

# The state is there for the people, not the other way around



## PRAY

O God, you have endowed us men with rationality, will and energy. Make us able to assume responsibility now or in the future. Make us strong to be of real service to our fellow human beings. Don't let those who now have power and room to maneuver sleep in peace when they see that some are lining only their own pockets and using and exploiting others. Your son has served us. See to it that we, too, do our best for a better world. Amen.



## CONTEMPLATE

One person reads the Bible passage aloud.  
Short silence.

**Exchange:** *What particularly appealed to you?*



## STUDY

1. Read DOCAT text sentence-for-sentence. Then one person reads the text aloud in full.
2. Three minutes of silence.
3. Each person reads a word or phrase aloud (without comment) that he or she has noticed.
4. Explain briefly in the next round why you have chosen the sentence (e.g. memories, questions, etc.).



## DISCUSS

**Also discuss your own questions on this topic!**

**Treasure Book:** *Take five minutes to write down what you don't want to forget.*



## CHALLENGE

Our **CHALLENGES** are just suggestions you can make in addition to your study guide meetings. You can also replace them with stronger, more fitting, more original or better ones. Just let us know at [feedback@youcat.org](mailto:feedback@youcat.org).

**#DOCATChallenge:** *Share your experience on Facebook or Instagram.*



## Am 5:14

Seek good and not evil, that you may live; Then truly will the LORD, the God of hosts, be with you as you claim!

210

## What difference does it make when politics "serves"?

Catholic social teaching emphasizes that all public office is service. Someone who serves the common good is not looking out primarily for his own welfare but for that of the political community entrusted to him, and he performs his political function according to ethical criteria. This is decisive in the fight against corruption. Moreover, someone who serves has in view the concrete human person in his misery and need. Nor does the excessive bureaucratization of states or communities of states serve the free, subsidiary development of persons and smaller societal units. Common people are often at a disadvantage, because the complexity of bureaucratic procedures is beyond their understanding. Good management is a great good; good management serves the common good. Excessive bureaucracy (= rule by office), in contrast, can dehumanize those who practice it, and it turns men into "functionaries and mere cogs in the administrative machine" (Hannah Arendt).

1. What is actually "to serve" and why is Jesus the best example for true service?
2. Why is bureaucracy inhumane? How is it generated? How can we fight it?
3. Why is the designation „public servant“ something one can be proud of?
4. Which role should the principle on human dignity play (see Docat questions 54 and 55) in the administration? How would you like to be treated at public offices and institutions? How do you treat people who need something from you?

Discuss in your group what could be changed in your town/village if some people lent a hand and served the public good (collecting waste at the riverside, re-painting a youth center, organizing a clothes bank, etc.). Approach issues yourselves or address proposals to politicians and offer your support...

Do you take on this challenge?

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