

Spiritual Resources Exploring the Theme of Service

Created by the Marist Association Pastoral Team

*He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God.*

Micah 6:8



*This is the lifestyle that God would like
all of us to reflect.*

Prayer & Input



Dare to Hope

We dare to imagine a world
where hunger has no chance to show its face.

We dare to dream of a world
where wars and terror are afraid to leave their mark.

We long to believe in a world
of hope unchained and lives unfettered.
We dare to work for the creation of a world
where your people are free from poverty.

Dare we open minds to difference?

Dare we open our lives to change?

Your Kingdom come, O Lord,
Your will be done.

Amen.

(Linda Jones)

Spend a few moments pondering on these 2 Questions below. Why? Why not?

Dare we open minds to difference? Dare we open our lives to change?

The term 'social justice' implies fairness and mutual obligation in society: that we are responsible for one another, and that we should ensure that all have equal chances to succeed in life. Justice, charity and mercy are important themes in the Gospels. The Beatitudes, the

Sermon on the Mount, and such parables as the Last Judgment, the Good Samaritan, the Rich Man and Lazarus, the Pharisee and the Tax Collector—these and many other passages inspire acts of justice and charity. The most important principles of Catholic Social Teachings are

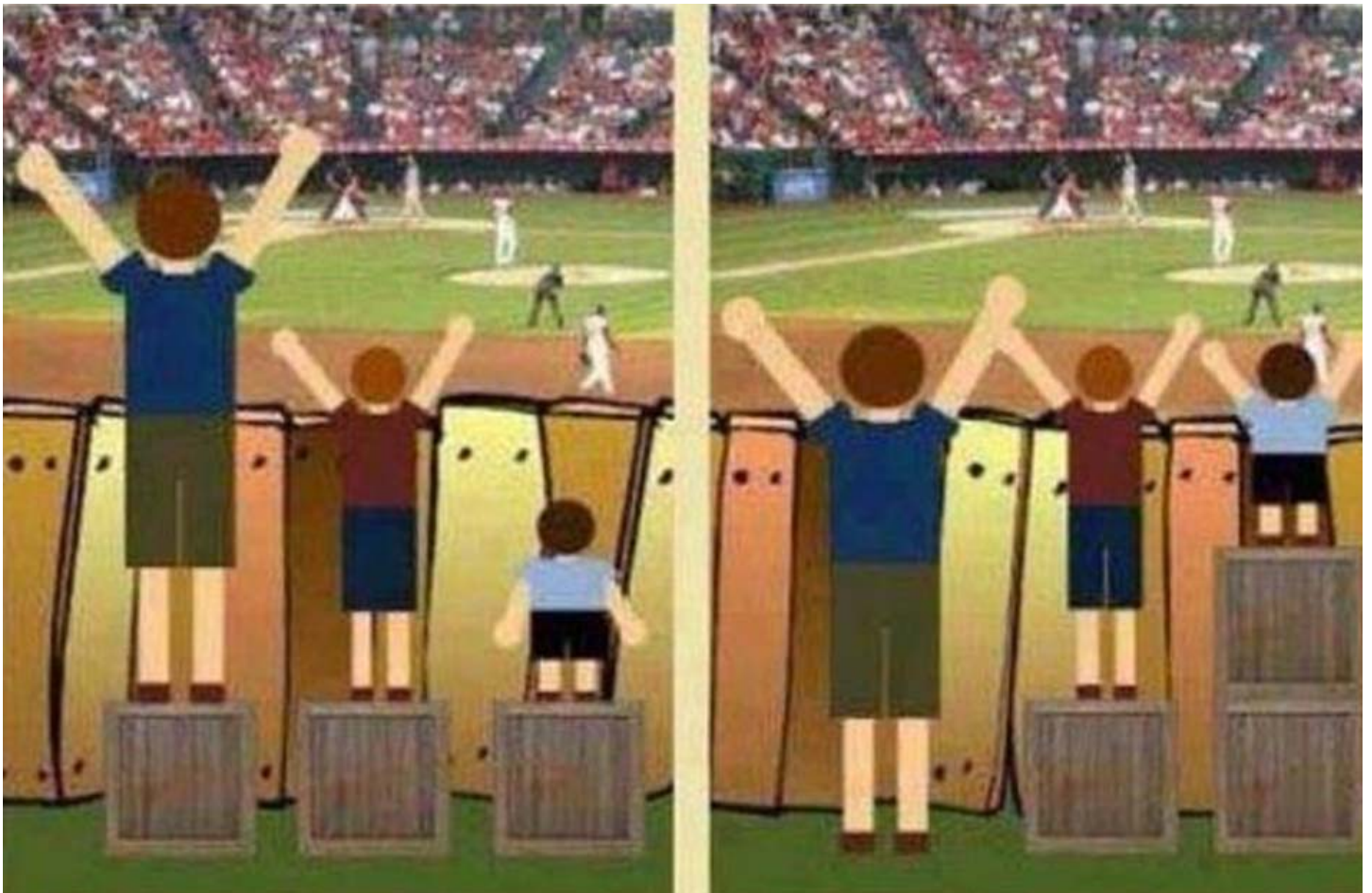
made up of the following:
Three distinct Elements: Principles of reflection; Criteria for judgment and Guidelines for action
Three Key Principles: Human dignity; the Common Good; Subsidiarity and Solidarity.

Catholic Social Teaching calls us to work towards the justice of God's Reign in the complex network of relationships in which we live. It provides us with touchstones that help us to live in right relationship with ourselves, others, with God, and with the whole of God's creation.

The social mission is something that we are asked to embrace as followers of Jesus Christ. The social mission has —two feet both of which are necessary for moving forward to be in

relationship with God's people and thus with God. One foot of Charity responds to the immediate need that people experience, people in situations that do not allow them to live with the dignity that God have given each of us. A second foot of Justice asks the question WHY? and responds with action for social change. Why are people suffering or living in poverty? What can we do to change the situation? How can we, the community of faith, be co-creators with God for the fullness of life?

The Church sees in men and women, in every person, the living image of God himself. This image finds, and must always find anew, an ever deeper and fuller unfolding of itself in the mystery of Christ, the Perfect Image of God, the One who reveals God to the human person ... The whole of the Church's social doctrine, in fact, develops from the principle that affirms the inviolable dignity of the human person.



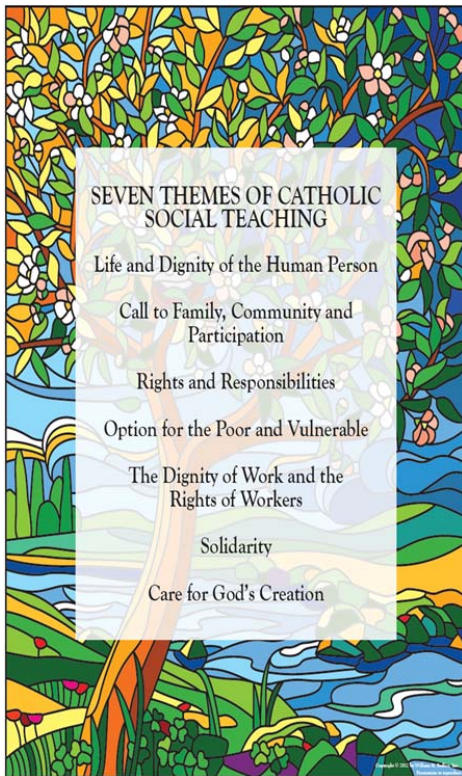
Personal Reflection:

The phrase from Micah 8 is easy to say but hard to live.

☞ *How do YOU 'act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with your God'?*

How are YOU journeying on the path of Justice and Mercy?

Read the following statements slowly and carefully –
add those things that are important to you to the list
and then share with the person next to you.



1

Life and dignity of human persons: Every human person is created in the image and likeness of God; therefore, human life is sacred and must be treated with dignity. *The senseless killing of innocent people and...*

2

A call to family, community and participation: The human person is not only sacred but inherently social. *Domestic violence, Teenage/Youth violence and ...*

3

As social beings, our relationships are governed by a web of rights and responsibilities.

Each person has a fundamental right to life and to those things that allow one to live a decent life - faith, family, food, water, shelter, health care, housing, education, employment. *The lot of migrant families, refugees and ...*

4

The Bible and the Church call on all of us to embrace a **preferential love of the poor and vulnerable.** *Look at the growing gap between impoverished and wealthy people and nations and...*

5

The dignity of work and the rights of workers: The economy must serve people, not the other way around! *Think of child labour, exploitation, working conditions, just wages and ...*

6

Solidarity: Because of the interdependence of creation, we have a moral responsibility to commit ourselves to the common good everywhere. *Small and large scale conflicts; caring for our neighbor; working in solidarity with our brothers and sisters and ...*

7

Care for God's creation: Our stewardship of the earth is a kind of participation in God's act of creating and sustaining the world. *Think about environmental destruction; misuse and abuse of our natural resources and ...*

Scripture: The Beatitudes

Matthew 5:1-10

Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Then read the following silently and spend some time reflecting...

Beatitudes for a modern day

By John D. Alexander, S.J.

These beatitudes are really a summary of what I've learned down through the years. So I pass them on for what they're worth before the bell tolls. (John D. Alexander, S.J., was former Headmaster of Brooklyn Prep High School, N.Y., and Moderator of the Brooklyn Prep Alumni Association. He resides on the campus of Fordham University.)

Blessed are those who "recognize their need for God," who acknowledge their dependence on God and His gifts to them.

Blessed are those who though they are blessed with fine families and friends are still very concerned with the pain and suffering of others, either nearby or at a distance. These others are their human brothers and sisters.

Blessed are the generous people who give of their love, their time, their money, and somehow keep on giving despite disillusionment and disappointment in seeing their efforts go wasted.

Blessed are the "big people" who can forgive those who are petty, angry, rude, or neurotic, and seek to find and delight in the good qualities of the people around them.

Blessed are those who respect a person as an individual and do not prejudge him or her because of race, color, ethnic, or economic background or sexual identity. They do not, therefore, reduce that individual's many good qualities to one rather unessential characteristic.

Blessed are the single persons who somehow can hack this life alone.

Blessed is the partner in marriage whose love affirms his or her partner with patience, understanding, and especially, forgiveness, helping that partner to keep growing in every way.

Blessed are the parents who love and respect their children as individuals. They realize that, regardless of what their children are taught and how they are disciplined, they will learn especially by imitation of them.

Blessed are the parents of teenagers who can really listen and give them time in casual, low-keyed situations, and who take time to explain and discuss quietly their reasons for certain actions.

Blessed are the children and teenagers who respect their parents, who try not to inflict their growing pains upon the ones who love them the most, and who contribute to the family with their time and communication.

Blessed are the peacemakers who before a rift in a family is frozen like ice and divides a family for years, go out of their way to settle disputes, heal the bruised egos, and restore peace.

Blessed are those who mourn the loss of a loved one and who, because of their hope in Christ, work through this pain and anger without becoming depressed or bitter.

Blessed are those who befriend the divorced and separated and give them time, understanding, and support

during this period of self-doubt and loneliness.

Blessed are those who do not resent the poor or the homeless.

Blessed are those who befriend the handicapped and appreciate the people in their lives who teach them that no situation is hopeless and that they should use all the talents they have.

Blessed are those heroic Christians who can forgive muggers and who can even forgive the murderers of their children. Their love is closest to Christ on the cross.

Blessed are those people in Eastern Europe who never let the spirit of freedom die and who worshipped quietly while at great risk.

Blessed are those men and women who in the September of their lives still wonder how they can serve God and others better. In their cheerful acceptance of pain and inconvenience, they give witness to a strong belief in a loving God.

Blessed are those who like Christ are facing what seems like a senseless death with so many jobs to be done and people to take care of. This trust in the face of death is their last compliment to a loving and caring Father who waits to reward them.

Finally, blessed are those people who are most sensitive to pain and injustice around them. They help us to keep our vision clear. By this example they help us to be patient,

loving, and forgiving. They inspire us to keep putting one foot in front of the other in our attempts to walk the path of Christ in following the ideals of these beatitudes.

As a postscript, less serious but still important: Blessed are those selfless people who throw parties that get families and friends together.

Highlight phrases or sentences that stand out for you.

In threes share what you have highlighted.



As Marists... Water from the Rock 124-129



Bringing Good News to the Poor

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me

How easy to believe that I am an instrument of your love when my life is going well, O God. **124.** Marist spirituality, being apostolic, is lived out on mission. The mission of Marist apostles is born of the

experience of being loved by God and of our desire to actively participate in the mission of Jesus.

God is passionate about the world and its people, and Jesus expresses this love by a ministry of teaching and healing. *I came that you may have life, and have it abundantly.*⁹⁶ Like Jesus we recognise the urgings of the Spirit within, calling us to witness to this Good News. Out of these inner promptings, the mission of the Church is born: to proclaim the Kingdom of God as a new way of living for humanity, a new way to relate with God. We join in this mission of the Church as we look upon the world with compassion.

125. What we see in the world both amazes and shocks us. On the one hand, we celebrate the beauty and diversity of nature and its wondrous harmony. We rejoice too in the rich cultural diversity of humankind.... Yet we also come face to face with violence and insecurity, poverty and despair, AIDS and child abuse, ecological degradation and starvation, illiteracy and ignorance.

126. It is encouraging how many people, including the young, facing such apparently hopeless situations, are responding with passion and commitment. Involved in groups, they work in solidarity to make a better world for all. They seek companions who not only share their passion, but also the wisdom not to lose hope in the face of so much pain and suffering. These are men and women with a spirituality of compassion and mission. Their choices are a source of inspiration to us.

127. The cries of the world, especially those of poor people, touch the heart of God and ours as well. The depth of God's compassion challenges us to be men and women whose hearts have no bounds since *in his infinite love, God continues to be totally involved with all men and women and today's world, with its disappointments and hopes.*

128. Our Marist charism prompts us to be attentive to the calls of our time, to the longings and preoccupations of people, especially the young. Surpassing religious and cultural borders we seek the same dignity for all: human rights, justice, peace, and equitable and responsible sharing of the planet's wealth.

129. Our compassionate response to the needs of the world wells up from our spirituality. Spirituality draws us into mission and, in living that mission, finds itself nourished and rekindled. It gives meaning to our human experiences and allows us to read life with the eyes and heart of God and to understand it as God's project.

How well do you bring the 'Good News to the poor'?
How are you being challenged to grow personally?

Final Prayer



Spirit of God

We have heard your call to share in building up the Kingdom of God.
Fill us with the desire to change ourselves and to change the world.
Enflame our passion for justice into a commitment
to address unjust situations and structures.

Deepen our concern for our sisters and brothers in Australia and overseas
who endure the burdens of poverty, war, exploitation and persecution.

Let us enthusiastically play our part in the mission of the Church in the modern world.

Banish any complacency in our hearts and minds

Teach us to recognise the lack of justice

May we always act in the Spirit of justice

May we envisage, pray about and create a different sort of world
in which injustice is replaced with a renewed sense of solidarity and care.

Enlivened by the Spirit, may we go forth in the peace of the Holy Spirit
to love and serve the Lord.

Amen

St Marcellin Champagnat:

Pray for us,

Mary, our Good Mather:

Pray for us

And let us always remember:

To pray for one another.