

The significant narrative I have chosen to discuss is the Gospel of Matthew. The Gospel of Matthew was written in the city of Antioch by an unknown author; however, we can assume that the author was a church leader, associated with Matthew the Disciple, or was a Jewish Christian who knew much about the Jewish Faith and Traditions. The gospel of Matthew is thought to have been written in 85–90 AD. Some historic events, such as the second destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem, were recognised by the author, which occurred in 70 AD.

The first key message that is expressed throughout the Gospel of Matthew is that Jesus is a teacher. In Matthew 5:3–11, Jesus gave a sermon about true happiness, which explains how to live happy and prosperous lives and how to ensure eternal life in heaven. Jesus taught us eight ways to live; these are known as the beatitudes. Verses 6–9 relate to the acts of a person to care for his creation. God requires us to care for his creation. Being merciful and pure in heart and working to create peace in relationships, communities, and the world is what God requires of us. Jesus taught us to care for God's creation, and in return, God will give us happiness and eternal life in the kingdom of heaven. This key message relates to the Catholic faith, as we are taught to care for and protect people and the environment. By caring for the creation of God, we are living the way Jesus taught us. The Catholic Social Teaching (CST) of preferential option for the poor and vulnerable applies to the key message that Jesus is a teacher and how we must care for God's creation.¹ As Catholics, we are to have preferential option for the poor and vulnerable, which means we should think about the needs of those who are vulnerable and put them before ourselves. In Leviticus 58:5-7, preferential option for the poor and vulnerable is shown as it states, "True worship is to work for justice and to care for the poor and oppressed." An individual today can show preferential option for the poor and vulnerable through the seven corporal works of mercy taught to us by Jesus. By feeding the hungry, giving drinks to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, visiting the sick, visiting the prisoners, or burying the dead, the individual is showing preferential option for the poor and vulnerable.² Caritas is a charitable organisation that is influenced by the Catholic social teaching and advocates for preferential option for those who live in poverty and are at a disadvantage.³ Caritas uses its donations of money or food to go to the homeless, the handicapped, and those who live in hostile environments where food and shelter are not available.

The second key message that is expressed throughout the gospel of Matthew is that Jesus is the King of Heaven and Earth. In Matthew 2:11–12, Jesus is born, and visitors from the east come to see Jesus and give him gifts of a king. "On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh." Traditionally, the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh were ordinary offerings to kings. Gold was valuable and associated with royalty and immortality; frankincense could be made into a perfume as the scent was valued; and myrrh was used to make perfumes and ointments.⁴ When these gifts were given to Jesus, they each symbolised a part of His life and identity. The gift of gold represented the kingship of Jesus, frankincense represented the worship of Jesus, and myrrh represented the death and mourning of Jesus.⁵ This key message relates to the Catholic faith, as we are to do God's will to create his kingdom on Earth. In Matthew 9:10, Jesus said, "Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Following the teachings of Jesus, the King of Heaven and Earth, we are able to carry out God's will to build His Kingdom on earth. God's Kingdom is peaceful, loving, just, and prosperous. For us to live our lives to fulfil God's will, we must live and share the ways of God's Kingdom. The Catholic social teaching of promotion of peace relates to the key message that Jesus is the King and the upholding of God's will. As Catholics, we must promote peace to fulfil God's Kingdom on earth. This means that we must be candid, loving, and peaceful in our interactions with others. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, CCC. 2304, it states, "Peace cannot be

attained on earth without safeguarding the goods of persons, free communication among men, respect for the dignity of persons and peoples, and the assiduous practice of fraternity. Peace is 'the tranquillity of order.' Peace is the work of justice and the effect of charity."