



The Development and Implementation of Characteristic Six

Characteristic Six of the Evangelizing Catholic School process states: *An evangelizing Catholic school is actively conscious of forming and transforming children and youth according to the social teaching of the Church.*

The development and implementation is designed to be used in a “newsletter format” and contains information that your faculty and the parents of your students may find helpful as they attempt to learn more about social teaching of the Catholic Church.

You might duplicate the entire newsletter and send it home with a cover letter of your own as you inform the parents of your students about the work being done in the school regarding the social teachings of the Church or you might re-type a section of the newsletter and include it in your own weekly or monthly newsletter to parents.

Read this carefully and to use your best judgment as to how you can best make use of this information.

“The Church that Jesus founded, and therefore the Catholic School, must evangelize. This is its essential mission! If the Church does not evangelize, it cannot be Church. If the Catholic school, which exists to carry out the mission of the Church, does not evangelize, it cannot call itself a Catholic school.” (The Evangelizing Catholic School Manual)

THE EVANGELIZING CATHOLIC SCHOOL

“If the Church does not evangelize, it cannot be Church...if the Catholic school, which exists to carry out this mission of the Church, does not evangelize; it cannot call itself a Catholic school.”

THE SIXTH CHARACTERISTIC

“An evangelizing Catholic school is actively conscious of forming and transforming children and youth according to the social teaching of the Church.”

The formation and transformation of our children and youth is truly the mission of the Church and subsequently of the Catholic school. But how do we form them? And better yet, how do we transform them into the life and teaching of Jesus Christ and His Church?

In the Gospel of Matthew [Mt 5:1-12], we see Jesus instructing the crowds:
“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are they who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the land.
Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be satisfied.
Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the clean of heart,
for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me.
Rejoice and be glad,
For your reward will be great in heaven.

The spiritual and corporal works of mercy closely parallel the teaching on the Beatitudes and the Church’s teaching on social doctrine.

The Spiritual Works of Mercy

Correct sinners;
Teach the ignorant;
Give advice to those who are confused;
Comfort those who suffer;
Be patient with others;
Forgive injuries;
Pray for the living and the dead.

The Corporal Works of Mercy

Feed the hungry;
Give drink to the thirsty;
Clothe the naked;
Visit those in prison;
Shelter the homeless;
Visit the sick;
Bury the dead.

At first glance one might think that it is the Corporal Works of Mercy that most align themselves with the Social Doctrine of the Church but the Church calls every being to not only do charitable works for humankind but to be a reflection of God’s mercy and love to everyone. Thus, both the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy are at the root of Social Teaching.

THE QUICKER, PICKER UPPER

Have you ever placed a paper towel on a small pool of water and watched as the paper towel absorbs the liquid until it's saturated? If left alone, the water – an altogether separate element- actually becomes part of the paper towel and the towel can be used again and again to absorb more and more until it finally reaches its saturation point.

Of course, most of us are not of the mindset to reuse paper towels but are quick to discard them, once used, and to tear off another sheet when it's time to absorb something else.

Perhaps, that's true of us as well! We can absorb a lot but seldom do we like the feeling of total saturation...unless it's being saturated with the "finer things of life." Think back on our days in school when we felt overwhelmed with information and just shut down our ability to absorb any more. We just tuned out and turned off.

If we truly take some time to reflect upon our lives up to this point I surmise that we would be able to find a number of times when we reached our saturation point. Perhaps it was getting advice from adults as we were growing up; or maybe a teacher told us over and over again that we couldn't do this or achieve that; or was there a time when we prepared for a test or exam and crammed in so much information that we had reached our limit.

So what is our saturation level on the Social Doctrine of the Church? Have we tuned out or turned off thinking that we know everything there is to know or that we don't know everything but we know enough?

Our first thought might be to say that we know the teachings of Jesus Christ as presented in the Scriptures. The values espoused by Jesus in the Gospels are evident and our intentions would be to apply those values to our actions and interactions with others.

But living our lives as authentic Catholic Christians demands that we absorb as much as we can to come to a deeper knowledge and understanding of the values of Jesus as espoused in the Gospels and in His Church.

This follow-up process is intended to give you some deeper insight and to help you develop ways to assist yourselves, your students and their families to absorb the rich history of the social teaching of the Church.

THE COMPENDIUM OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

The Church herself has, in a sense, pulled out the core teachings of Jesus Christ and fashioned them into the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* written by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and published by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2005.

The 255 pages of text is a wonderful resource for those who wish to know more about the social doctrines of the Church. It is a concise but complete overview of the Church's social teachings.

At first glance, we might feel that the separation of Church and state would prevent the Church from entering the secular arena. However, precisely because the Church is an expert in humanity and because her mission is to help people live their lives with authentic meaning, she has the duty to guide all persons to fully live out the dignity that God has given to all men and women.

In guiding persons to live out that dignity, we are reminded of Saint Paul's words to His disciple, Timothy: "*Preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths. As for you, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.*" (2 Tim 4:2-5)

The work of the evangelist is never-ending! Our ministry to evangelize is a ministry that extends to every person, in every culture, and demands we share the person of Jesus Christ with all and announce the love that God has for all peoples. It is only by announcing this love to the world that every person can come to embrace Jesus Christ and share in the dignity that God has promised as the right of all peoples.

Discovering that they are loved by God, every person comes to understand their own dignity more deeply. Individuals learn not to be satisfied with only themselves but to encounter their neighbors in relationships that are ever more authentically human. Men and women who are made new by discovering this love of God are able to change the rules and the quality of relationships, transforming even social structures. They are people capable of bringing love where there is hatred, joy where there is sadness, light where there is darkness and pardon where there is injury. Only love is capable of radically transforming the relationships that people develop among themselves. This perspective – radical love for all - allows every person of good will to perceive the broad horizons of justice and human development in truth and goodness.

To love others takes a great deal of work and the Church is eager to make her contribution with her social doctrine, which concerns the whole person and is addressed to all people. So many of our brothers and sisters are waiting for help, so many that are oppressed are waiting for justice, so many who are unemployed are waiting for a job, so many people are waiting for the respect that is their due. Christian love prompts activity that inspires all who sincerely have the good of others at heart to make their contribution, no matter how small or insignificant it may seem to the world.

The Christian knows that in the social doctrine of the Church can be found the principles of reflection, the criteria for judgment and the directives for action which are the starting point for the promotion of an integral and unified humanism. Making the social doctrine of the Church a pastoral priority is therefore a responsibility that cannot be taken lightly. In doing so men and women will be

enlightened by it and will be enabled to interpret the reality of our culture and seek appropriate paths of action. *“The teaching and spreading of her social doctrine are part of the Church’s evangelizing mission.”* (Sollicitudo Rei Socialism, 41)

As disciples of Jesus Christ we carry this evangelizing mission within our hearts and must constantly commit ourselves, together with all peoples, to the search for truth and the meaning of life lived both as individual persons and as a society. God has spoken His Word to us throughout history and has entered into history in order to enter into dialogue with us and to reveal to us His plan of salvation, justice and brotherhood. In Jesus Christ, His Son made man, God has freed us from sin and has shown us the path we are to walk and the goal towards which we are to strive.

The Church walks alongside all humanity in its search for justice and equality. She lives in the world, and although not of the world, she is called to serve the world according to her innermost vocation.

The Church, the sign in history of God’s love for humankind and of the vocation of the whole human race to unity as children of the one Father, intends with the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church to propose to all men and women a humanism that is up to the standards of God’s plan of love in history, an integral and solidary humanism capable of creating a new social, economic and political order, founded on the dignity and freedom of every human person, to be brought about in peace, justice and solidarity.

This humanism can become a reality if individual men and women and their communities are able to cultivate moral and social virtues in themselves and spread them in society. *“Then, under the necessary help of divine grace, there will arise a new generation, the molders of a new humanity.”* (Gaudium et Spes, 30)

MEDIA RESOURCES

The Archdiocesan Media Center is an excellent resource for religious education in all of its dimensions. The following list will give you an insight into the offerings on the Social Doctrines of the Church to use with faculty, parents, students and the wider parish community.

(order at www.reledmediacenter.com or by phoning 314-792-7360)

Catholic Social Teaching

WE ARE CALLED: CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING FOR TODAY

DVD242 H/A 22min 2001

This DVD gives a clear and concise explanation of the seven principles of Catholic Social Teaching and shows how everyday people try to live by these principles in response to their baptismal call (See also VC1368).

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

DVD603 H/A 30minx4 2006

Msgr. Stuart Swetland of the University of Illinois Newman Center places a very human face on Catholic Social Teaching as he describes concrete, practical ways in which Catholics today may live out principles of Social Teaching. Examples are cited from the personal experiences of Pope John Paul II, Blessed Mother Teresa, and St. Maximilian Kolbe, among others. The overarching theme is to make the law of charity the law by which we live, for "As you did these things unto the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt 25:40).

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

DVD749 H/A 60min 2012

This episode of Theology Roundtable discusses the principles underlying Catholic social teaching, with contemporary examples illustrating the challenges of our lives today.

CHRISTIANS IN SOCIETY: KEYS TO CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

DVD759 H/A 30minx9 2012

This nine-part series shows in striking images response to the conflicts posed within our global society. Included are Catholic Social Ethics, Family and Society, Law and Justice, Public Authorities, Taxes, The International Order, Labor Relations, the Company, and the Market. Position the DVD with the letters NTSC upwards. In English or Spanish.

Poverty

WHEN DID I SEE YOU HUNGRY?

DVD113 H/A 37min 2002

A film-documentary featuring more than 250 powerful and poignant photographs from Gerald Straub's book by the same title, asking us to see Jesus in the face of the hungry. The images and commentary invite meditation on the plight of the poor world-wide and on our responsibility to help (See also VC1518).

CHILDREN OF THE BATEY

DVD722 H/A 30min 2012

What does it mean to be the hands of Jesus? Some teen and adult parishioners from St. Peter's Parish in Ontario experience the challenge directly through a week-long visit to the Batey in the Dominican Republic. Although they could not change the reality in this impoverished community, they could each impact one life, and themselves be touched by the faith and joy of the children there. They learn "Blessed are the poor, and blessed are you who help the poor."

POVERTY AND PRAYER

DVD811.4 H/A 90min 2004

Inspirational new footage as well as the most powerful scenes from his previous films on world-wide poverty are seen in this moving reflection on hunger and hope, both physical and spiritual. After producing films on the suffering of the extremely poor in India, Kenya, Brazil, Central America, Gerry Straub was led deeper into prayer, which in turn taught him to be more dependent upon God for everything.

POVERTY & PRAYER II

DVD811.9 H/A 150min 2007

The most popular film produced by the San Damiano Foundation, Poverty and Prayer, is followed here by Part II, divided into scenes each of which can be a perfect teaching tool for classroom or adult small group sessions. Sometimes we are embarrassed by the poverty of Jesus, and those of the poor among us who do not seem "blessed." But Jesus entered our poverty and calls us to discover our own poverty and become one with the poor as we are all reborn into a new life hidden in Christ.

ROOM AT THE INN

DVD811.6 H/A 150min 2006

This tells the inspirational story of the St. Francis Inn, a soup kitchen in a dark, depressed area of Philadelphia where poverty, pain and drugs thrive. But here guests are served the love and mercy of God, acknowledging their dignity as human beings. The images and meditative commentary became an Advent retreat on Christ who became poor for us.

THE FACES OF POVERTY

DVD811.7 H/A 45min 2007

We talk about the "poor," but hardly ever meet any poor person. Here you will meet actual poor people, learn their names, hear their tragic stories, see their sorrowful faces. These mothers and children, grandmothers, veterans, unemployed who are imprisoned in suffocating squalor live in the shadow of astounding affluence, presenting a compelling call to work to end the injustice of poverty.

WHERE LOVE IS

DVD811.10 H/A 90min 2006

Inspired by the simple and saintly life of Friar Solanus Casey, the Capuchin Soup Kitchen serves the poor of Detroit since 1929. Stories of faith emerge from places of deep pain like beams of light piercing through immense obstacles. The friars and volunteers reach out with arms of love, believing that where love is, there God is.

DOROTHY DAY: BLESSED ARE THE POOR

DVD829 H/A 0min 1992

No greater witness of the Christian concern for the dispossessed poor in the 1930's Depression can be found than in the Catholic Worker Movement founded by Dorothy Day. Following the spiritual journey of the Catholic convert, the video also assesses Day's legacy of non-violence for the modern world (See also VC553).

FOOL FOR CHRIST: THE STORY OF DOROTHY DAY

DVD570 H/A 52min 2007

Dorothy Day, one of the most dynamic and beloved religious modern history, is brought to life by Sarah Melici in this one-woman play. Born in Brooklyn, New York in 1897, Day made her mark as a journalist, social activist and a devout Co-founder of the Catholic Worker Newspaper/Movement in 1933. Dorothy Day is perhaps best known for her long battle for peace and justice on behalf of the poor and homeless. Dorothy died in 1980. Her work continues today around the world in over 180 Catholic Worker Communities protesting injustice and violence in all forms.

Homelessness**I WISH I WERE A PRINCESS**

DVD726 J/H 14min 2001

This DVD records the sad but hopeful words and faces of homeless children, recounting their experiences and feelings. It is a touching presentation that witnesses to the causes and effects of poverty and homelessness on children (See also VC1324).

RESCUE ME

DVD811.1 H/A 150minx2 2003

This two-part DVD is a moving documentary picturing a Sea of Despair and an Island of Hope in Skid Row, Los Angeles. It presents a stark look at the tragic lives of the more than 10,000 real people who live on the streets in shocking poverty, and the Rescue Mission where love abounds, offering food, shelter and rehabilitation programs.

Immigration

POSADA

DVD509 H 57min 2009

The U.S. Border Patrol turns away 100,000 unaccompanied immigrant children every year. This is the story of three who stayed. Posada portrays the journeys of Densi, Johny and Wilber who, as teenagers, separately left their homes in Central America for the United States. They each were detained by immigration officials for months between 1999 and 2002. Their struggles helped pave the way for others to receive assistance. They relate their stories to Las Posada, a Mexican tradition that retells the Christmas story of Joseph and Mary's search for shelter.

ENDLESS EXODUS: THE SORROWFUL FLIGHT OF THE MIGRANTS

DVD811.3 H/A 130min 2004

This film captures the face and presence of Christ in the face and presence of migrants from Mexico and Central America, many of whom will die trying to cross the desert to get a job nobody really wants. While not addressing the immense complexity surrounding the problem of illegal immigration, this film simply sheds light on the life of these poor, whose journey can parallel our own spiritual journey and teach us about sacrifice, fearlessness and dedication in the face of grave and confusing circumstances.

Racism

BEYOND THE NEWS: RACISM

DVD561.2 H/A 25min 2010

Explores prejudice and white privilege and how they affect jobs, expectations in education, the judicial system, and the Church. This series goes beyond the statistics, beyond the sensational, beyond the impersonal, beyond the comfortable to real situations, in-depth understandings, and questions to stimulate discussion. Study guide included.

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

DVD385 H/A 60min 1994

This documentary offers a one-of-a-kind examination of the extraordinary life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., using rare and largely unseen film footage and photographs, and including two rare speeches and a civil rights timeline. Dr. King was a respected and loved leader in American history, the conscience of the struggle for civil rights, and one of its heroic martyrs. His life and death exemplify that social change and enlightenment are brought about only by the overwhelming force of the human spirit.

SISTERS OF SELMA: BEARING WITNESS FOR CHANGE

DVD511 H/A 60min 2007

After the racial violence of 1965, Catholic Sisters from around the country followed their faith to join the voting rights protests in Selma, Alabama. Showing those who risked personal safety to bring change, this documentary is a powerful, affirming story of faith and justice.

Featuring the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, the Sisters of Loretto, the Franciscan Sisters of Mary, including Sister Antono Ebo, FSM.

Death Penalty

CULTURE OF LIFE AND THE PENALTY OF DEATH

DVD126 A 15min 2006

This DVD accompanies the statement from the United States Bishops calling for an end to the death penalty in our country. It presents the Catholic social teaching on this important issue and includes testimonies from those who have been touched by violence, like Bud Welch whose daughter died in the Oklahoma City bombing. Discussion guide is available through the website www.usccbpublishing.org Video/DVD Study Guides.

THE DEATH PENALTY

DVD507.4 H/A 20min 2006

Father Gregory J. O'Meara, SJ, an assistant professor of law at Marquette University Law School, engages us in a passionate discussion of the death penalty from an historical, legal and Catholic perspective. As one of the attorneys who successfully convicted serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer in 1992, Father O'Meara provides firsthand insight into the criminal justice system and paints an all-encompassing, passionate argument for an end to the death penalty.

THE DEATH PENALTY

DVD561.4 H/A 75min 2010

Does killing a killer create justice? Should murderers be forgiven? How do our Christian teachings move the discussion on capital punishment beyond just an emotional or philosophical level? Be inspired and challenged by this three-part presentation as you encounter families of murder victims moving from fury to forgiveness.

LA MAMA

DVD950 H/A 27min 2014

This documentary profiles the life and work of Mother Antonia, an American nun who chose to live among the prisoners in La Mesa Penitentiary in Tijuana, Mexico, after living a charmed life in Beverly Hills, California. For decades she served a life-sentence by choice as an intermediary between inmates and guards, defusing violence, ensuring humane conditions and meeting practical needs.

Pro-Life**LIFE: IT'S A GIFT AND A CLASS PROJECT**

DVD521 H 45min 2001

This video is an intense film that deals with abortion, casual sex and relationships. It will help young people to think carefully about choices in life and the consequences of their behavior (See also VC1383).

PRO-LIFE IS PRO-LOVE

DVD658 H 30min 2008

This program is a reality-based teaching tool designed by former chaplain of Bishop O'Connell High School, Fr. Daniel Mode, to provide high school students with a firm grounding in the Church's pro-life principles. It is a four year program that helps students throughout their high school years, training them in evangelization, defense of the pro-life position, and much more. This dynamic approach to life easily adapted to any young adult catechetical program, and is sure to equip your teens to win the culture for life

FROM MY MOTHER'S WOMB

DVD700.8 H 30min 2010

This series hopes to inspire Catholic youth to live more fully their baptismal call to holiness. Session eight focuses on the Pro-Life cause and rewards of defending life, with added sections on the reality of D&E abortions and post-abortion ministry.

TO BE BORN

DVD733 H/A 15min 2011

This is about a young woman faced with an unplanned pregnancy who seeks to have an abortion. She hears her unborn daughter begin to describe the chilling details of what is happening to her, and in contrast, the days of joy she can share with her daughter if she is born. The visually gripping images in this powerful pro-life film make it appropriate for seniors in high school or older (In English, Polish and Spanish).

INTO MY ARMS

DVD856 H/A 15min 2011

Very little is reported about the effect abortion has on women who made this choice. In this documentary we hear from five women who share their remorse and their struggles with an array of psychological challenges. Leading Christian counselors reflect on their experience and offer hope for forgiveness and restoration. Bonus feature on Men and Abortion.

40

DVD972 H/A 60min 2014

40 is a compelling new documentary that examines the effects of abortion on our nation over the last 40 years since Roe v. Wade. It showcases interviews with dozens of pro-life leaders and presents abortion as the most important human rights issue of our time.

CUTTING THROUGH THE SPIN ON STEM CELLS AND CLONING

DVD44 H/A 80min 2006

Father Tad Pacholczyk is both a priest and a Ph.D. in Neuroscience who is currently the Director of Education for the National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. His presentation on the science and ethics of stem cell research and cloning is informative and helpful in countering the media myths that bombard us. He clearly differentiates embryonic stem cell research from the truly effective methods of treatment from placenta and adult stem cell research which do not destroy one human being to supposedly help another.

HEALING THE CULTURE: A PRO-LIFE PHILOSOPHY

DVD664 H/A 30minx4 2007

Fr. Robert Spitzer, SJ, brings his deeply felt convictions about the purpose of life, the common good, and the means of achieving a healthy future for our society to this call for healing our culture. Engaging the studio audience in "how-to" steps for spreading an unashamedly pro-life, anti-euthanasia, and determinedly optimistic message to the twenty-first century, Fr. Spitzer moves easily from introducing us to an understanding of the highest levels of happiness and meaning of life, to a discussion of human freedoms, love, and suffering, to practical advice in sharing this information with the Church, community, educational organizations, and civic groups.

THE CULTURE OF LIFE: QUESTIONS IN BIOETHICS

DVD725 H/A 30minx8 2012

The Catholic contribution to bioethics is provided here from both the scientific and ethical points of view, with visual thought-provoking analysis. This respectful approach to suffering humanity addresses abortion, artificial procreation, stem cell research, AIDS, euthanasia, palliative care and MORE. Not recommended for those under age 13. (Position the DVD with the letters NTSC upwards to watch in the United States). In English or Spanish.

GOSPEL OF LIFE IN HEALTHCARE

DVD760 H/A 90minx4 2011

What does the Catholic Church say about the medical issues we face today? This series explores a full range of beginning to end-of-life topics, including the Hippocratic Oath, the Theology of the Body, formation of conscience, natural fertility care, abortion, euthanasia, optional and obligatory medical treatment.

CARING WITH FAITH

DVD394 A 34minx4 2000

This four-DVD set is designed for caregivers, families, pastoral ministers in dealing with their own and other's suffering and death. It explores the ways Christians enter into the mystery of human suffering with hope in new life in Christ. It includes Training Ministers to the Sick (VC1127), Facing My Own Suffering and Loss (VC1126), Suffering With a Loved One (VC1263), and Toward Death (VC1264). Closed Captioned for the hearing impaired.

TURNING THE TIDE: DIGNITY, COMPASSION AND EUTHANASIA

DVD584 H/A 30min 2007

Moving testimony from disabled persons who are threatened in contemporary discourse with the potential legalization of euthanasia and assisted suicide. Together they offer tangible solutions as to what needs to be done to improve the quality of life for all through the true meaning of compassion and dignity.

Disabilities

THE HEART HAS ITS REASONS

DVD387 H/A 57min 1984

A video-documentary about Jean Vanier and the L'Arche community for men and women with mental handicaps. Today, L'Arche is a worldwide federation of more than sixty homes rooted in the spirituality of the Beatitudes (See also VC89).

DISABILITIES AWARENESS: WELCOMING OUR DIFFERENCES

DVD842 H/A 14minx2 2013

As a Church, we are called to accept all people. By welcoming our differences, we build relationships which bring us one step closer to total inclusion. Advocate ministers open doors to accessibility, open minds through education, and open hearts by giving people with disabilities the opportunity to share their gifts through ministry.

Militarism/Martyrdom

BLESS YOU PRISON

DVD117 A 86min 2005

The true story of Nicoleta Valery Grossu's amazing survival in a Romanian Communist prison camp and how faith in the Lord enabled her to transcend the relentless cruelty. It was an experience unspeakably brutal: to be taken from your home and thrown into jail without any trial, to be tortured night after night, to endure the horrors of the prison workcamp. And yet she found God in the Communist prisons. (warning: extreme violence shown makes this film not suitable for use in schools).

THE DIARY OF IMMACULEE

DVD344 H/A 38min 2006

Immaculee grew up in a country she loved, surrounded by a family she cherished. She lost both in the brutal tribal wars in Rwanda, while she survived with seven other women hidden in a cramped bathroom for three months. She tells the story of how her faith helped her face unspeakable horrors and return to her country with love.

ROMERO

DVD370 H/A 105min 1989

A look at the life of Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador, who made the ultimate sacrifice in a passionate stand against social injustice and oppression in his country. This chronicles the transformation of Romero from an a-political, complacent priest to a committed leader of the Salvadoran people (See also VC280).

POPIELUSZKO: FREEDOM IS WITHIN US

DVD862 H/A 150min 2009

This film depicts the powerful true story of Blessed Jerzy Popieluszko, the courageous young priest-martyr who was the chaplain of the large Polish trade union, Solidarity. His dynamic personality, deep prayer life, and strong empathy for the persecution and sufferings of the workers made him a beacon of hope to the oppressed Polish people. He was brutally murdered by Communist agents for his outspoken defense of his people and for proclaiming the teachings of the Church on human rights and the dignity of the human person. He was beatified in 2010. In Polish, with English and Spanish subtitles.

Holocaust

MAXIMILIAN: SAINT OF AUSCHWITZ

DVD343 H/A 75min 1995

The gripping story of the saint of Auschwitz is brought to life. As the exciting plot unfolds, one is drawn not only into the compelling events of this courageous life, but into Kolbe's message of faith and trust as well (See also VC814).

LIFE FOR LIFE: MAXIMILIAN KOLBE

DVD974 H/A 90min 2014

An escaped prisoner from Auschwitz learns the tragic news that ten random inmates are sentenced to death by starvation because of his escape. Fleeing the Nazis and his sense of guilt, Jan visits the Franciscan monastery where Father Maximilian Kolbe had been founder and superior. Why would Kolbe decide to die for another prisoner, a complete stranger? This film reflects on what heroic faith and love can do, declaring with Pope John Paul II that patron saint of the difficult 20th century.

EDITH STEIN: THE SEVENTH CHAMBER

DVD567 H/A 110min 1995

A moving, artistic portrayal of the life of Jewish philosopher, Catholic convert and Carmelite martyr, Edith Stein, capturing the interior struggles of this extraordinary woman as well as the great conflicts from her decision to convert to Catholicism. Deeply influenced by the writings of St. Teresa of Avila, she joined the Carmelites and took the name of Teresa Benedicta of the cross, was put to death in Auschwitz in 1942, and was canonized by John Paul II in 1998. This film shows how two worlds were united within her, the Jew and the Christian, in absolute coherence in her search for truth.

THE COURAGEOUS HEART OF IRENA SENDLER

DVD764 H/A 95min 2009

How did one woman save 2500 children? This is the remarkable true story of World War II hero Irena Sendler during the German occupation of Poland. As a social worker, Irena had access to the Warsaw ghetto, making it possible for her to rescue the daughter of a Jewish friend and safely hide the young girl with a Catholic family. At great personal risk, she recruited sympathetic friends and co-workers to smuggle thousands more children out.

THE JEWISH CARDINAL

DVD947 A 100min 2014

This tells the amazing true story of Jean-Marie Lustiger, a Polish-Jewish immigrant who maintained his cultural identity as a Jew even after converting to Catholicism and later joining the priesthood. He becomes the focus and mediator of the controversy between Jews and Catholics centering around a convent proposed at Auschwitz. DVD includes bonus 10-min film *Kosher*, about a lonely Orthodox Jewish boy's imaginative meeting with a pig that miraculously shows up at his doorstep. In French, with English subtitles.

IN SPITE OF DARKNESS: A SPIRITUAL ENCOUNTER WITH AUSCHWITZ

DVD948 H/A 74min 2008

An interfaith retreat held at the notorious Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camps in Poland brings together a Rabbi, an atheist, a Catholic priest and others who attempt to pray together in a place that silences the heart and chills the soul. They come to face-to-face with their own vulnerabilities and complicity, to emerge with new strength, peace and glimmers of hope. Includes 58min classroom version and online study guide.

CORRIE TEN BOOM: A FAITH UNDEFEATED

DVD949 H/A 55min 2014

When Nazi forces invaded Holland in 1940 and began rounding up Jews, Corrie ten Boom, her sister and their elderly father risked their lives to save as many as possible. For their "crimes," they were sent to the notorious Ravensbruck concentration camp, where they suffered relentless cruelty. Corrie was released due to a clerical error and spent the rest of her days caring for other death camp survivors. She shared her story in the bestselling book *The Hiding Place* (DVD520) that provides her account of persevering faith and forgiveness in the face of terrible evil.

THE HIDING PLACE

DVD520 J/H 150min 1975

True-life account of a Christian family in WW II Holland imprisoned by the Nazis for concealing Jews in their home. As the youngest daughter sees her family members put to death one by one, she must fight to reaffirm her faith in humanity and God (See DVD949 and VC677).

HIDDEN IN SILENCE

DVD641 H 90min 1995

When Jews are sent to the ghettos after the Nazi takeover of Poland, a Catholic teenager Stefania Podgorska sneaks thirteen Jews into her attic. When two German nurses are assigned to her living quarters, the chances of discovery - and immediate execution - become dangerously high. This is a true story of a young woman's selfless commitment and unwavering resolve in the face of prejudice and war.

**POPE PIUS XII AND THE HOLOCAUST:
A HAND OF PEACE**

DVD412 H/A 55min 2008

Pope Pius XII guided the Catholic Church through two tumultuous decades, firmly establishing himself as a champion of peace, and the moral voice of the world torn apart by war. However, shortly after his death in 1958, his heroic legacy was called into question by some historians who claim that his alleged "silence" during the Nazi holocaust allowed Hitler to carry out his "final solution" against the Jews. Pope Pius XII protested vehemently the persecution of Jews. His was a prophecy in action, which saved the lives of countless victims of the neo-pagan Nazi reign of terror, rather than making potentially counter-productive public statements. This documentary explores the difficult choices Pius XII faced during the Second World War, and provides convincing proof that his bold, yet discreet, prophetic actions saved tens of thousands and paved the way for a new era of Catholic-Jewish relations that have deepened over the past 50 years.

PIUS XII: UNDER THE ROMAN SKY

DVD867 H/A 200min 2010

Based on Vatican documents and personal testimonies, this epic film tells the great, often hidden struggle waged by Pope Pius XII to save the Jews from the Nazis during WWII. Despite all his efforts, he is not able to prevent some of the horrors when over a thousand victims are deported to Auschwitz, but history testifies that over 10,000 Jews were saved, hidden in churches and convents in Rome.

**THE RECKONING: REMEMBERING THE
DUTCH RESISTANCE**

DVD779 H/A 96min 2010

A most powerful and inspirational documentary recounting the heroic resistance of ordinary people in Holland during the Nazi occupation. Through the eye-witness accounts of six survivors, the horrors of "the final solution" meet the amazing faith, courage and affirmation of life by Christians and Jews who risked their lives for others at risk. Their honest feelings about their love and loss, their questions and trust in God, their reflections on why some did and some didn't resist, their finding of meaning and purpose in the most difficult of times -- all move the heart and raise significant questions about our own choices in life. Some archival footage contains graphic imagery that is not suitable for children.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

In *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions* of 1998 the United States Catholic Bishops opened with the following quote: “*There are many innovative efforts by Catholic educators to communicate the social doctrine of the Church. At the same time, however, it is clear that in some educational programs Catholic social teaching is not really shared or not sufficiently integral and explicit. As a result, far too many Catholics are not familiar with the basic content of Catholic social teaching. More fundamentally, many Catholics do not adequately understand that the social teaching of the Church is an essential part of Catholic faith. This poses a serious challenge for all Catholics, since it weakens our capacity to be a Church that is true to the demands of the Gospel.*”

Catholic social teaching has its roots in the Old Testament prophets who announced God’s special love for the poor and called God’s people to a covenant of love and justice. It is a teaching founded on the life and words of Jesus Christ, who came “to bring glad tidings to the poor...liberty to captives...recovery of sight to the blind” (Lk 4:18-19). The Church’s social teaching is a rich treasure of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of modern society. It offers moral principles and coherent values that are badly needed in our time. In this time of widespread violence and diminished respect for human life and dignity in our country and around the world, the Gospel of life and the biblical call to justice need to be proclaimed and shared with new clarity, urgency and energy.

To that end, the seven themes of Catholic Social Doctrine will be treated throughout the remainder of this bulletin. In addition, suggested activities for faculties, students and parents will be offered to assist you in your work of fulfilling the sixth characteristic of *The Evangelizing Catholic School*: “*An evangelizing Catholic school is actively conscious of forming and transforming children and youth according to the social teaching of the Church.*”

SEVEN PRINCIPLES: THE HEART OF SOCIAL DOCTRINE

There are seven themes that are at the heart of Catholic Social Doctrine: (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; and, (7) Care for God’s Creation.

Catholic schools, religious education, adult education, and faith formation programs are vitally important for sharing the substance and values of Catholic social teaching. Just as the social teaching of the Church is integral to Catholic faith, the social justice dimensions of teaching are integral to Catholic education and catechesis. They are an essential part of Catholic Identity, formation and evangelization..

The Church has the God-given mission and the unique capacity to call people to live with integrity, compassion, responsibility, and concern for others. Therefore, all of us have the responsibility to see the Church’s social teaching as a core part of teaching and formation for all of us, especially those who are entrusted to our care. Without presenting our social teaching, our programs would be offering an incomplete presentation of our Catholic tradition. We would therefore fall short of our mission and this would result in a serious loss for those in our schools and programs of religious education.

These principles build on the foundation of Catholic social teaching: the dignity of human life. This central Catholic principle requires that we measure every policy, every institution, and every action by whether it protects human life and enhances human dignity, especially for the poor and vulnerable. The Scriptures tell us that “without a vision the people perish.” (Prv. 29:18) As Catholics, we have an inspiring vision in our social teaching. In a world that hungers for a sense of meaning and moral direction, this teaching offers ethical criteria for action.

LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

“The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. Our belief in the sanctity of human life and the inherent dignity of the human person is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching.” (Sharing Catholic Social Teaching, pg. 4)

There is no more basic principle in the Catholic social vision than the dignity of the human person. It is the bedrock theme, the place where the Church stands when it addresses the question of justice in the world. Therefore, we are required to honor the human person, to give priority to the person because of the intrinsic dignity that each person possesses.

Theologically, the principle of human dignity is grounded in the idea that the person is sacred, made in the image of God. The human person is the clearest reflection of God among us. When we look into the eyes of another person, we see there the greatest manifestation of the grandeur of God, the clearest reflection of the presence of God among us.

The Church through her social teaching asks us to never forget this most basic principle: people are more important than things. Every person, regardless of age, sex, race, religion, or economic status, has the special dignity that comes from being a child of God. Thus the moral issues of abortion, assisted suicide, the death penalty, racism and other life issues in our culture must always be seen in light of this basic moral principle.

Whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, as well as disgraceful working conditions, where people are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons, all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society. (*Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, #27*)

ACTIVITIES TO TEACH THIS PRINCIPLE

Following are suggested activities that you might use to apply the principle on the *Life and Dignity of the Human Person*. Naturally, these are only suggestions and your ability and creativity will allow you to add to this listing. As much as possible we have attempted to appeal to all ages and grade levels within the school community and to the wider community of faith so that all may experience God’s love for His people and the Church’s call to evangelize and bring people into closer intimacy with Him.

ALMOST HOME

This organization is a transition living program for homeless teenage mothers and their children. Make contact with them to see what services you might be able to provide (clothing, toys, food, hygiene supplies, etc) as a school community. Involve the entire school and parish community in your efforts. Then take representatives from all facets of the parish community and deliver them. Make sure you spend some time with the residents and then share your experiences and reflections with the community. (3200 St. Vincent, 314.771.4663)

FOSTER GRANDPARENTS/FAITHFUL FRIENDS

Both of these organizations are conducted through Cardinal Ritter Senior Services. This would be a great way to not only bring joy into the life of an elderly person but also to allow others in the community to learn from those who have a wealth of wisdom to share. (314.918.2297 / 314.383.0800)

PRO LIFE MARCH

As you prepare for the anniversary of Roe vs. Wade, solicit parents and their upper grade students to pilgrimage to Washington, DC for the annual Pro-Life March. Parents going with their children will be much more educational than children going with other adults. Prepare reflection questions for the parents to discuss with their children on their trip. Don’t forget to offer the opportunity for them to reflect with the student body once they return. (Contact the Respect Life Apostolate for assistance.)

COMMUNITY, FAMILY, AND THE COMMON GOOD

“The body is one and has many members, but all the members, many though they are, are one body; and so it is with Christ. It is in one Spirit that all of us...were baptized into one body...if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members share its joy. You, then, are the body of Christ. Every one of you is a member of it.” (1 Cor. 12:12-17)

In Catholic social thought, the person is not only sacred but is also social. The very nature of human beings is that they are communal creatures who live and grow in community. The dignity of the person makes sense only in the context of the person's relationships to others in the world. Human dignity can only be realized and protected in the context of relationships with society.

The common good grows out of the social nature of the human person and is defined as the sum total of spiritual, material, and social conditions that are necessary in order that all in society might realize their full human dignity.

The obligation to love our neighbor has an individual dimension, but it also requires a broader social commitment to the common good. Everyone has an obligation to contribute to the good of the whole society, to the common good.

Contemporary society is characterized by a radical separation of private life and social life. Far too often, American culture promotes an ethic of private interest to the near exclusion of social virtues and social commitments. The nation is witnessing a loss of commitment to the social order, a declining willingness to sacrifice one's immediate selfish interests for the good of the wider society.

The Catholic tradition teaches that human beings grow and achieve fulfillment in community. We believe people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the well-being of all, especially the poor and the vulnerable.

ACTIVITIES TO TEACH THIS PRINCIPLE

Following are suggested activities that you might use to apply the principle on *Community, Family, and the Common Good*. As much as possible we have attempted to appeal to all ages and grade levels within the school community and to the wider community of faith so that all may experience God's love for His people and the Church's call to evangelize and bring people into closer intimacy with Him.

APOSTOLATE FOR FAMILY CONSECRATION

This is an international community of families seeking to rebuild family life through a variety of ministries and evangelization programs. Research this Apostolate, contact them, and examine ways that you might spread their work through involving the families of your students. Spend some time attempting to get the entire family of your students involved in the activities. (310 Cliff Cave Road, 63129)

CATHOLIC CHARITIES

An excellent organization with over 66 agencies and programs providing services to people in need without regard to religion, race, or national origin. Whether it be a food drive, a collection for clothing for all ages, or some sort of an activity to raise money for those less fortunate, this organization has something for everyone. There are opportunities throughout the area at various centers. (Contact 314.367.5500)

ARCHDIOCESAN MISSION OFFICE

The Mission Office coordinates missionary education, animation, spiritual and financial support of the missionary activity of the Church. While many of our schools participate in the Holy Childhood Association there is so much more that can be done. Perhaps you could host a parish-wide Mission Carnival or Mission Awareness activity that would generate activity and interest in helping those in third world countries who are in need of assistance and in need of hearing the Word of God preached to them. (Information: 314.792.7655 or visit their website at <http://www.stlmissions.org>)

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In a world where some speak mostly of “rights” and others mostly of “responsibilities,” the Catholic tradition teaches that human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met.

Those who claim their own rights, yet altogether forget or neglect to carry out their respective duties, are people who build with one hand and destroy with the other. Since people are social by nature, they are meant to live with others and to work for one another’s welfare.

Everyone has the right to life, to bodily integrity, and to the means which are suitable for the proper development of life; these are primarily food, clothing, shelter, rest, medical care, and finally the necessary social services.

In Catholic social teaching, the basic demands of justice are made explicit by a specific set of human rights. These rights are bestowed on human beings by God and grounded in the nature and dignity of the person. They are not created by society, but rather, are inherent in the very nature of every person. These fundamental rights form a kind of baseline, a set of minimum conditions for social justice.

Human rights are the minimum conditions for life in the community. When people are hungry or homeless, when they do not have access to health care or employment, they are being denied basic rights. Society must ensure that these rights are protected.

As a nation, we are challenged to ask a basic question: how can we structure society so that we guarantee that no one goes without the basic goods that are essential to human dignity?

Therefore when the civil and political and the social and economic personal rights of the individual are denied they harm persons and wound the human community. Their serious and sustained denial violates individuals and destroys solidarity among persons.

ACTIVITIES TO TEACH THIS PRINCIPLE

Following are suggested activities that you might use to apply the principle on *Rights and Responsibilities*. As much as possible we have attempted to appeal to all ages and grade levels within the school community and to the wider community of faith so that all may experience God’s love for His people and the Church’s call to evangelize and bring people into closer intimacy with Him.

SAINT PATRICK CENTER

Every year before the start of school backpacks full of school supplies go to hundreds of children in need. Contact the Saint Patrick Center to be part of this effort.

PEACE AND JUSTICE COMMISSION OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS

The goal of the commission is to address societal issues such as poverty, racial tensions and the lack of educational opportunities.

MOVIE NIGHT ACTIVITIES

Work with other parish organizations in offering a “social justice night” for the entire parish. Have your children take a prominent role in hosting this event. Perhaps you could divide those attending into different groups, beginning with a combined prayer service, then showing a film or film clip on some facet of social justice, and then coming together to set a plan of action that might be carried out through the remainder of the year. Once you get things going, have a parish organization coordinate the activities.

OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE

The theme of special care and love for the poor is one that is central to the biblical notion of justice. The Old Testament Scriptures emphasize that God expects those who are faithful to the covenant to pay special attention to the “widows, orphans, and aliens.” In the New Testament, especially in the Beatitudes, and in the whole of Jesus’ life and teaching, it is clear that those who seek to follow the way of Jesus must care for the poor in a special way.

Pope John Paul II spoke of this special obligation to the poor as a “preferential, but not exclusive, love of the poor.” He described this preferential love as a “call to have a special openness with the small and the weak, those that suffer and weep, those that are humiliated and left on the margin of society, so as to help them win their dignity as human persons and children of God.” (Origins, July 1980)

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in their pastoral letter on the economy wrote: *“the primary purpose of this special commitment to the poor is to enable them to become active participants in the life of society. It is to enable all persons to share in and contribute to the common good.”*

The obligation to evaluate social and economic activity from the viewpoint of the poor and the powerless arises from the radical command to love one’s neighbor as one’s self. Those who are marginalized and whose rights are denied have privileged claims if society is to provide justice for all.

A healthy community can be achieved only if its members give special attention to those with special needs, to those who are poor and are on the margins of society. All members of a family and of society in general are better off when they exercise this “option” for the poor and vulnerable.

This obligation is deeply rooted in Christian belief.

ACTIVITIES TO TEACH THIS PRINCIPLE

Following are suggested activities that you might use to apply the principle on the *Option for the Poor and Vulnerable*. As much as possible we have attempted to appeal to all ages and grade levels within the school community and to the wider community of faith so that all may experience God’s love for His people and the Church’s call to evangelize and bring people into closer intimacy with Him.

TUTORING

Whether it is a student in a special education program or a student who is just having difficulty understanding a particular concept, some of your upper grade students might serve as tutors for these children.

FOOD PANTRIES

Throughout the area one does not have to look far for an opportunity to help those in need. Food pantries, today, more than ever are in serious need of items to help feed the poor and the vulnerable. Many of these persons, until recently, have been just like us but economic circumstances have put them at risk. We often think of collecting food and other items at Thanksgiving and Christmas but often forget that “the poor we have with us always.” They are always in need of assistance and if one person regains their status and no longer needs assistance, there are always more to take their place.

ORPHANAGES/HOMES FOR CHILDREN

There are many opportunities for your students to interact with other children their own age throughout the Archdiocese. With a group of parents and possibly with the help of your Board of Education, organize an outing for some of your students to visit and spend the day with children who are less fortunate. You could turn the day into a “field day” of sorts with organized games and activities and top it off with a picnic lunch. Make it a fun day for everyone. Don’t forget when you return to school to give an opportunity for students to reflect on their experience.

THE DIGNITY OF WORK AND THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS

“Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God’s creation. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected—the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages ...to private property, and to economic initiative.” (Sharing Catholic Social Teaching, pg. 5)

Work has a special significance in the Catholic tradition because, as the creation ethic in Genesis teaches, we have a responsibility to carry forward God’s creative activity. Work is a primary way in which we do that. When we work, we are carrying out our role as co-creators with God in the ongoing saga of creation.

Work is a form of participation that is vital to human development because it is through work that most people meet their material needs and exercise their talents. People who are able and willing to work, but cannot get a job, are deprived of a chance to participate and to contribute to the economy and to the good of society.

We must consider it our duty to reaffirm that the remuneration of work is not something that can be left to the laws of the marketplace; nor should it be a decision left to the will of the more powerful. It must be determined in accordance with justice and equity; which means that workers must be paid a wage which allows them to live a truly human life and to fulfill their family obligations in a worthy manner. (*Mother and Teacher*, #15)

In a marketplace where too often the quarterly bottom line takes precedence over the rights of workers, we believe that the economy must serve people, not the other way around. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected.

Respecting these rights promotes an economy that protects human life, defends human rights, and advances the well-being of all.

ACTIVITIES TO TEACH THIS PRINCIPLE

Following are suggested activities that you might use to apply the principle on *The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers*. These activities are more academic than service oriented but will allow students to come to a deeper understanding of the Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers.

IMMIGRATION

In the media today there is a great deal of information being disseminated about keeping America for “Americans” and subsequently keeping those from across the border from entering our country. Additionally, laws are in the process of being enacted whereby a “wall” should be erected to keep people out. This topic would be a great way to involve your students in the topic of social justice for workers and to discuss the work ethic of peoples in general. Perhaps you might have them do research on the number of immigrants that yearly cross over into our country, the types and nature of the work they do, and the remuneration they receive for their services.

FAIR PAY FOR A FAIR DAY’S WORK

The Scriptures tell us about good stewardship in the parable of the workers in the vineyard. Read this passage to your students and ask them to discuss their reaction to the passage. Hopefully you will then be able to instruct them about what’s fair and just in light of Church teaching.

RESEARCH ON UNEMPLOYMENT

This is a multi-faceted approach to the principle on the dignity of work and the rights of workers. Divide your classes into groups giving them various topics to research either through the internet, the newspaper, or magazines.

- The percentages of “the rich,” “the upper middle class,” “the middle class” and “the poor.”
- The average wage of each class
- The number of unemployed in the St. Louis area.
- The average salary of the poor in St. Louis.

SOLIDARITY

“Solidarity...is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering 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.” (On Social Concern, #34)

In today’s global village, citizens are increasingly aware of the social and economic problems around the world. Hundreds of millions of children go to bed hungry every night because they live in desperate poverty. Millions more suffer the effects of war, ethnic conflicts, and natural disasters. The disparities between poverty and wealth are so extreme as to be almost overwhelming.

In the face of these “signs of the times” we, who are people of faith, are forced to ask the question: “Am I my brother’s keeper?” To what extent are we morally and socially responsible for the fate of others, especially those who are in need? This question is difficult enough when it refers to those who are in one’s immediate vicinity. But how does one answer that question when it refers to people half a world away? Am I supposed to be the “keeper” of my brother and sister who live in places I have never seen, who speak a language I do not understand, and whose culture is foreign to my own?

Church teaching answers this question with a resounding “Yes.” The U.S. Bishops in their 1997 statement, *“Called to Global Solidarity,”* pointed out that American Catholics have a special responsibility. *“We are members of a universal Church that transcends national boundaries and calls us to live in solidarity and justice with the peoples of the world. We are also citizens of a powerful democracy with enormous influence beyond our borders. As Catholics we are uniquely called to global solidarity.”*

No one can consider himself or herself extraneous or indifferent to the lot of another member of the human family.

ACTIVITIES TO TEACH THIS PRINCIPLE

Following are suggested activities that you might use to apply the principle on *Solidarity*. These suggestions are both academic in the sense that you could assign them as research tasks to your students but are also intended to help the students assume responsibility for action and service to those who are in need.

RESEARCH TOPICS

These topics can easily become part of the lesson in many subject areas and viewed from a Catholic Christian perspective.

- Research the effects of violence on the American people from all aspects.
- The number of homeless in America (or St. Louis) and what is being done to alleviate homelessness.
- What do we do as a nation to help those in third world countries in regard to poverty, disease and other calamities?

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

Work with a group of students to research the types of medical assistance your community might provide to help those who are suffering from disease. You might contact the Red Cross or a local Blood Bank for information and direction.

OPEN ENDED ACTIVITIES

The above items are just a few of the avenue to be explored and acted upon in light of this principle of the Social Doctrine of the Church. Service to the larger community can take the form of visiting the sick, letter writing campaigns to civic officials to correct injustices to the poor, to the imprisoned, to the illiterate, and a wide variety of other injustices.

CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION

On a planet conflicted over environmental issues, the Catholic tradition insists that we show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.

The teaching on caring for God's Creation is a complex and nuanced tradition with many other important elements. This central Catholic principle requires that we measure every policy, every institution, and every action by whether it protects all of God's creation.

The Church's teaching about environmental responsibility and stewardship of natural resources is rooted in the message of Genesis – the goods of the earth are gifts from God. We humans are not the ultimate owners of these goods, but rather, the temporary stewards. We are entrusted with the responsibility of caring for these gifts and preserving them for future generations.

How we treat the environment – the air and water, the woodlands and grasslands, the farm fields, and the mineral deposits – is a measure of our stewardship, a sign of our respect for the Creator. We are accountable to God for how well we preserve and care for the earth and its creatures.

Material goods and the way we are developing the use of them should be seen as God's gifts to us. They are meant to bring out in each one of us the image of God. We must never lose sight of how we have been created: from the earth and from the breath of God. (*On Social Concern, #29*)

We must all do our part to safeguard the environment for future generations, no matter how small or insignificant we may feel our efforts are.

ACTIVITIES TO TEACH THIS PRINCIPLE

We've all heard of the three principles of being good stewards: time, talent and treasure. Each of us has a responsibility in caring for God's creation of exercising and developing these three facets of good stewardship.

"Creation is not a property which we can rule over at will; or, even less, is the property of only a few. Creation is a gift, it is a wonderful gift that God has given us, so that we care for it and we use it for the benefit of all, always with great respect and gratitude."
(Pope Francis' audience, May 21, 2014)

FINAL THOUGHT

Students who graduate from Catholic schools and parish religious education programs are called to go forth into the world with a mission: to be a leaven in society for its transformation. By the way they think and act, by the values they profess, and by the work they do on behalf of human dignity and social justice, these graduates serve as a visible sign of the Church's social mission and the social values that serve as the foundation for that mission.

Educators who help prepare and form these students have a profound responsibility and a wonderful vocation: to assist their students so that they are aware that they have a right and a responsibility to help form and shape public policy so that the laws of our culture reflect the social teachings of Jesus Christ and His Church.

CARPE DIEM

May you seize the day and make use of every opportunity that the Spirit of God gives you to help those entrusted to your care to become better disciples dedicated to the social teaching of the Church.

