January 2017

Catholic Social Teaching

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. In “Love Thy Neighbor,” we highlight themes that are at the heart of our Catholic social tradition.

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Love Thy Neighbor

Dignity of the Human Person (Social Justice Ministry / Human Concerns)

Our Faith in Action: A Corporal Work of Mercy by Rob Shelledy

As we end the Christmas season, many of us reflect on gatherings of family and friends over the past holiday season. Depending on our own personality, extrovert or introvert, and who our family and friends are, these gatherings may be a bit overwhelming at times. As a result, we may look forward to a bit of quiet time to ourselves.

In his ministry, Jesus would often withdraw from the crowds to pray in solitude. (Luke 5:16) A little “me time” is part of a healthy life, but unfortunately, there are people in our community who are isolated.

The most poignant example of this isolation is the fact that every year there are people whose lives end as “unclaimed indigent decedents.”

For example, Milwaukee County averages 15-20 unclaimed bodies each year. These are people for whom no family, friends, or neighbors will claim the person’s body for a proper burial. Although there are several government programs that provide funding for a funeral and burial for a person who is indigent, there are a few people each year who do not qualify.

A while ago, Mr. Hector Colon, head of Milwaukee County Health and Human Services, asked Fr. Tim Kitzke, our Vicar for Urban Ministry, for help from the Catholic Church to address this issue. Fr Tim responded “Absolutely!” With the strong support of Catholic Cemeteries, we are able to live out this corporal work of mercy in burying these dead. Pulling together, we as a Church are able to show God’s love even to the most isolated person in our community because “there is not, never has been, and never will be a single human being for whom Christ did not suffer.” (Council of Quiercy and 1 John 2:2)

To complement this effort, we should all continue to pray for the living and the dead. In particular, for those who have died that have no one to pray for them. If you don’t live in Milwaukee County, you might also reach out to your county government to see if they face similar problems. Finally, you may want to reach out to family members, friends, neighbors, and even strangers so that no one is isolated in our community.

Catholic Social Teaching: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HUMAN PERSON

People have a fundamental right to life and to those things that make life truly human: food, clothing, housing, health care, education, security, social services, and employment. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities – to one another, to our families, and to the larger society: to respect the rights of others and to work for the common good.

Annual Archdiocesan Respect Life Mass, January 23

More than 56 million abortions have occurred since the 1973 decisions of Roe v. Wade and Doe v. Bolton. These acts reflect with heartbreaking magnitude what Pope Francis means by a “throwaway culture.”

However, we have great trust in God’s providence. We are reminded time and again in Scripture to seek the Lord’s help, and as people of faith, we believe that our prayers are heard. Bring an item that supports life* when you join us on January 23 (or a Holy Hour for Life) to pray for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life and of penance for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion.

*Items distributed to UMCS, SET and Catholic Charities.
Catholic Charities: Caring for Older Adults

Catholic Charities offers care options for older adults who require some assistance in order to continue to live safely within the community, rather than in a nursing home or attendant care facility.

Their Adult Day Center provides partial and full day service for seniors enabling their caregivers to maintain employment and other family responsibilities.

Safe, supervised settings meet the daily care needs of the participants while encouraging them to maintain self-help and social skills.

The center also functions as a resource hub for families and caregivers of older adults providing information on aging needs as well as educational opportunities and support groups for caregivers.

In-Home Support Services provides supportive home care services to frail, older adults (aged 50 or better) and adults with disabilities. Direct service visits may include light housekeeping, laundry assistance, grocery shopping, meal preparation and companionship/socialization. These services help individuals live independently in clean, safe homes or apartments in order to delay institutional placement.

SET Launching New Home Visiting Program in 2017

SET works with families where they live and learn, teaching them how to increase self-sufficiency and become productive adults.

Their vision is a vibrant, healthy, productive Milwaukee where children live in stability and peace within their own families.

Based in the Sherman Park neighborhood since 1985, SET serves Milwaukee residents from twenty locations across the central city. SET also supports 278 families right in their own homes, working to avoid evictions, homelessness and/or nursing-home placements.

When we support SET, we have the opportunity to be part of the solution to the many challenges facing Milwaukee today. In February 2017, SET will launch a new home visiting program for families with children aged birth to 5.

SET helps by facilitating experiences where people learn to trust others so they can develop the skills to cultivate the positive relationships needed for growth. It’s ground breaking work that’s inspired by medical science and it’s working by producing higher employment rates, health improvements, happier homes and safer children.

SET’s unique approach to delivering care while teaching new skills helps families heal and gain the skills they need to thrive. Their model helps family members improve listening and communication skills, grow and strengthen self-esteem, gain skills to identify and manage feelings and become successful problem solvers, decision makers and leaders in their schools and neighborhoods.
Syrian Refugees: A Global Humanitarian Response

The Basheer family fled Syria when a bomb destroyed their home. Luckily, Khaled Basheer, his wife and three children survived (two of them shown in the photo on left).

“Can you really say we were lucky?” Khaled asks. “We had to live in a tent in the suburbs of our hometown, Aleppo, for more than one year. And we were frightened every single minute, every day and every night.”

The Basheers feared more bomb attacks. They heard explosions and gunfire nearly every day. “We were also very frightened of an attack by the [Islamic State]. We heard such horrible stories, how cruelly they kill innocent people and rape women and young girls.”

Now staying at a CRS refugee camp in Serbia, the family hopes to make it to Germany. “Daddy promised we will get a nice home there,” his 8-year-old daughter Omama says. She sometimes tells her father that she feels homesick. His reply: “How can you feel homesick when there is no home any longer?”

Caroline Brennan, Senior Communications Officer of CRS Global Humanitarian Response will share more stories about Syrian refugees and the CRS humanitarian efforts helping children on Monday, March 6 in Milwaukee. CRS has already assisted 1.25 million Syrian and Iraqi refugees. Join us at the Cathedral!

Special thanks to sponsor Fr. Eugene Pocernich

March 6, 2017
CRS Rice Bowl
& Global Discipleship
featuring Caroline Brennan
Cathedral of St. John
the Evangelist
812 N. Jackson Street
Milwaukee 53202
5:15 pm – Mass in Chapel
Reception & Presentation
to follow in Atrium

We Are Called to Build a Culture of Encounter

Jesus made this call clear from the way he lived and the message he preached. Pope Francis makes it clear by his own daily example. And we have a host of holy men and women who have come before us, who have gone to the margins of society so that every member of our human family might know the love of God. Now, it’s our turn!

With the spiritual pillars of Lent, we can set out on a 40-day encounter with ourselves, our neighbors and our God.

Through prayer, we encounter Christ, present in the faces of every member of our human family, so often still walking that long road to Calvary.

Through fasting, we encounter our own obstacles, those things about ourselves that prevent us from loving God and neighbor.

Through almsgiving, we encounter our brothers and sisters around the world, asking what we can give up so that others might have life to the fullest.

Lent is our time to encounter, to cultivate a spirit of global solidarity. CRS Rice Bowl is our guide, a vehicle through which the stories of communities around the world can be shared, an invitation through which our prayers and Lenten sacrifices can change lives!

In 2017 we’ll encounter our neighbors from India, Zambia, El Salvador, Mexico, Ethiopia and Honolulu. Join us at the Cathedral on Sunday evening, March 19 at 6 pm in the Atrium for a personal accounting of how CRS Rice Bowl changes lives with our featured speaker, Thomas Awiapo from Ghana.

Integrating the Catholic Social Mission

As the story of the Last Judgment in Matthew’s Gospel reminds us, in the end we will all be judged by how we have cared for the least among us. This means that the Catholic social mission is an essential part of the faith life of every able Catholic.

As parish leaders and committee chairs of social justice and human concerns, we can offer assistance to help weave education into programs so that all Catholics learn about Catholic social teaching.

Does your parish:

♦ Encourage reflection on social issues in the prayer and worship of your faith community?
♦ Include a wide range of opportunities for members of your parish to act on the social dimensions of our faith?
♦ Need insight to motivate others to get involved in shaping policies, programs, and structures of society?

Need help in these areas? A free webinar is being offered by Catholic Charities USA and may be beneficial to your team. Gain insight to motivate others to get involved in shaping policies, programs, and structures of society on Wednesday, February 15, from 1:00 – 2:00 pm.

Register for free Webinar: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/512437668324632067

A resource adapted from Communities of Salt & Light may be useful at your parish:


“Trust in the Lord and do good, dwell in the land and feed on his faithfulness.”

Psalm 37:4
Loving God and neighbor in ways that bear fruit in the life of society.

Dignity of the Human Person

Office Location:
Archbishop Cousins Catholic Center
3501 South Lake Drive
St. Francis, WI 53235

Mailing Address:
Dignity of the Human Person
P.O. Box 070912
Milwaukee, WI 53207-0912

For more information contact:
Robert Shelledy
Director, Dignity of the Human Person
Archdiocese of Milwaukee
(414) 758-2286
shelledyr@archmil.org

CALENDAR OF EVENTS — 2017

January 23
Archdiocesan Respect Life Mass, 7:00 pm
Rosary at 6:30 pm, Reception follows Mass
St. Anthony Parish, 1711 S. 9th St., Milwaukee
Requesting donations that support Dignity of Life: Disposable diapers, baby formula, adult incontinence items, or gift card for prescriptions in $5 or $10 increments are most appreciated

February 11
Catholics for Peace & Justice: Extending a Life Line to Justice, 8 am – 12:15 pm
Registration and program details: www.catholicsforpeaceandjustice.org
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, 12700 W. Howard Ave., New Berlin

February 15
Parish Social Ministry & Legislative Advocacy Webinar, 1:00 – 2:00 pm
https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/512437668324632067

March 6
CRS Rice Bowl and Global Discipleship, featuring Caroline Brennan, CRS
Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, 812 N. Jackson Street, Milwaukee
5:15 pm Mass followed by CRS presentation and reception in the Atrium

March 19
The Global Encounter, featuring Thomas Awiapo, CRS Ghana, 6:00 pm, Atrium
Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, 812 N. Jackson Street, Milwaukee

March 28
Catholics at the Capitol, Keynote: Human Trafficking
Monona Terrace, Madison, WI

There is Always Hope in Times of Great Need

“The cycle of poverty often seems daunting and can easily overwhelm, but there is always hope! As we see so often in times of need, humanity rises up to make certain that no neighbor, friend, or stranger suffers needlessly. We all feel a compulsion to extend ourselves, to provide from our abundance, to alleviate the suffering of people we may not know.” This was the message shared by the Riverwest Food Pantry, where a community of generosity has a place at the table.

Executive Director Vincent Noth is proud of their mission. “We come together around food to relieve hunger, improve lives, and grow community well-being.” Riverwest Food Pantry alleviates food insecurity by providing access to healthy food through an interactive shopping experience. They grow and cook food together since solidarity is the best entry point into their shoppers’ lives. “We sit and listen so we can create nurturing mentor relationships that connect people to needed resources and create a space where members of our community discover the gifts they are meant to offer and the gifts they are meant to receive.”

DON’T BE AFRAID, JUST BELIEVE.
MARK 5:36

Lord, help me use the talents You have given me to make things a little bit better for all.

HELP NEEDED! We’re updating the archdiocesan food pantry publication.
Please submit updated information by February 6, 2017 to Kathy at ShineK@archmil.org
www.archmil.org/ArchMil/Resources/SOLJUS/FoodPantries-2016.pdf