



Holy Spirit Catholic Church Social Ministry Newsletter

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Committed to the principles of Catholic Social Teaching

THE TWO FEET OF SOCIAL MINISTRY

Principles of Catholic Social Teaching

1. Life and dignity of the human person
2. Call to family, community, and participation
3. Rights and responsibilities
4. Option for the poor and vulnerable
5. The dignity of work and the rights of workers
6. Solidarity
7. Care for God's creation

Dates to Remember

September

- 2 S. J. Commission
- 4-5 Food for the Poor
- 18-19 Fair Trade sales
- 24 Friday assistance

October

- 3-10 IHN host week
- 5 JRLC presentation
- 7 SJ Commission
- 16-17 Fair Trade sales
- 22-23 Cardboard box city
- 29 Friday assistance

November

- 4 SJ Commission
- 6-17 Thanksgiving
Food baskets
- 19 Friday assistance
- 20-21 Fair Trade &
Work of Human
Hands sales

When Jesus began his public life, he said that he came to bring good news to the poor, liberty to captives, sight to the blind, and freedom to the downtrodden. Throughout his life, he trained and commissioned his disciples to carry on his work.

For the past 2,000 years, the Church has performed the social ministries of serving the hungry, homeless, sick, poor, captive, migrant, and other vulnerable populations in various ways. In recent centuries we've gradually recognized that there are 2 major types of social ministries — charity and justice.

Charity involves private, individual acts of direct service to address immediate needs. Examples: homeless shelters, food shelves, emergency collections. Charity addresses the symptoms of social problems, not their root causes.

Justice involves public, collective action to deal with the roots of social problems. It strives to change institutions in order to eliminate social injustices. Examples: lobbying legis-

lators, community organizing, public demonstrations.

Since 1891, popes and bishops have explored social justice issues in a series of encyclicals and other documents. In 1995, *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions*, produced by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, identified 7 key social justice themes:

- 1) Life and dignity of the human person
- 2) Call to family, community, and participation
- 3) Rights and responsibilities
- 4) Option for the poor and vulnerable
- 5) The dignity of work and the rights of workers
- 6) Solidarity
- 7) Care for God's creation

A series of brief looks at each of these social justice themes will appear in the Social Justice Commission's newsletter during the coming year. References and sources used for the reflection will be identified in the Social Justice Commission's portion of the Holy Spirit parish website.

(www.holyspiritrochester.org)

We're New—Check Us Out

This brand new quarterly newsletter is brought to you by the members of Holy Spirit's Social Justice Commission (SJC).

Why? Holy Spirit is an incredibly active and vibrant parish and there's just not enough room in our current bulletin to address everything worthy of attention.

What you can expect to find in these pages:

- ⇒ **Featured Programs**—activities going on right here at Holy Spirit (e.g. The Giving Tree)
- ⇒ **Articles** on current social issues from a

Catholic perspective

- ⇒ A look at **Catholic Social Teaching** (for many of us our faith formation ended at Confirmation)
- ⇒ **Resources** for further information & study
- ⇒ How **YOU** can get more involved with a **calendar** of important dates
- ⇒ A **new logo** which emphasizes the need for balance between charity and working to eliminate the injustices that create the need for that charity.

*You have been told what is good, and what the Lord requires of you:
only to do the right and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God.*
(Micah 6:8)

FRIDAY ASSISTANCE DAY—a Ministry of the Giving Tree

In April of this year, a lady came to Holy Spirit during our scheduled Friday Assistance Day hours because she was in need. Nervously, she quickly and quietly checked in with the person at the desk. She was greeted and was given simple instructions: Please fill out this form, help yourself to coffee or lemonade and goodies over on the table, have a seat and make yourself comfortable, and Father Don will call your name. We noticed she didn't care to socialize much, and after an hour or so, her turn to speak with Father came up and she was ready to leave. But on her way out, she stopped at the desk where she had checked in, to thank us for being so hospitable. Her face lit up as she asked: Did you notice how nervous I was when I came in? I felt so down, but now I feel so much better, because everyone here has been so nice." And with that, she left.

That example sums up what happens on Assistance Day at Holy Spirit. Spiritual writers of today emphasize that Jesus came to minister to the poor. And at Holy Spirit, Assistance Day is one of the ways in which our parish lives out this gospel imperative.

We are so different from the social agencies with which many of these folks have been involved. On Assistance Day they are greeted at the door with a smile and welcomed with a "glad you are here" attitude. Coffee, donuts, and homemade treats are available, and groups of people talk, laugh, and exchange news or their own stories. For the children, there are coloring books and toys on a table. When a child has finished his or her "masterpiece," they are helped to tape their picture to the front ledge of Monica's desk, accompanied by applause and compliments on having created such a masterpiece.

When the person is called into Father's office to receive a gift card for gas or groceries, one thing that has always impressed us is the fact that Father Don calls them by name (not a number!)



Judy McIlmail staffs the registration table on a recent Friday Assistance day

and conveys to each person that he is sincerely happy to see them. And recently Deacon Joe has helped Fr. Don with the distribution of the cards.

As the needs in the community have increased so have the numbers of people coming to us for help. If you wish to encounter the many faces of Christ in the needy in our community, join us on Assistance Day, which is usually the 4th Friday of the month from 9-11AM. Contact Mary Margaret if you would like to help.



Frank McIlmail offers refreshments to those seeking assistance. Refreshments are provided by Holy Spirit volunteers.

MOST IMPORTANTLY, Assistance Day could not happen without the generous support of the Holy Spirit community. The second collection taken on the first Sunday of the month goes to help those in need. We so appreciate your generosity and many thanks to you from your brothers and sisters in Rochester who need your help!



An Inside Look at Catholic Social Teaching

Theme 1: Life and Dignity of the Human Person

Catholic social teaching on the dignity of each person means that:

- Every person is precious.
- People are more important than things.
- Our efforts are to respect that dignity and help each person to flourish. [Krier]

The gospel of life is at the heart of Jesus' message. In presenting the heart of his redemptive mission, Jesus says: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (Jn 10:10). [*Evangelium Vitae*, 1]

Believers in Christ must defend and promote the right to life. Through his incarnation, the Son of God has united himself in some fashion with every human being and established the incomparable value of every human person. The gospel of God's love for each person, the gospel of the dignity of the person, and the gospel of life are a single and indivisible gospel. [*Evangelium Vitae*, 2-3]

The proclamation of life is ever more urgent due to the increase and gravity of threats to the life of individuals and peoples. For

example, broad sectors of public opinion justify certain crimes against life in the name of the rights of individual freedom. Such initiatives are even being given cognizance by legislators in many countries. The individual conscience is finding it more and more difficult to distinguish between good and evil in what concerns the basic value of human life. [*Evangelium Vitae*, 4]

References

1. Marvin L. Krier Mich, *The Challenge and Spirituality of Catholic Social Teaching* (Louisville, KY: JustFaith, 2005), page 50.
2. Pope John Paul II in his encyclical letter *On the Gospel of Life (Evangelium Vitae)* expresses a strong view on the basic value of human life.
3. Kevin E. McKenna, *A Concise Guide to Catholic Social Teaching* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2002), page 26.

For a look at the source document access the following link: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031995_evangelium-vitae_en.html

Question to ponder: How does this teaching affect my view of the dignity of the unborn, homeless people, undocumented migrants, convicted felons, sex-abuse offenders, drug addicts, etc.?

Fair Trade Opportunities at Holy Spirit

As Americans, we are among the most wealthy and largest consumers in the world. Each purchase we make and every dollar we spend has a global impact. Since the cause and effect of our daily lives is not immediately apparent, we can defer responsibility to others.

Holy Spirit offers Fair Trade products for sale on the 3rd Sunday of each month. We sell coffee, tea, chocolate, nuts and other tasty items at prices that provide a living wage for the farmers who produce them. The price you'll pay at our little store isn't much different from other avenues for you to spend your dollars. Please consider buying from our Fair Trade store either for yourself or as gifts for others. If you do, you'll provide direct support to farmers

and their families who are struggling to survive. Our Catholic community believes that many small actions will have a large, positive impact.

If you are willing to volunteer at the store, contact Scott Forstie at: Forstie@charter.com.



Meet the Social Justice Commission

The mission of the Social Justice Commission is to serve Holy Spirit parishioners as a resource for understanding Catholic Social Teaching. The commission is to be a catalyst for action on behalf of justice and thus foster a caring community that would respectfully address and act upon the social injustices of our parish, local and global communities.

The Commission meets regularly on the 1st Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Emmaus Room. Everyone is welcome to join the Commission. For further information, contact current chair, Judy O'Fallon at judyof@charterinternet.net.

Current members of the Social Justice Commission include:

- Kay Anderson
- Ariel Caride
- Bob and Margie Hake
- Marcia and Rich Hartmann
- Bob Loechler
- John McGuire
- Judy O'Fallon, chair (judyof@charterinternet.net).
- John Orbeck
- Mary Margaret Yaeger (staff)

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WE'RE ON THE WEB

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Responding with Charity and Justice—in America and Beyond

Charity and justice have long been topics for discussion, viewed as especially important from the angle of Catholic Social Teachings within our church. I will address how these “two feet” of social ministry can both be powerful Christian responses to human need and how both aspects are required of us to walk closely in the footsteps of Jesus.

When I think of charity, I see so many generous people in this world. As Christians, our mandate for emulating the gospel often comes quickly and easily through charity. When the floods came to SE MN two summers ago, Holy Spirit made an Advent project out of assisting flood victims in Rushford. This summer when tornados hit in Albert Lea and our surrounding communities, people responded in masses. It makes my heart swell with pride in seeing this immediate action. I also saw charity in action on a May/2010 medical mission trip to Haiti. Our nation donated more than \$150 million in just 4 days following their January earthquake, and world estimates collectively topped over \$500 million. (It is actually too many 0's for me to wrap my mind around!) But I do know it is wonderful, people responding to immediate needs, providing direct services. When we walk away at the end of the day or at the end of the week, our bodies tired and feet sore, we still smile knowing a difference was made. And as this food, shelter and clothing are provided, I know that Jesus was present with us in our charitable efforts.

Responding with charity continues to be the most popular, obvious answer. Responding with justice, the second “foot,” tends to be more challenging. But as Catholic Christians, our charge to do both continues. Pope John Paul II stated that justice is “among the essential elements in proclaiming the church’s social doctrine.” Justice addresses not the short-term fixes but responds to more long-term needs. It looks at core root causes of injustices and faces structural inequities, as opposed to more “surfaced” wounds. But choosing to dive deeper into these more chronic struggles requires time and often a change of heart; our safe, immediate, non-controversial actions are sometimes overshadowed by a look of controversy and struggle. Many people remember the old quote by Archbishop Camera of Brazil, “When I tried to help the poor, people said I was a saint. When I asked why they were poor, they called me a communist.” One common controversy in our community continues over giving money to the pan

handlers. Additional turmoil around this very topic comes in knowing some requests for help are not always legitimate. Using the assumption that MOST panhandling IS genuine, the myriad of opinions linger. For some, it is easy to hand the homeless man a \$5.00 bill at the stop light. That clearly defines charity and is certainly a Christ-centered response, but not all will agree on this approach to assist. This homeless gentleman with no source of income may require your \$5.00 for his dinner every night for months. What will it take to get this man off the 2nd Street/Hwy 52 junction? Stop to talk to him a moment, ask him about the job he just lost, or figure out together how he can re-gain that income so he can buy his own dinner tomorrow night. That is justice.

Another example of the need for justice comes from Haiti. Hundreds of non-government organizations have been formed since the earthquakes. Thousands of people have come to offer assistance in the form of manual labor, re-building homes and feeding the hungry. This is charity at its best. And yet in Port au Prince, a population of 3 million people, over HALF remain without homes because the structural foundation required of a city is not there – proper electricity, sewage systems, clean sanitation and water, plus piping and other large equipment required to build roads. In my world of health care, charity is going to assist them for a week, as we did, offering medicines, clinical expertise and treating patients. But what we ALSO tried to give were ideas and tools to use the resources they had available to them already in their own country to make medical care more attainable, without our help. We worked WITH the doctors and nurses, collaborating on approaches to clinical situations so that when we returned home, a sustainable culture could be fertilized enough to grow and maintain on its own. This defines justice – a result gained from collective efforts, with thought and long-term efforts contributed and a hope for structural changes to evolve.

So the next time social action is required, remember BOTH feet of ministry – charity AND justice - as we serve God’s children, and reflect Christ’s original intentions for each of us.

Peace be with you! Kay Anderson

