

Catholic Social Justice Catechetical Preparation

Consider the following statement: Social Justice is unconditional love for our neighbor. It is love that springs forth from an outpouring of God's unconditional love for us. The deeper our love for God grows, so too will the depth and desire to love our neighbor grow also.

Keeping the above statement in mind, read and meditate on the following passages:

Scripture:

Gen 2:27	“God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him..”
Mt. 5:42	“ Give to him who begs from you, do not refuse him who would borrow from you...”
Mt. 6:24	“You cannot serve God and mammon..”
Mt. 25:31-40	Last Judgment – judged by our love.
Lk 19:8	Reparation for injustice...”If I defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.”
I Cor. 13:1-13	<u>Def. of love:</u> “ love is patient; love is kind...”
II Thess 3:10	“If any one will not work, let him not eat...”

Catechism:

CCC, 1700-1715	Dignity of the Human Person
CCC, 2407-2418	Respect for Persons & their Goods
CCC, 2419-2425	Social Doctrine of the Church
CCC, 2426-2436	Economic Activity & Social Justice
CCC, 2437-2442	Justice & Solidarity among Nations
CCC, 2443-2449	Love for the Poor

Key Terms:(Catechism Appendix)

Justice: The cardinal virtue which consists in the constant and firm will to give what is due to God and to neighbor.

Social Justice: The respect for the human person and the rights which flow from human dignity and guarantee it. Society must provide the conditions that allow people to obtain what is their due, according to their nature and vocation.

*“ If the Church was a body composed of different members, it couldn't lack the noblest of all; it must have a Heart, and a Heart **BURNING WITH LOVE**. And I realized that **this love alone** was the true motive force which enabled the other members of the Church to act; if it ceased to function, the Apostles would forget to preach the gospel, the Martyrs would refuse to shed their blood. **LOVE, IN FACT, IS THE VOCATION WHICH INCLUDES ALL OTHERS; IT'S A UNIVERSE OF IT'S OWN, COMPRISING ALL TIME AND SPACE – IT'S ETERNAL!**”*

(St. Therese of Lisieux)

Catholic Social Justice Catechetical Session

Premise:

Social Justice is unconditional love for our neighbor. It is love that springs forth from an outpouring of God's unconditional love for us. The deeper our love for God grows, so too will the depth and desire to love our neighbor grow also.

Essentials:

I) What is love ?

- Love is not just a charitable thought or a feeling – feelings may be part of love, but not necessarily. Feelings are not the essence of Christian Love.
- What is Christian Love?
Love is the giving of oneself for another person's good. It is a selfless and conscious act for the good of another person. (It may be accompanied by nice feelings for a particular person – or it may not)

e.g. It is easy to be kind and patient with those people who are our friends. Christian love calls us to be patient and kind to even those people who we know may be mean and nasty to us. This is unconditional love.

I Cor 13:1-13

- Catholic Social Justice can not be separated from the love of God, for without a relationship with God we cannot love our neighbor.

Secular humanism – refers to helping people (when you feel like it) because it makes me feel good. Difference between Christian Love/Social Justice and Secular Social Work.

II) Characteristics of Catholic Social Justice –

- 1) Dignity of the Human Person – all men and women are created in the image and likeness of God. A person has dignity not because of what they do or do not do. A person has personal dignity because of who they are. (a child of God – created in His image and likeness)
- 2) Unity - Love of neighbor is inseparable from love of God. There is a certain resemblance between the union of Father, Son & Holy Spirit – communion of divine persons/communion of love and communion between one human person and another. Love of neighbor means that we come to give of ourselves with the understanding that we are all part of the human family.
- 3) Solidarity – Love seeks the best for others. *Solidarity* means helping out those members of our human family, who are our brothers and sisters in need. Solidarity means committing oneself to helping those in need for their good individually, and for the *common good* of all society.

- 4) Preference for the Poor, the Sick, the Lonely & the Suffering – Those who suffer in the world today are not only those in Africa and Asia – they are in Rome and Paris and New York and Wisconsin – yes even here in La Crosse.
- Physically it is the poor and the sick and the disadvantaged who perhaps are the most vulnerable in our society today.
 - However there is also a deeper suffering here in America that we overlook.
 - It is a suffering for lack of time spent to love and be present to each other. Children/Young people may have grown up in broken homes with a parent who had little time or even desire to be with them. The Elderly – often are neglected – deep loneliness for many, because they are no longer useful, and are a burden for their families. Again there is a need for love – time spent just to be with them. Even for those of us go in the mad rush of ordinary life – temptation not to take the time to slow down and really be present to each other, understand each other, share God’s love with one another.
- 5) Justice for the disadvantaged who lack justice – justice is sought purely out of love for the good of those who suffer, and without malice for those who perpetuate the injustice. We are still called out of Christian love to love even our enemies.

* End with Matt 25:31-40

- Short Clip on Mother Teresa (~10 Min)