematic doctrinal content to be mastered, or cultivated as a practical orientation formed through experience, reflection, and service. Institutional practice has increasingly embedded CST within canon law and university legislative instruments governing seminary, university, and lay-formation, translating doctrine into locally adapted pedagogical structures across a range of settings. This has occurred alongside a broader, global expansion of lay ecclesial formation and service-learning programmes within Catholic higher education, extending CST's reach well beyond seminary walls. How this translation from doctrine into pedagogical practice has actually been documented and structured across the literature, however, remains unmapped.

Despite this breadth, the literature on how CST is introduced and taught as a pedagogical and curricular discipline, distinct from its doctrinal content in itself remains fragmented across practical theology, missiology, canon law, religious education, and service-learning scholarship. This review is accordingly concerned with the pedagogical delivery and curricular framing of introductory CST courses: how the discipline is taught, sequenced, and structured for learners, rather than with the theological or doctrinal analysis of the encyclicals and magisterial texts that constitute its content. Despite CST's centrality to Catholic identity and mission, no comprehensive scoping review of how it is introduced, taught, and applied as a foundational course of study appears to have been undertaken, leaving open questions about pedagogy, comprehension, and practical application. This review responds by mapping systematically how CST has been conceptualised, taught, and applied as an introductory discipline across the relevant literature.

The review is guided by one general question: How has Introduction to Catholic Social Teaching been understood, taught, and applied as a foundational discipline within theological and pastoral formation programmes? Specifically, it aims to (1) identify and compare the definitions and framings used to introduce CST within formation curricula; (2) map the principles, documents, and encyclicals most commonly taught in introductory courses; (3) examine the pedagogical approaches used to teach CST in seminary, university, and lay-formation settings; (4) map available evidence on how foundational CST formation is associated with, or reported to inform, later justice, advocacy, and pastoral engagement; and (5) identify gaps in research on the teaching and reception of CST as an introductory discipline. Unlike the first four, this fifth objective is addressed cumulatively across the evidence base in the Discussion and Research Gaps sections rather than coded per source (see the note to Appendix A).

### **Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

Eight frameworks were identified a priori during protocol development and applied as the conceptual lens for the search and synthesis; the extent to which each was substantiated, elaborated, or thinly engaged is reported below rather than here. Practical theology and curriculum theory are treated here as a single combined framework rather than as two, because no included source engaged one without explicit reference to the other: curricular structure was consistently operationalised through a practical-theological method, and vice versa (e.g., DeMarais, 2022; Nnorom, 2020; Ratliff & Chanderbhan, 2021). These eight a priori frameworks are analytically distinct from the six thematic clusters used to organise the Findings below: several frameworks (the four cardinal principles, the preferential option for the poor, and integral human development) converge on a single core principles cluster, while two clusters (curriculum design and institutional embedding; regional and institutional variation) describe structural and geographical patterns that cut across, rather than derive from, any single a priori framework. This mapping is referenced again where the six clusters are first introduced in the findings.

The *four cardinal principles* human dignity, the common good, subsidiarity, and solidarity provide the doctrinal architecture around which introductory curricula are most consistently organised, explicit in Mwanja's (2026) integral pedagogy of sustainability and in Kovács's (2020) account of Christian Social Ethics teaching across Hungary's Catholic theological colleges; Aton et al. (2026) and Ujházi (2026) organise their curricular and canonical arguments around the same cluster. The *preferential option for the*



poor functions in several sources as the organising principle for introductory pedagogy specifically rather than one principle among several: Zaker (2020) traces it through *Justice in the World* (1971), *Economic Justice for All* (1986), and *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013) to propose a pedagogy of practising proximity at the peripheries, while Abraham (2023) and Ratliff and Chanderbhan (2021) ground their immersion and youth theology curricula in it.

*Natural law theory*, rooted in the Thomistic and Aristotelian tradition, situates CST within the wider Catholic intellectual tradition: Brungardt's (2024) course guide organises a semester around Aquinas's *Treatise on Law* and Aristotle's *Politics* before the papal-economic tradition, and Ratliff and Chanderbhan (2021) report a Thomistic natural-rights account of dignity underpinning introductory instruction. *Integral human development*, articulated through *Populorum Progressio* and elaborated in *Caritas in Veritate*, orients formation towards the whole person and community rather than narrow doctrinal transmission (DeMarais, 2022; Mwanja, 2026). *Practical theology and curriculum theory* jointly provide the methodological framework through which doctrine becomes structured formation practice. DeMarais (2022) adapts Tracy's revisionist model and Lonergan's four-step method for East African women religious (i.e., women belonging to Catholic religious institutes, such as sisters and nuns, who have taken vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience). Nnorom (2020) proposes restructuring seminary curricula around Holland and Henriot's pastoral cycle. Zaker (2020) draws on Foley's orthodoxy-orthopraxis-orthokardia framework. Ratliff and Chanderbhan (2021) structure a week-long programme around the Pastoral Circle.

*Liberation theology's* emphasis on contextual, theology-from-below pedagogy finds direct but limited engagement: Nnorom (2020) draws on Freire's problem-posing education to take seminarians' own experience, including of urban poverty in Enugu, as the starting point for theological reflection. *Laudato Si'* (2015) functions across multiple sources as both a core curricular text and a framework extending CST into *ecological ethics* (Aton et al., 2026; DeMarais, 2022; Mwanja, 2026; Nygard, 2023). Finally, *personalism*, as developed by Maritain and Wojtyła, was identified a priori given its historical influence on CST's account of dignity; the extent of its engagement is reported below.

## **Methodology**

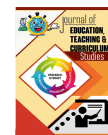
This section sets out how the review was conducted, in three parts: the research design adopted and the rationale for a scoping, rather than systematic, approach; the search strategy, database selection, and record screening and selection procedures; and the approach taken to data extraction, thematic synthesis, and quality appraisal.

### **Research Design**

A systematic scoping review design was adopted to synthesize empirical, conceptual, and practice-based evidence on Introduction to CST as a foundational discipline, given a literature spanning practical theology, canon law, religious education, service-learning scholarship, and missiology. A scoping design was selected over a systematic review because the objective was to chart the range and nature of available evidence rather than to answer a narrow empirical question; scoping reviews suit conceptually diverse fields where definitional variability is high (Peters et al., 2020). The review followed PRISMA-ScR (Tricco et al., 2018) and the framework of Arksey and O'Malley (2005) as refined by Levac et al. (2010). The protocol was not prospectively registered; this is noted as a limitation below and addressed, in its absence, through transparent reporting of the search strategy, eligibility criteria, and screening log described here.

### **Search Strategy and Selection**

Two Boolean strings were developed. The first combined ("Catholic social teaching" OR "Catholic social doctrine" OR "social encyclicals") AND ("introduction to" OR curriculum OR pedagogy OR teaching OR formation) AND (seminary OR theology OR "pastoral formation" OR "lay-formation" OR university). The second combined ("Catholic social teaching" OR "Rerum Novarum" OR "Laudato Si'" OR "Populorum Progressio") AND ("theological education" OR "pastoral studies" OR catechesis OR

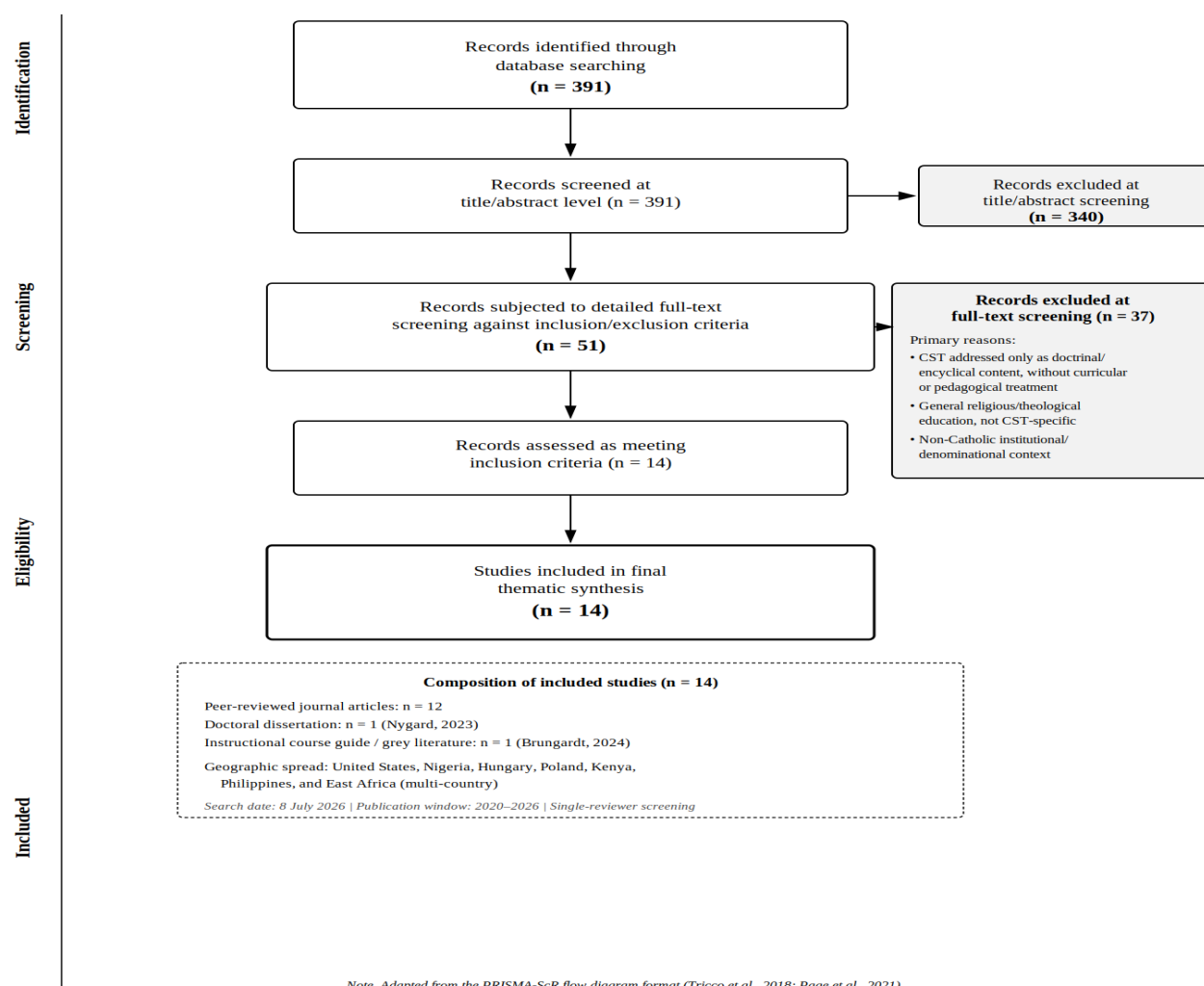


"religious education") AND ("course design" OR "learning outcomes" OR pedagogy). Both were adapted to each database's field-tag syntax while preserving the same Boolean logic.

An initial search was conducted in March 2026 and re-run on 8 July 2026 to capture newly published sources, including three carrying 2026 publication dates (Aton et al., 2026; Mwanja, 2026; Ujházi, 2026); full-text screening and synthesis were conducted between March and July 2026. Five databases were searched: ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials (n = 142), Scopus (n = 98), Web of Science Core Collection (n = 76), ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global (n = 51), and ERIC (n = 24), giving 391 records before de-duplication. Literature was included if it addressed the teaching, content, curricular design, or pedagogical approach to introducing CST within seminary, university, catechetical, or lay-formation settings, and was published between 2020 and 2026; both conceptual and empirical work was eligible. Literature was excluded where CST was discussed purely as doctrinal or encyclical content without reference to its teaching or curricular application, where publication fell outside the date window, or where full-text was not retrievable.

Following title and abstract screening, 51 records underwent detailed full-text screening, with individualised, reasoned decisions and thematic-cluster mapping recorded for each in a structured screening and extraction log; records were de-duplicated in EndNote 21 and decisions tracked in a spreadsheet supporting the audit trail. Of the 51, 14 met the inclusion criteria; the remaining 37 were excluded predominantly because CST was addressed only as doctrinal or encyclical content, because the source concerned general religious or theological education without a CST-specific focus, or because the institutional context was non-Catholic. Figure 1 reports exclusion reasons at the full-text stage rather than only the aggregate excluded count.

Figure 1: PRISMA-ScR Flow Diagram of the Identification, Screening, Eligibility, and Inclusion Process

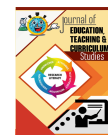


Note. Search date: 8 July 2026; records published 2020–2026; total records identified: n = 391; full texts screened: n = 51; sources included: n = 14; excluded at full-text: n = 37.

### Data Extraction, Synthesis, and Appraisal

Extraction used a standardised framework capturing author and year, institutional and geographical context, methodology and sample, engagement with each specific objective, thematic-cluster mapping, and identified limitations (Table 1; Appendices A and B). Given heterogeneity of design, institutional-type, and disciplinary context, meta-analysis was inappropriate; thematic synthesis followed Thomas and Harden (2008), with line-by-line inductive coding of all 14 sources, iterative grouping of descriptive codes against the six anticipated clusters, and interpretation into the six findings reported below, following the mapping between the eight a priori conceptual frameworks and the six thematic clusters set out above. The six thematic clusters are content-based synthesis categories describing what the literature covers and are conceptually distinct from the four specific objectives (SO1–SO4) coded per source in Appendix A the fifth, cumulative objective is addressed separately, as noted above so a single source may, for example, be coded against specific objective 2 while contributing evidence to several thematic clusters at once.

Quality appraisal was pragmatic and interpretive, suited to a sample spanning a doctoral dissertation, empirical qualitative studies, conceptual and doctrinal-policy essays, a practitioner programme

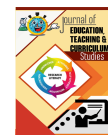


description incorporating external evaluation findings, and one instructional course guide. The audit trail and exclusion logging described above serve the transparency requirements common to both systematic and scoping methodologies (Tricco et al., 2018); the appraisal approach that follows is, by contrast, deliberately scoping-review-consistent rather than systematic-review-consistent, prioritising breadth of mapping over uniform methodological grading. No single standardised instrument was applied, because the criteria of such instruments are not uniformly applicable across these source types. Sources were assessed for clarity of purpose, methodological appropriateness, transparency, credibility, and relevance, with conceptual essays additionally assessed for analytical depth and engagement with primary magisterial and canonical sources. Quality informed the weighting of evidence but did not determine exclusion.

Two caveats are noted and revisited under limitations. First, the inclusion of Brungardt's (2024) internal course guide alongside peer-reviewed articles and a doctoral dissertation introduces heterogeneity in evidentiary standing; it was retained because it satisfies the inclusion criteria on curricular grounds and provides syllabus-level detail unavailable in any peer-reviewed source in the sample, but its findings should be weighted as a single-instructor, non-peer-reviewed account. Second, screening was conducted without an independent second reviewer, which may introduce selection bias.

### **Findings**

Across seminary, university, and lay-formation settings the literature converges on CST as a formally embedded, curricularly structured discipline that institutions actively translate into concrete pedagogical practice, rather than doctrine transmitted in the abstract. Some studies organise their argument around named CST principles (Mwania, 2026; Zaker, 2020); others describe equivalent dynamics as Catholic political philosophy (Brungardt, 2024) or Christian Social Ethics (Kovács, 2020). Six themes, corresponding to the anticipated clusters, are presented below and summarised against those clusters in Appendix B. These six clusters are not in one-to-one correspondence with the eight a priori conceptual frameworks: several frameworks converge on shared clusters, and two clusters describe structural, rather than conceptual, patterns, as explained in the Theoretical and Conceptual Framework above.



*Table 1: Characteristics of Included Studies (n = 14)*

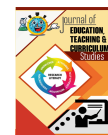
| Author (Year)                | Country/Region                | Source type and design                                  | Context/discipline                               |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Adarlo (2020)                | Philippines                   | Journal article; multi-sited ethnography                | Catholic university service-learning (two sites) |
| Gogolik (2020)               | Poland                        | Journal article; doctrinal-policy analysis              | Religion-teacher and catechist formation         |
| Kovács (2020)                | Hungary                       | Journal article; disciplinary report                    | National theological higher education            |
| Nnorom (2020)                | Nigeria                       | Journal article; conceptual-programmatic                | Spiritan seminary curricular reform              |
| Sokol et al. (2021)          | United States                 | Journal article; conceptual practitioner                | Jesuit university core and co-curriculum         |
| Zaker (2020)                 | United States                 | Journal article; practitioner-reflective                | Catholic seminary field education                |
| Ratliff & Chanderbhan (2021) | United States                 | Journal article; programme description                  | Jesuit high-school theology institute            |
| DeMarais (2022)              | East Africa (six countries)   | Journal article; programme description with evaluation  | Continuing formation for women religious         |
| Abraham (2023)               | United States / Mexico        | Journal article; framework with small qualitative study | Benedictine seminary immersion curriculum        |
| Nygard (2023)                | United States                 | Doctoral dissertation; quasi-experimental               | Mandatory undergraduate CST course               |
| Brungardt (2024)             | United States                 | Course guide; instructional grey literature             | Undergraduate Catholic political philosophy      |
| Aton et al. (2026)           | Philippines                   | Journal article; conceptual-theoretic                   | Catholic secondary and university theology       |
| Mwania (2026)                | Kenya                         | Journal article; conceptual-analytical                  | Catholic university service-learning             |
| Ujházi (2026)                | International (Hungary-based) | Journal article; canon law analysis                     | Catholic and ecclesiastical universities         |

*Note.* Studies are listed chronologically, as reported in the original sources. Each study's aim, CST framing, key findings, and limitations appear in Appendix C.

### **Curriculum Design and Institutional Embedding**

The most pervasive finding, in 13 of the 14 sources, is that Introduction to CST is formally and structurally embedded within seminary, university, and catechetical curricula rather than left to incidental or elective coverage. At the level of canonical mandate, Gogolik (2020) documents CST as a required subject under *Veritatis Gaudium* and the *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* for both seminary and lay-catechist formation in Poland, with minimum instructional-hour thresholds attached to lay qualification pathways. Ujházi (2026) similarly traces the canonical requirement (c. 811 §2) that CST-relevant questions be taught across every discipline at a Catholic university. Kovács (2020), in turn, confirms that Christian Social Ethics is taught as a distinct subject at all of Hungary's Catholic tertiary theological institutions.

At the level of course design, Brungardt (2024) provides the most granular single-course artefact, a three-part syllabus sequencing Aquinas and Aristotle before an extensive papal-economics reading roster, while Zaker (2020) and Ratliff and Chanderbhan (2021) structure entire formation sequences around CST content, respectively, across all four seminary formation pillars and a week-long immersive Pastoral Circle. Nnorom (2020) extends the theme into a Global South reform proposal, recommending that a Nigerian seminary urbanise its Social Ethics course by integrating CST with urban-planning field



immersion, while Adarlo (2020), Aton et al. (2026), Mwanja (2026), and Sokol et al. (2021) each document CST-related coursework embedding service-learning as a credit-bearing requirement rather than an optional co-curricular addition.

### **Core Principles and Their Pedagogical Framing**

Represented across 12 sources, this theme concerns how dignity, the common good, subsidiarity, solidarity, and the preferential option for the poor are selected, sequenced, and pedagogically framed. Zaker (2020) centres the option for the poor as the organising principle of an entire seminary pedagogy; Mwanja (2026) organises an integral pedagogy of sustainability around four named principles plus integral ecology, each mapped onto a specific curricular practice; and Aton et al. (2026) name dignity, solidarity, the option for the poor, and stewardship of creation as the content linked to community-based service projects. Kovács (2020) and Gogolik (2020) extend the theme into national curricular mapping, tracing dignity, solidarity, and subsidiarity from *Rerum Novarum* to *Laudato Si'* within Hungarian and Polish formation respectively, while Ujházi (2026) applies the same principles to a worked example on migration policy and Abraham (2023) frames Benedictine hospitality through CST to centre solidarity and the option for the poor in a seminary language-immersion curriculum. This is the only theme absent from both Nygard (2023), whose intervention is organised around ecological connectedness, and Adarlo (2020), whose courses invoke CST alongside general social-justice language without naming specific principles.

### **Integration with Practical Theology, Service-Learning, and Advocacy Formation**

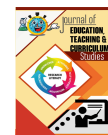
Eleven sources contribute to this theme, which concerns how introductory content is translated through structured method into practical-theological reflection, service-learning practice, and advocacy formation. DeMarais (2022) provides the most methodologically explicit account, adapting Tracy's revisionist model and Lonergan's four-step method into a structured reflection process for East African women religious. Nnorom (2020) proposes a parallel pastoral cycle and Freirean theology-from-below for a Nigerian seminary. Ratliff and Chanderbhan (2021) structure a programme around the Pastoral Circle heuristic of experience, social analysis, theological reflection, and action. Zaker (2020) integrates field education with theological reflection through Foley's framework.

Service-learning is the theme's most concretely documented mechanism, particularly across the Global South and Southeast Asian sources. Mwanja (2026) documents the Cardijn see-judge-act method structuring a full academic year of field immersion at a Kenyan university; Aton et al. (2026) extend the same tradition, via *Mater et Magistra*, into the CARES Framework for Philippine Catholic education; and Adarlo (2020) and Sokol et al. (2021) document how structured placements move students from privilege-blindness towards what Adarlo (2020) terms a critical professional identity. The theme is notably absent from Brungardt (2024), Gogolik (2020), and Kovács (2020), each of which documents curricular mandate or philosophical sequencing rather than field-based method.

### **Reception and Comprehension Among Learners**

Markedly the weakest of the six clusters, represented in only five sources, this theme confirms the gap anticipated at the outset. DeMarais (2022) provides the most substantial reception evidence in this sample, reporting findings from a programme evaluation informed in part by survey data originally collected by Mumford (2019) that found high satisfaction, increased knowledge of CST and the Sustainable Development Goals, and increased confidence and leadership skill, with graduates subsequently leading workshops reaching nearly 700 people. Adarlo (2020) contributes the only other empirically grounded reception data, documenting through interviews and reflection journals how structured critical reflection moved students from privilege-blindness towards recognising their own structural advantage.

The remaining three contributions are thinner. Abraham (2023) reports post-immersion survey responses from a convenience sample of seven students, noting the findings are not generalisable, while Mwanja (2026) and Aton et al. (2026) rely on secondary or anecdotal evidence of student transformation drawn from other authors' prior studies rather than primary data. No included source employs a



validated, purpose-built instrument to measure CST-specific comprehension or retention, and none employs a controlled or comparative design capable of isolating the effect of CST-specific instruction from that of general theological or service-learning coursework.

### **Regional and Institutional Variation**

Twelve sources contribute to this theme, documenting how Introduction to CST is introduced differently across seminaries, universities, dioceses, and world regions. The sample spans seven country-level or regional contexts (Table 1): six individually named countries the United States, Nigeria, Hungary, Poland, Kenya, and the Philippines and East Africa as a seventh, multi-country region, comprising six countries that DeMarais (2022) does not individually identify. Abraham (2023) additionally reports a United States–Mexico seminary immersion partnership; Mexico is not counted as an eighth context here because it features only as an immersion destination rather than as a primary institutional site of the introductory course examined. This range demonstrates that introductory CST teaching is not a uniform, exportable curricular package but is consistently adapted to local institutional and pastoral need. Nnorom (2020) frames curricular reform against a critique of inherited Western models in African theological institutes. DeMarais (2022) documents deliberate inculturation, including translation of CST themes into Kiswahili and comparison of students' own sociocultural contexts with first-century Galilee. Kovács (2020) situates Hungarian teaching within the legacy of communist-era suppression of theological education.

Institutional-type variation is as pronounced as geographical variation, spanning clerical seminary formation (Nnorom, 2020; Zaker, 2020), required undergraduate coursework (Brungardt, 2024; Nygard, 2023; Sokol et al., 2021), high-school and youth theology programmes (Ratliff & Chanderbhan, 2021), national systems of theological higher education (Gogolik, 2020; Kovács, 2020), and non-university continuing formation for women religious (DeMarais, 2022). The theme is comparatively absent only from Zaker (2020), whose single-institution reflective essay draws no institutional comparisons, and Ujházi (2026), whose canonical analysis addresses the universal legal architecture of Catholic higher education rather than institution-specific variation.

### **Key Encyclicals and Documents**

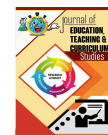
Eleven sources contribute to this theme, documenting which magisterial texts are emphasised and how they are sequenced. Ujházi (2026) provides the most extensive single roster, tracing curricular engagement from *Rerum Novarum* (1891) through *Quadragesimo Anno*, *Populorum Progressio*, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, *Gaudium et Spes*, and Pope Leo XIV's 2025 *Drawing New Maps of Hope*, while Brungardt (2024) provides comparable breadth at course level, sequencing an annotated roster from Pius IX's *Quanta Cura* through John Paul II's *Centesimus Annus* and *Evangelium Vitae* and teaching students to read such documents in historical context rather than in isolation.

*Laudato Si'* (2015) is the single most consistently cited contemporary text, functioning as a core resource in Nygard's (2023) nature-based pedagogy, Mwanias (2026) integral ecology principle, DeMarais's (2022) certificate curriculum, Ratliff and Chanderbhan's (2021) programme, and Aton et al.'s (2026) framework. *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987) is the second most consistently engaged, cited by Ratliff and Chanderbhan (2021) for its concept of structures of sin, by Nnorom (2020) as the warrant for solidarity as the Spiritan charism's organising paradigm, and by Mwanias (2026) as a source for solidarity. Gogolik (2020) and Kovács (2020) document how canonical formation documents and national-language textbooks mediate students' access to the primary magisterial corpus. The theme is absent from Abraham (2023), Adarlo (2020), and Nygard (2023) beyond its single core text, each foregrounding pedagogical method or reception data over encyclical-level content.

### **Proposed Conceptual Account**

Drawing on the six findings, the following account is proposed:

*Introduction to Catholic Social Teaching is a canonically mandated, curricularly embedded, and locally adapted formation discipline that translates the Church's core social principles human dignity, the common good,*



*subsidiarity, solidarity, and the preferential option for the poor* into structured pedagogical method, most often through experiential, service-learning, or practical-theological reflection processes, within seminary, university, and lay-formation settings across widely varying institutional and geographical contexts, such that curricular design, principle selection, and encyclical sequencing are richly and consistently documented across the literature, while the discipline's actual reception, comprehension, and long-term formational effect upon learners remain comparatively under-evidenced.

The account integrates the canonical, curricular, pedagogical, and geographical dimensions as they emerge collectively from the literature, affirming the discipline as simultaneously a formally mandated component of Catholic theological education (Gogolik, 2020; Ujházi, 2026), a body of content that institutions translate into locally adapted pedagogical structure (DeMarais, 2022; Mwanja, 2026; Nnorom, 2020), and a field whose evidentiary base is asymmetrically weighted towards description of what is taught rather than evidence of what is learned. Mwanja's (2026) integral pedagogy and DeMarais's (2022) certificate model provide granular detail but are not designed to generalise beyond their own institutional case, while Ujházi's (2026) canonical analysis documents the universal mandate without describing how it is operationalised in any classroom. What the account adds is the explicit identification of curriculum design, principle selection, and encyclical sequencing as the discipline's evidentiary strengths, and learner reception as its weakness, grounded in a systematically mapped evidence base.

## **Discussion**

The discussion below proceeds thematically, considering in turn curriculum design and canonical mandate as the field's best-evidenced dimension; service-learning as its most consistently documented pedagogical mechanism; the persistent but narrowing geographic concentration of the evidence base; the sharp boundary observed during screening between CST as doctrine and CST as taught discipline; the weak evidence on learner reception, comprehension, and long-term impact; and the near-absence of personalist engagement among the included sources.

### ***Curriculum Design and Canonical Mandate as the Best-Evidenced Dimension***

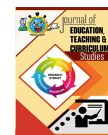
Introduction to CST is not merely a topic individual instructors choose to include but a formally, and in several jurisdictions canonically, mandated curricular component. Gogolik (2020) and Ujházi (2026) demonstrate that this mandate operates at both national-regulatory and universal-canonical levels, while Brungardt (2024), Ratliff and Chanderbhan (2021), and Zaker (2020) show how institutions translate it into granular, locally distinctive structure convergence indicating that curriculum design is genuinely the field's strongest dimension rather than an artefact of this sample.

### ***Service-Learning as the Most Consistently Documented Pedagogical Mechanism***

Adarlo (2020), Aton et al. (2026), Mwanja (2026), and Sokol et al. (2021) each document structured service-learning curricula drawing on a shared genealogy traceable to Cardijn's see-judge-act method and *Mater et Magistra*, applied across markedly different contexts, from Kenyan university sustainability projects to Philippine literacy and maternal-health immersions to a United States Jesuit university's co-curricular continuum. Service-learning therefore functions as CST pedagogy's most exportable and adaptable structural form, even as the partnerships, reflection instruments, and assessment practices attached to it vary considerably.

### ***Persistent but Narrowing Geographic Concentration***

Introduction to CST is taught across seven countries or multi-country regions and five institutional types, a breadth wider than the English-language search strategy might lead one to expect: Adarlo (2020), Aton et al. (2026), DeMarais (2022), Mwanja (2026), and Nnorom (2020) together contribute more than a third of the sample. At the same time, five of the 14 sources originate in United States contexts, and the English-language strategy likely excluded Spanish-, French-, Portuguese-, and Italian-language curricular scholarship, particularly given CST's roots in Latin America and continental Europe.



### **The Boundary Between CST as Doctrine and CST as Taught Discipline**

An unanticipated finding emerged from the screening process rather than from the included studies: the sharpness of the boundary between CST discussed as doctrinal, encyclical, or business ethics content and CST discussed as a taught, curricular discipline. Of the 37 records excluded at full-text screening, a substantial cluster concerned sophisticated work engaging CST's doctrinal content directly, including an editorial on the common good in business ethics (Schlag & Melé, 2020) and conceptual work on ecclesial synodality (Ballano, 2024), that lacked any sustained treatment of how CST is taught, sequenced, or pedagogically structured. A further recurring pattern concerned spiritual and character formation within non-Catholic, predominantly Evangelical Protestant, seminary contexts (Wang et al., 2023), confirming that the Catholic-institutional criterion, like the doctrine–pedagogy boundary itself, reflects a genuine fault line in the theological education literature rather than a screening convenience.

### **The Weakest Link: Reception, Comprehension, and Long-Term Impact**

Primary reception data appear in only two sources (Adarlo, 2020; DeMarais, 2022), secondary or small-sample evidence in three further sources (Abraham, 2023; Aton et al., 2026; Mwanja, 2026), and no reception evidence at all in the remaining nine. The discipline's sustaining logic that structured curricular exposure produces durable comprehension and subsequent justice engagement is therefore more often assumed than demonstrated. Curricular investment in CST content (Gogolik, 2020; Ujházi, 2026) has not been matched by comparable investment in assessing what students retain or subsequently do with it, a gap underscored by DeMarais's (2022) reliance on a programme evaluation that, notwithstanding its incorporation of externally collected survey data (Mumford, 2019), is reported without independent methodological detail and falls short of a validated comprehension instrument.

### **The Absence of Personalist Engagement**

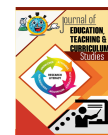
One a priori framework, personalism, was not substantiated: none of the 14 sources engages personalist philosophy explicitly or attributes its curricular arguments to Maritain or Wojtyła. This should not be read as evidence that personalist thought is absent from CST teaching more broadly; it more plausibly reflects a gap in the pedagogical literature captured by this search strategy and is noted as an avenue for future scholarship rather than a substantive finding about the field.

### **Research Gaps**

Five gaps represent priority areas for future inquiry. First, only Adarlo (2020) and DeMarais (2022) provide primary empirical evidence of learner comprehension, and neither employs a validated instrument; comparative, longitudinal, or psychometrically validated studies of what students retain about CST's core principles, as distinct from general theological or service-learning gains, are almost entirely absent. Second, although the sample spans seminary, university, high-school, and non-university lay and religious formation, no source directly compares CST teaching across two or more institutional types within a single design, precluding confident claims about whether seminary pedagogy differs systematically from lay-formation pedagogy in content or method. Third, comparable curricular case studies from Latin America, where CST has particularly deep historical and pastoral roots, and from Francophone and Lusophone Africa are entirely absent, an absence compounded by the English-language search strategy. Fourth, although Ratliff and Chanderbhan (2021) and DeMarais (2022) gesture towards downstream engagement, no source employs a longitudinal design capable of tracking graduates' justice or advocacy engagement over a multi-year period, leaving a gap between the field's formational ambition and its evaluative capacity. Fifth, with the partial exception of Nygard's (2023) quasi-experimental test of nature-based pedagogy and Aton et al.'s (2026) as-yet-untested CARES Framework, the sample contains little research designed to test alternative pedagogical approaches against one another, limiting evidence-based recommendation about which methods most effectively convey CST's core content.

### **Limitations**

Several limitations must be acknowledged. The final sample of 14 sources constrains comprehensiveness, and the six findings may not represent the full range of curricular practice across



all relevant contexts. Only English-language sources were retrieved, introducing a language bias particularly consequential given CST's institutional roots in Latin American, Francophone African, and continental European Catholic education. Screening was conducted without an independent co-reviewer. Compensating steps were taken a full audit trail and a piloted set of criteria applied consistently across all 51 full-text-screened records but these do not substitute for independent duplicate screening. A related risk is that the six clusters were defined a priori and applied by the same reviewer during both screening and coding, so the scheme may partly select for its own confirmation. The finding that all six clusters were substantiated should therefore be read as a description of what this sample contains, not as independent validation of the framework. Replication with a second coder is recommended before these patterns are treated as settled. The sample is also methodologically heterogeneous: it includes one internal, non-peer-reviewed course guide (Brungardt, 2024). As a result, several of the most curricularly detailed findings rest on single-author, single-institution accounts. Several sources report outcomes through evaluation that was internal to, or authored by staff of, the programme described (DeMarais, 2022; Ratliff & Chanderbhan, 2021; Sokol et al., 2021). This raises a risk of reporting bias that should temper confidence in the reception findings drawn from them. Finally, two sources carried a 2026 publication year at the time of the search and remain subject to post-publication correction.

## Conclusion

Introduction to CST is consistently and formally embedded within seminary, university, and lay-formation curricula, and canonically mandated in several jurisdictions. Institutions translate this mandate into locally distinctive pedagogical structures, most consistently through service-learning and practical-theological reflection, and the discipline is taught across seven countries or multi-country regions and five institutional types. Yet a consistent pattern emerges curriculum design, principal selection, and encyclical sequencing are richly documented, while evidence of what learners comprehend, retain, and subsequently act upon remains thin. This indicates a divergence between the field's curricular ambition and its evaluative rigour. Documented outcomes include gains in solidarity, cultural sensitivity, and critical professional identity, and, in the strongest single case, downstream community action reaching hundreds of beneficiaries (DeMarais, 2022). Persistent challenges include a near-absence of validated comprehension measurement, insufficient cross-institutional comparison, and weak longitudinal evidence.

For theory, the findings reinforce CST's core principles framework, natural law theory, and practical theology and curriculum theory. They also highlight the near-absence of personalist philosophy within the curricular literature captured here, despite its historical significance to CST's account of dignity; clarifying whether this reflects a genuine gap or a limitation of this search strategy is an important theoretical agenda. For practice, effective introductory formation benefits from structured, experiential method explicitly linked to CST's core principles for example, the Cardijn-derived frameworks of Aton et al. (2026) and Mwanja (2026), or the practical-theological reflection of DeMarais (2022) rather than doctrinal transmission alone. Assessment infrastructure requires strengthening, given that only two of 14 sources provide primary reception data, and comprehension should be a designed, measured outcome rather than an assumed by-product of exposure. For policy, institutions, seminaries, and episcopal conferences should continue to develop the curricular mandates documented by Gogolik (2020) and Ujházi (2026), while building accompanying assessment frameworks capable of demonstrating that mandated content is learned rather than merely delivered. They should also align investment with the Global South and comparative evaluation gaps identified here and invest in longitudinal evaluation infrastructure.

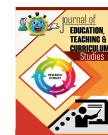


## References

- Abraham, D. B. (2023). Cultivating community through language learning in a Benedictine seminary network. *Religions*, 14(3), 299. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14030299>
- Adarlo, G. M. (2020). Service-learning as global citizenship education: Acting locally on global challenges and concerns. *IAFOR Journal of Education*, 8(3), 7–23. <https://doi.org/10.22492/ije.8.3.01>
- Arksey, H., & O'Malley, L. (2005). Scoping studies: Towards a methodological framework. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 8(1), 19–32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1364557032000119616>
- Aton, P. A., Buencibello, J., Valeriano, E., & Perez, G. (2026). Reframing service-learning (SL) as a pedagogy of care (PoC): Toward a humane framework for religious and theological education. *Hitik: International Journal of Catechists and Religious Educators*, 3(1), 153–173. <https://doi.org/10.63130/hijcre.v3i1.231>
- Ballano, V. O. (2024). The sociological innovations of Pope Francis's synodality. In *Pope Francis's synod on synodality and modern sociology: Exploring behavioral and research aspects* (Chapter 3). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003517702>
- Brungardt, J. G. (2024). *Catholic social & political philosophy: Course guide for PHIL 3073S* (4th ed.). The School of Catholic Studies, Newman University.
- DeMarais, S. C. (2022). “Are we theologians?”: A practical theology approach to Catholic Social Teaching with women religious in East Africa. *Journal of Moral Theology*, 11(2), 136–145.
- Gogolik, M. (2020). Theological preparation of religion teachers in the light of current indications of the Church in Poland. *Poznańskie Studia Teologiczne*, 36, 179–196.
- Kovács, G. (2020). Christian social ethics and social-ethical thinking in Hungary. *Jahrbuch für Christliche Sozialwissenschaften*, 61, 259–270. <https://doi.org/10.17879/jcsw-2020-2984>
- Levac, D., Colquhoun, H., & O'Brien, K. K. (2010). Scoping studies: Advancing the methodology. *Implementation Science*, 5, Article 69. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1748-5908-5-69>
- Mwania, P. (2026). Service learning and education for sustainable development: Toward an integral pedagogy in Kenyan Catholic higher education. *African Journal for Social Transformation*, 1(1), 1–25.
- Nnorom, J. C. (2020). Imagining Enugu as classroom for theological education in SIST: A trans-disciplinary approach. *Missionalia*, 48(2), 196–212.
- Nygard, C. H. (2023). *Cultivating connectedness to nature in the college classroom: A consideration of nature-based pedagogy in undergraduate education* [Doctoral dissertation, Bellarmine University]. ScholarWorks@Bellarmine. <https://scholarworks.bellarmino.edu/tdc/149>
- Peters, M. D. J., Godfrey, C., McInerney, P., Munn, Z., Tricco, A. C., & Khalil, H. (2020). Scoping reviews. In E. Aromataris & Z. Munn (Eds.), *JBIM manual for evidence synthesis*. JBI. <https://doi.org/10.46658/JBIRM-20-01>
- Ratliff, D., & Chanderbhan, S. (2021). Strength for the journey with youth: High school theology programs and the Universal Apostolic Preferences. *Jesuit Higher Education: A Journal*, 10(1), 61–76.
- Schlag, M., & Melé, D. (2020). Editorial introduction: Building institutions for the common good. The practice and purpose of business in an inclusive economy. *Humanistic Management Journal*, 5, 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41463-020-00092-9>
- Sokol, B. W., Sanchez, S. J., Wassel, B., Sweetman, L., & Peterson, A. M. (2021). Moral character and the civic mission of American universities: The Catholic, Jesuit vision of justice education. *International Journal of Christianity & Education*, 25(1), 61–82.
- Thomas, J., & Harden, A. (2008). Methods for the thematic synthesis of qualitative research in systematic reviews. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 8, Article 45. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-8-45>
- Tricco, A. C., Lillie, E., Zarin, W., O'Brien, K. K., Colquhoun, H., Levac, D., Moher, D., Peters, M. D. J., Horsley, T., Weeks, L., Hempel, S., Akl, E. A., Chang, C., McGowan, J., Stewart, L., Hartling, L., Aldcroft, A., Wilson, M. G., Garritty, C., ... Straus, S. E. (2018). PRISMA extension for scoping



- reviews (PRISMA-ScR): Checklist and explanation. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 169(7), 467–473. <https://doi.org/10.7326/M18-0850>
- Ujházi, L. (2026). The role of Catholic and ecclesiastical universities in promoting peace and social justice. *Religions*, 17(2), 227. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel17020227>
- Wang, D. C., Reed, A., Greggo, S., Bowersox, L., Drennan, A., Strawn, B., King, P. E., Porter, S. L., & Hill, P. C. (2023). Spiritual formation in theological education: A multi-case exploration on seminaries and student development. *Christian Education Journal: Research on Educational Ministry*, 20(1), 65–86. <https://doi.org/10.1177/07398913231177722>
- Zaker, C. R. (2020). Catholic theological education at the margins. *Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry*, 40, 130–142.

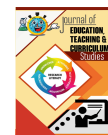


## Appendix A

### Evidence Matrix: Alignment of Included Sources with Specific Objectives and Themes

| Author (Year)                | Source type           | SO1 | SO2 | SO3 | SO4 | Themes                 |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------------------|
| Zaker (2020)                 | Journal article       | ●   | ●   | ●   | ●   | T1, T2, T3, T6         |
| Nygard (2023)                | Doctoral dissertation | ○   | ●   | ●   | ○   | T1, T3, T5             |
| Abraham (2023)               | Journal article       | ●   | ●   | ●   | ●   | T2, T3, T4, T5         |
| Ratliff & Chanderbhan (2021) | Journal article       | ●   | ●   | ●   | ●   | T1, T2, T3, T5, T6     |
| Brungardt (2024)             | Course guide          | ●   | ●   | ○   | ○   | T1, T2, T5, T6         |
| Nnorom (2020)                | Journal article       | ●   | ●   | ●   | ○   | T1, T2, T3, T5, T6     |
| Ujházi (2026)                | Journal article       | ●   | ●   | ○   | ○   | T1, T2, T3, T6         |
| Kovács (2020)                | Journal article       | ●   | ●   | ○   | ○   | T1, T2, T5, T6         |
| Gogolik (2020)               | Journal article       | ●   | ●   | ○   | ○   | T1, T2, T5, T6         |
| Mwania (2026)                | Journal article       | ●   | ●   | ●   | ●   | T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6 |
| Aton et al. (2026)           | Journal article       | ●   | ●   | ●   | ●   | T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6 |
| DeMarais (2022)              | Journal article       | ●   | ●   | ●   | ●   | T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6 |
| Sokol et al. (2021)          | Journal article       | ●   | ●   | ●   | ○   | T1, T2, T3, T5, T6     |
| Adarlo (2020)                | Journal article       | ○   | ○   | ●   | ●   | T1, T3, T4, T5         |

*Note.* ● = addressed; ○ = not addressed. SO1 = definitions and framings used to introduce CST; SO2 = principles, documents, and encyclicals commonly taught; SO3 = pedagogical approaches; SO4 = relationship between introductory formation and subsequent justice, advocacy, or pastoral engagement. The fifth specific objective, identifying research gaps, is a review-level objective addressed cumulatively in the Discussion and Research Gaps sections rather than by individual sources, and is therefore omitted as a per-source column. T1 = curriculum design and institutional embedding; T2 = core principles and their pedagogical framing; T3 = integration with practical theology, service-learning, and advocacy formation; T4 = reception and comprehension among learners; T5 = regional and institutional variation; T6 = key encyclicals and documents.



## Appendix B

### Synthesis of Anticipated Thematic Clusters and Emergent Findings

| Anticipated thematic cluster                               | Emergent synthesis finding and key sources                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Curriculum design introductory courses                     | for Substantiated and the most extensively elaborated theme. Thirteen of 14 sources contribute; CST is documented as canonically mandated and consistently translated into concrete curricular structure, from full syllabi to national regulatory frameworks (Brungardt, 2024; Gogolik, 2020; Kovács, 2020; Ujházi, 2026; Zaker, 2020).                                                                                                                                     |
| Core principles and pedagogical framing                    | their Substantiated. Twelve of 14 sources contribute, with dignity, the common good, subsidiarity, solidarity, and the preferential option for the poor consistently identified as the organising content (Aton et al., 2026; Kovács, 2020; Mwanja, 2026; Zaker, 2020).                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Integration with practical theology and advocacy formation | Substantiated. Eleven of 14 sources contribute, with the Cardijn see-judge-act method, the Pastoral Circle, and Lonergan/Tracy-based practical theology recurring as the concrete pedagogical mechanisms (Aton et al., 2026; DeMarais, 2022; Mwanja, 2026; Ratliff & Chanderbhan, 2021).                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Reception and comprehension among learners                 | Only partially substantiated and the weakest theme. Five of 14 sources contribute, and only Adarlo (2020) and DeMarais (2022) provide primary empirical reception data; the remainder rely on small convenience samples or secondary evidence. This confirms the gap anticipated at the outset.                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Regional and institutional variation                       | Substantiated. Twelve of 14 sources contribute, spanning the United States, Nigeria, Hungary, Poland, Kenya, the Philippines, and East Africa, and spanning seminary, university, high-school, national-system, and non-university religious-formation types (DeMarais, 2022; Gogolik, 2020; Nnorom, 2020).                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Key encyclicals and documents in introductory teaching     | Substantiated. Eleven of 14 sources contribute; Laudato Si' and Sollicitudo Rei Socialis are the most consistently engaged contemporary texts, while Brungardt (2024) and Ujházi (2026) provide the broadest historical rosters.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Emergent: the doctrine-pedagogy exclusion boundary         | Not anticipated as a distinct cluster but emerged from the screening process. A substantial proportion of the 37 excluded records concerned theologically or philosophically sophisticated work on CST's doctrinal content, including business-ethics literature on the common good (Schlag & Melé, 2020), that lacked any curricular or pedagogical treatment. This confirms the doctrine-pedagogy distinction as a genuine fault line rather than a screening convenience. |



**Appendix C**

**Summary of Evidence Synthesised from Included Studies (n = 14)**

| <b>Included study</b>        | <b>Aim</b>                                                                                            | <b>Methodology</b>                                                                           | <b>CST framing</b>                                                                                                 | <b>Key findings</b>                                                                                                                         | <b>Limitations</b>                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Zaker (2020)                 | Propose an integrated pedagogy for teaching the preferential option for the poor                      | Conceptual, practitioner-reflective essay                                                    | Option for the poor as organising principle, via Justice in the World, Economic Justice for All, Evangelii Gaudium | Practising proximity at the peripheries across all four formation pillars; three named pedagogical cautions                                 | Single-institution, first-person essay; no learner comprehension data                                                              |
| Nygard (2023)                | Test whether nature-based pedagogy strengthens outcomes within a mandatory CST course                 | Quasi-experimental mixed methods (n = 14 control, n = 24 experimental)                       | Laudato Si' as core text within a required senior CST course                                                       | Both groups gained in nature-connectedness, the experimental group more; field experience and spiritual-emotional reflection most impactful | Single institution and semester; researcher also designed the intervention; outcome is nature-connectedness, not CST comprehension |
| Abraham (2023)               | Examine how Benedictine, CST-grounded language pedagogy cultivates solidarity                         | Conceptual framework plus small exploratory qualitative study (n = 7 post-immersion surveys) | Benedictine hospitality framed through solidarity and the option for the poor and vulnerable                       | Increased cultural sensitivity, solidarity, and willingness to serve Latino congregations                                                   | Small, non-generalisable sample; no comparison group                                                                               |
| Ratliff & Chanderbhan (2021) | Describe how high-school theology programmes fulfil the Jesuit preference to walk with the poor       | Programme description essay; non-statistical reference to internal pre/post trends           | Sollicitudo Rei Socialis's structures of sin analysed via immersions; Laudato Si' and scripture reinforce          | Reported non-quantified gains in self-perceived efficacy, knowledge of inequities, and dialogue skills                                      | Not a formal empirical study; single-institution and one age cohort                                                                |
| Brungardt (2024)             | Introduce students to CST as Catholic political philosophy within the Catholic intellectual tradition | Instructional course guide/syllabus                                                          | Aquinas and Aristotle precede an extensive papal-economics encyclical sequence from Pius IX to John Paul II        | Not applicable — instructional document reporting no outcome data                                                                           | Single-instructor grey literature; no assessment data                                                                              |
| Nnorom (2020)                | Assess whether a Nigerian seminary should urbanise its                                                | Conceptual-programmatic proposal                                                             | Solidarity (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis) as paradigm                                                                  | Recommends restructuring Social Ethics around CST,                                                                                          | Aspirational proposal; author is an alumnus, not                                                                                   |



| Included study     | Aim                                                                                           | Methodology                                                                      | CST framing                                                                                                           | Key findings                                                                                                                              | Limitations                                                                                            |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                    | Social Ethics curriculum via CST                                                              | informed by interviews, site visits, and documentary analysis                    | for the Spiritan charism; Ad Gentes and Evangelii Gaudium as warrants                                                 | urban immersion, and the pastoral cycle; proposes a theology-from-below                                                                   | resident faculty; no outcome data                                                                      |
| Ujházi (2026)      | Trace the canonical evolution of CST's place in Catholic university curricula                 | Conceptual canon law and historical analysis                                     | Solidarity, common good, dignity, and the option for the poor applied to law, economics, and security studies         | Curricular integration has deepened since Lec XIII, but transdisciplinary CST-security-studies methods remain underdeveloped              | Institutional/canonical scope rather than a course case study; no learner data                         |
| Kovács (2020)      | Survey the history, standing, and teaching of Christian Social Ethics in Hungary              | Peer-reviewed descriptive disciplinary report                                    | Dignity, solidarity, and subsidiarity traced from Rerum Novarum to Laudato Si' in the Hungarian context               | The field has professionalised since 1989 but needs a more distinctive disciplinary identity and greater public accessibility             | National overview, not a course case study; no learner-level data                                      |
| Gogolik (2020)     | Analyse universal-Church and Polish regulatory mandates for CST in religion-teacher formation | Conceptual doctrinal-policy analysis                                             | CST as a required subject under Veritatis Gaudium and the Ratio Fundamentalís, alongside Scripture and moral theology | CST is formally mandated, with minimum instructional-hour thresholds in Polish catechist qualification pathways                           | CST is one line item within a broader subject list; no data on how effectively it is taught or learned |
| Mwania (2026)      | Articulate an integral pedagogy linking service-learning, sustainable development, and CST    | Qualitative conceptual-analytical, illustrated with three institutional examples | Dignity, common good, solidarity, subsidiarity, and integral ecology mapped onto service-learning practice            | Three Kenyan universities differ in integration model; secondary evidence of deepened student responsibility and ecological consciousness | Institutional examples explicitly not formal case studies; reception evidence is secondary/anecdotal   |
| Aton et al. (2026) | Propose the CARES Framework to embed care ethics                                              | Conceptual-theoretic                                                             | Dignity, solidarity, the option for the poor, and                                                                     | Existing Philippine service-learning shows faith-                                                                                         | No primary outcome data; the framework was                                                             |



| Included study      | Aim                                                                                                   | Methodology                                                                                    | CST framing                                                                                                       | Key findings                                                                                                           | Limitations                                                                                                        |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                     | and CST within service-learning design                                                                | dialectical synthesis                                                                          | stewardship linked to the Cardijn see-judge-act method                                                            | formation gains but lacks relational-continuity and evaluation phases                                                  | untested in practice at publication                                                                                |
| DeMarais (2022)     | Describe how a practical theology method teaches CST to East African women religious                  | Practitioner programme description with reported external evaluation                           | Subsidiarity and integral human development via a Tracy/Lonergan-based four-step reflection method                | High satisfaction; increased CST and SDG knowledge and confidence; about 700 people reached via graduate-led workshops | Author is programme staff (reporting bias risk); evaluation is internal; long-term persistence not assessed        |
| Sokol et al. (2021) | Ground university justice education in CST's charity/justice distinction                              | Conceptual practitioner article combining literature review with programmatic description      | Charity/justice distinction and dignity via Justitia in Mundo, Ex Corde Ecclesiae, and Two Feet of Love in Action | Maps the distinction onto a required core sequence and a philanthropy-to-solidarity co-curricular continuum            | Single-institution account by programme staff; no learner-outcome data                                             |
| Adarlo (2020)       | Examine the teaching-learning process of CST-embedded service-learning at two Philippine universities | Empirical qualitative multi-sited ethnography (observation, journals, interviews; open coding) | CST invoked alongside general social-justice language within named theology courses                               | Structured critical reflection moved students from privilege-blindness towards a critical professional identity        | CST is one of several theological framings rather than the article's headline focus; no specific encyclicals named |

*Note. Full citations for all included studies appear in the References section.*