

Who are you called to be?

I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.

Saint Teresa of Calcutta

Opening prayer

Come, O Holy Spirit

Come, open us to the wonder, beauty, and dignity of the diversity found in each culture in each face, and in each experience we have of the other among us.

Come fill us with generosity as we are challenged to let go and allow others to share with us the goods and beauty of earth.

Come heal the divisions that keep us from seeing the face of Christ in all men, women, and children.

Come free us to stand with and for those who must leave their own lands in order to find work, security, and welcome in a new land, one that has enough to share.

Come bring us understanding, inspiration, wisdom, and the courage needed to embrace change and stay on the journey.

Come, O Holy Spirit, show us the way.

Last month I asked you to consider your mission? What is your God given purpose? What purpose were you uniquely created to fulfill? A part of everyone's mission is rooted in the Social Teachings of our church. We are called to act, to care for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

St. Paul boldly proclaimed "faith without works is dead." There is a reason why we say we "practice" our faith. Being Catholic is not meant to be passive, but to cause us to act according to our gifts and talents.

The very nature of what Social Justice teaches us requires us to build relationships and grow in community. When we recently confirmed your 10th grade classmates, we gathered to celebrate and welcome them as a community. This is what happens every weekend when we attend Mass. (remember our lesson on the Mass?) We gather and grow as a community and from that point we realize our interconnectedness – this all a part of God's plan. Fr. Sas in his homily last week reminds us that in community members are called to care for one another especially the least among us. (here is the link to his homily if you would like to listen - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R5Qp7KVBNg80>)

ENCOUNTER -

You are called to build God's community here and now. We are called to build community and care for one another and all of creation. Jesus clearly reminds us in Matthew 25:34-40, that whatever we do to the least among us we do to Jesus. Remember, if we believe that God is within us both spiritually through the Holy Spirit and physically as we receive him in the Eucharist, then He is within each of us. Isn't then the person who annoys me a child of God? How about the homeless? The poor? The sick? Dorothy Day once said, "I only the God as much as the person I love the least."

Read the passage from Matthew's gospel and reflect upon who comes to mind?
(<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+25%3A30-40&version=NIV>)

What are your thoughts when we think about the poor.
How do we as a society or you as an individual make judgments upon other marginalized?

Now read St. Paul's words that I mentioned earlier and reflect upon what they mean to you today. Is this a call to action? What does it mean to you a teen living in Marlborough?

Faith Without Works Is Dead

¹⁴ What *does it* profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what *does it* profit? ¹⁷ Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

¹⁸ But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without ^[a]your works, and I will show you my faith by ^[b]my works. ¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! ²⁰ But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is ^[c]dead? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? ²² Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made ^[d]perfect? ²³ And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was ^[e]accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. ²⁴ You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

How do we live this today?
What does faith in action look like?
How does it differ from charity?

Consider this passage from Rachel Naomi Remen on the differences between serving, helping and fixing

Serving Is Different From Helping And Fixing

[Rachel Naomi Remen](#)

In recent years the question how can I help? has become meaningful to many people. But perhaps there is a deeper question we might consider. Perhaps the real question is not how can I help? but how can I serve? Serving is different from helping. Helping is based on inequality; it is not a relationship between equals. When you help you use your own strength to help those of lesser strength. If I'm attentive to what's going on inside of me when I'm helping, I find that I'm always helping someone who's not as strong as I am, who is needier than I am. People feel this inequality. When we help we may inadvertently take away from people more than we could ever give them; we may diminish their self-esteem, their sense of worth, integrity and wholeness.

When I help I am very aware of my own strength. But we don't serve with our strength, we serve with ourselves. We draw from all of our experiences. Our limitations serve, our wounds serve, even our darkness can serve. The wholeness in us serves the wholeness in others and the wholeness in life. The wholeness in you is the same as the wholeness in me. Service is a relationship between equals.

Helping incurs debt. When you help someone they owe you one. But serving, like healing, is mutual. There is no debt. I am as served as the person I am serving. When I help I have a feeling of satisfaction. When I serve I have a feeling of gratitude. These are very different things.

Serving is also different from fixing. When I fix a person I perceive them as broken, and their brokenness requires me to act. When I fix I do not see the wholeness in the other person or trust the integrity of the life in them. When I serve I see and trust that wholeness. It is what I am responding to and collaborating with. There is distance between ourselves and whatever or whomever we are fixing. Fixing is a form of judgment. All judgment creates distance, a disconnection, an experience of difference. In fixing there is an inequality of expertise that can easily become a moral distance. We cannot serve at a distance. We can only serve that to which we are profoundly connected, that which we are willing to touch. This is Mother Teresa's basic message. We serve life not because it is broken but because it is holy.

Rachel Naomi Remen is the author of various books, including Kitchen Table Wisdom. Excerpt above is from a transcript of Noetic Sciences Review. You may also read one of another story that Rachel recently shared with us: Doctor's Heart of Compassion.

How can you change your actions for fixing and helping to serving?

ENGAGE

So what are the social teaching of the church?

Watch this videos for a quick overview which focuses on the value of every person:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABRI2ZSs58E&t=3s>

There are Seven themes for the social Teachings of the Catholic Church. They are:

- Life and dignity of the Human Person – all person deserve to be treated with dignity and respect
- Call to Family, Community and Participation – we are sacred and social
- Rights and Responsibilities – we are called to protect the rights of all people
- Option for the poor and vulnerable – our moral test as a society is how we treat the poor
- Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers – the opportunity and dignity of work should be protected for all
- Solidarity – we are one human family
- Care for God's creation – we must care for all of creation

Now review the attached document and think about the social teaching of the Catholic church. Did you know this is how we are called to live? To act? To care?

(the pdf is attached with this document)

EMBRACE

"Everybody can be great. Because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve... You don't have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."

-- Martin Luther King

"We are not called to serve merely in order to receive a reward, but rather to imitate God, who made Himself a servant for our love. Nor are we called to serve only now and again, but to live in serving. Service is thus a way of life; indeed it recapitulates the entire Christian way of life: serving God in adoration and prayer; being open and available; loving our neighbor with practical deeds; passionately working for the common good."

— Pope Francis, Homily at Church of the Immaculate Conception, Bazu, Azerbaijan, Oct. 2, 2016

The social teaching of our church calls us to act justly not just with charity. We call this the two feet of social justice. Look over this document and think about which foot you rely more heavily upon. How can you commit to acting justly and using both feet?

Go to one of the following:

Come join us on April 20th from 10-3 as we serve others as a community

Attend Mass virtually or in-person

Attend adoration, Sunday afternoons at 4:00-4:45pm

Start today and pray for the different themes of the social teachings of the church and those who benefit from them

Commit to doing something that goes beyond charity and is instead focused on the second foot of social justice.

Family Questions

What can we do as a family to more fully live our gospel call?

How is it easy or difficult to reach out to others in need?

When is it difficult to be the person God created you to be?

Which of the social teachings can we commit to focusing in on for the next month?

What do I do to stand firm on both feet of social justice?

Who is a role model for me in how to live the social teachings of the Catholic church and why?

Closing prayer

Ever present God,
you called us to be in relationship with one another
and promised to dwell
wherever two or three are gathered.
In our community, we are many different people;
we come from many different places,

have many different cultures.
Open our hearts that we may be bold
in finding the riches of inclusion
and the treasures of diversity among us.
We pray in faith.

Amen

- *Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.*

Playlist within a playlist

Let Faith Arise -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AmzRA7xsNHY&t=73s>

Do Something – Matthew West

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b_RjndG0IX8

If Everyone Cared - Nickleback

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-IUSZyjiYuY>

What a Wonderful World – Louis Armstrong

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A3yCcXgbKrE>

Loving God and serving others

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-_0WYVveu3s

Other resources

Take time to watch all the CRS videos on the social teaching of the Catholic Church.

<https://www.crs.org/resource-center/CST-101>