



Holy Spirit Catholic Church Social Ministry Newsletter

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SEPTEMBER, 2011

Committed to the principles of Catholic Social Teaching

The 10th Anniversary of 9/11 Reflecting on the words of the US Bishops

Dates to Remember

SEPTEMBER

- 8 SJ Commission
- 13 Speaker: Dr. Susan Windley-Daoust
- 17 Pax Christi State Convention
- 24-25 Fair Trade
- 30 Friday Assistance

OCTOBER

- 9-16 IHN host week
- 6 SJ Commission
- 16 Sunday Noon Lunch at St. Francis
- 17 Speaker: Dr. Bernie Evans
- 22 Cardboard Box City
- 28 Friday Assistance

NOVEMBER

- 3 SJ Commission
- 5-6 Fair Trade
- 18 Friday Assistance
- 18 IHN Concert at Mayo Civic Center
- 22 Speaker: Tom Thibodeau

DECEMBER

- 1 SJ Commission
- 3-4 Fair Trade and Work of Human Hands
- 4 Sunday Noon Lunch at St. Francis
- 10 Christmas Anonymous
- 16 Friday Assistance
- 17 Saturday noon lunch

Two months after terrorists' planes attacked the World Trade Center and Pentagon, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) published a long Pastoral Message to comfort Americans and address some of the moral issues raised by this tragedy. In their introductory remarks they said:

Sacred Scripture and traditional ethical principles ... provide moral guidance on how the world should respond justly to terrorism in order to reestablish peace and order.

The dreadful deeds of September 11 cannot go unanswered. We continue to urge resolve, restraint and greater attention to the roots of terrorism to protect against further attacks and to advance the global common good. Our nation must continue to respond in many ways, including ...

- diplomacy,
- economic measures
- effective intelligence
- more focus on security at home, and
- the legitimate use of force.

In our response to attacks on innocent civilians, we must be sure that we do not violate the norms of civilian immunity and proportionality. We believe every life is precious whether a person works at the World Trade Center or lives in Afghanistan. The traditional moral norms governing the use of force still apply, even in the face of terrorism on this scale.

No grievance, no matter what the claim, can legitimate what happened on September 11. Without in any way excusing indefensible terrorist acts, we still need to address those conditions of poverty and injustice which are exploited by terrorists. A successful campaign against terrorism will require a combination of ...

- resolve to do what is necessary to see it through,
- restraint to ensure that we act justly,
- and a long term focus on broader issues of justice and peace.

Key issues that the Bishops addressed were:

The role of religion: *We are particularly troubled that some who engage in and support this new form of terror seek to justify it, in part, as a religious act. ... People of all faiths must be united in the conviction that terrorism in the name of religion profanes religion. ... A deeper appreciation of the role that religion plays in world affairs is needed, as is a deeper understanding of and engagement with Islam.*

The duty to preserve the common good, protect the innocent, and reestablish peace and order: *Our nation, in collaboration with other nations and organizations, has a moral right and a grave obligation to defend the common good against mass terrorism. The common good is threatened when innocent people are targeted by terrorists. ... How the common good is defended and peace is restored is a critical moral issue.*

- While military action may be necessary, it is by no means sufficient to deal with this terrorist threat.
- Acts of ethnic and religious intolerance towards Arab-Americans, Muslims, or any other minorities must be repudiated.
- [O]ur government must continue to respect the basic rights of all persons and in a special way of immigrants and refugees.

The use of military force: *Because of its terrible consequences, military force, even when justified and carefully executed, must always be undertaken with a sense of deep regret.*

- Every military response must be in accord with sound moral principles, notably such norms of the just war tradition as non-combatant immunity, proportionality, right intention and probability of success.
- The continuing priority must be to ensure that military force is directed at those who use terror and those who assist them, not at the Afghan people or Islam. ... We must not only act justly but be perceived as acting justly if we are to succeed in winning popular support against terrorism.
- In light of the Church's teaching that the use of arms must not produce disorders graver than the evil to be eliminated, the effect of military action on the Afghan people must be closely monitored on an ongoing basis.
- The United States and other nations have a moral responsibility to continue aid to Afghan refugees and displaced persons and to assist them in returning to their homes in safety where possible, or offer them other durable solutions.

Continued on the next page.

10th Anniversary reflection continued from p. 1

Pursuing Justice and Peace After September 11: *Our nation, as a principal force for economic globalization, must do more to spread the benefits of globalization to all, especially the world's poorest. The injustice and instability in far away lands about which we know too little can have a direct impact on our own sense of peace and security.*

Stopping terrorism must be a priority but foreign policy cannot be wholly subsumed under this campaign. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the suffering of people in Iraq, the lack of participation in political life, the abuse of human rights, endemic corruption, grinding poverty amidst plenty, and threats to local cultures are sources of deep resentment and hopelessness which terrorists seek to exploit for their own ends.

Given the prominence of our country, it is incumbent upon our citizens to pursue in whatever ways they can a more just international political, social and economic order. Reasonable persons may differ on the means to employ, but Catholics cannot remain neutral with respect to that goal.

We must work for the common good, measured not just in economic, political, or security terms, but also in terms of culture, basic human rights such as religious freedom, and all that is needed for a virtuous and spiritual life consistent with authentic human dignity. While our first responsibility is to the common good of our own society, we have an inescapable obligation to promote the global common good as well. [Some] specific aspects of the common good that deserve special attention are the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, Iraq, Sudan, and ...

The scandal of poverty. *Intolerable extremes of misery and a growing gulf between the "haves" and the "have-nots" characterize much of today's world, and breed hostility towards economic globalization. This hostility can be addressed, in part, by a comprehensive development agenda, including ...*

- ◇ substantially increased foreign aid,
- ◇ more equitable trade, and
- ◇ continuing efforts to relieve the crushing burden of debt.

We who have so much have a responsibility to the world's needy. ... Overcoming poverty in our own nation requires a continuing commitment as well. The needs of the jobless, hungry and homeless cannot be ignored or neglected. ... The poor abroad and in our own country must not be asked to bear a disproportionate burden of the sacrifices that will have to be made.

Human rights. *The necessity of maintaining an international coalition against terrorism must not lead our government to give less public attention to religious liberty and human rights violations around the world.*

Weapons of mass destruction and the arms trade. *It is a moral imperative that the U.S. government work to ...*

- ◇ reverse the spread of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons,
- ◇ pursue progressive nuclear disarmament,
- ◇ take concrete actions to reduce its own predominant role in the conventional arms trade, and
- ◇ work with other nations to do the same.

Strengthening the UN and other international institutions. *The United States should play a constructive role in making the United Nations and other international institutions more effective, responsible and responsive.*

Conclusion: *Our community of faith has the responsibility to live out in our time the challenges of Jesus in the Beatitudes –*

- to comfort those who mourn,
- to seek justice,
- to become peacemakers.

We face these tasks with faith and hope, asking God to protect and guide us as we seek to live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ in these days of trial.

Tenth Anniversary Reflection Questions:

How well have our national actions over the past 10 years measured up to the standards the Bishops set 10 years ago with respect to ...

1. addressing the conditions of poverty and injustice that are exploited by terrorists?
2. developing a deeper understanding of and engagement with Islam?
3. respecting the basic rights of all persons and in a special way of immigrants and refugees?
4. employing military force in ways consistent with just war principles?
5. reducing conventional arms trade and reversing the spread of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons?
6. strengthening the United Nations and other international institutions?

What do we need to do now to make improvements?

Social Justice City-wide

Back in June, the Holy Spirit Social Justice Commission invited social justice enthusiasts from all the Catholic parishes to a pot luck/barbeque to discuss our current activities and issues that interest us. Out of that evening of good food and good conversation came an August meeting of representatives from almost all the parishes to talk about how we could collaborate in our ministry.

Seven people met at St John's on a Monday evening and shared ideas and hopes. We decided that at the very least we would actively support the projects of other parishes by getting the word out in our parishes. Looking to the future, we hope to make a concerted effort to educate people on the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition and its Day on the Hill on Feb. 17th, 2012. Connected by the magic and ease of email, we hope to develop a sense of truly being on the same team regardless of our parish affiliation.



AN INSIDE LOOK AT CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

In 1995, *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions*, produced by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, identified 7 key social justice themes:

- Life and dignity of the human person
- Call to family, community, and participation
- Rights and responsibilities
- Option for the poor and vulnerable
- The dignity of work and the rights of workers
- Solidarity
- Care for God's creation.

Theme 6: Solidarity

Catholic social teaching proclaims that we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they live. We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. Learning to practice the virtue of solidarity means learning that "loving our neighbor" has global dimensions in an interdependent world. This virtue is described by John Paul II as "a firm and preserving determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all".¹

Solidarity is an essential stance of faith and a feature of moral consciousness recognizing that we belong to one human family. One demand of such membership is the responsibility to participate in the building up of community and the fostering of unity. Solidarity invites such participation and awareness at all levels and across all borders. We have mutual obligations to promote the rights and development of all people across communities, nations, and the world, irrespective of national boundaries. Solidarity is a way of "being with" our sisters and brothers around the globe.²

Questions to ponder: What does the term "solidarity" mean to me? How do I deal fairly with conflicts between people, and nations, in a peaceful and nonviolent manner?

Where do I see disregard for solidarity, in my community, in my region, state, country, and in the world?

References

1. USCCB, *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions*, 1998
2. Education for Justice (www.educationforjustice.org).

A RONALD ROLHEISER REFLECTION ~

A challenge to the Social Justice Commission.

What does it say to you?

The quality of your faith will be judged by the quality of justice in the land. And the quality of justice in the land will always be judged by how "widows, orphans, and strangers" are faring while you are alive.

Theologian Ronald Rolheiser explains that the phrase, "widows, orphans, and strangers", was code for the three weakest, most-vulnerable, groups in society at the time. For the great prophets of Israel, ultimately we will be judged religiously and morally on the basis of how the poorest of the poor fared while we were alive.

He goes on to say, "That's a scary thought which becomes scarier when we see how Jesus strongly endorsed that view. ... We have in Matthew's Gospel the famous text about the Last Judgment where Jesus tells us that, at the end of day, when we stand before the great King on the day of judgment, we will be asked only one set of questions and they all will have to do with how we treated the poor ... "

What that mantra of the prophets and Jesus' teaching on the Last Judgment also teaches is that charity alone is not enough. Charity is a great virtue, integrally part of the greatest virtue of all, love. It may never be downplayed.

But charity isn't necessarily justice. I can be a wonderfully charitable, kind, moral, and generous person in my own life and still be unfairly profiting from an historical, social, political, and economic system that is unduly rewarding me even as it is unfairly burdening and robbing others. The things that I attain honestly through my own hard work and which I am very generous with in terms of sharing with others, can at the same time be the product of a system which is unfair to others.

Taking care of "widows, orphans, and strangers" requires not just personal goodness and charity, but requires too that I have the courage to look at how my honest wealth may also be partially the product of a dishonest system. Who loses while I gain?

*Fair Trade sales
resume
on the weekend of
September 24 and 25*

Committed to the principles of Catholic Social Teaching

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**CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING
OUR BEST KEPT SECRET**

Tuesday, September 13, 7:00—9:00 p.m.

“The Life and Dignity of the Human Person as the Root of Catholic Social Teaching”

By Susan Windley-Daoust, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Theology, St. Mary’s University, Winona, MN

Dr. Windley-Daoust will present an overview of the 4 principles of Catholic Social Teaching, paying special attention to the life and dignity of the human person as a root to the tradition, and how that plays out in various issues such as immigration, oppressive poverty, war and peace, life issues, etc.



Monday, October 17, 7:00—9:00 p.m.

“Caring for God’s Creation—Caring for God’s People

By Bernard Evans, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Pastoral Theology, St. John’s University, Collegeville, MN

Dr. Evans will present the biblical foundations of our place within the rest of God’s creation, and make connections between CST and current issues in the news that relate to clean air and water (rivers), caring for the soil (agricultural issues), and public policies related to all this.



Tuesday, November 22, 7:00—9:00 p.m.

“Everyday Justice for Everyday Catholics”

By Tom Thibodeau, MA, (DMin candidate). Associate Professor of Religious Studies, Viterbo University, LaCrosse, WI

Social Justice is at the heart of the Church and is lived out every day in the lives of everyday Catholics, both in their lives and in their parishes. We will examine the practice of social justice, emphasizing the relationship between the eucharist and justice and the importance of serving the common good in the name of Christ.



Sponsored by the Social Justice Commission of Holy Spirit Catholic Church