

Adult Catechism September 26, 2016

My Family Home: A Place to Encounter the Living Christ

Service and Justice

Scripture Verses:

Proverbs 19:17: Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed.

Deuteronomy 15:10-11: You shall give to him freely, and your heart shall not be grudging when you give to him, because for this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore, I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.'

Acts 20:35: In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

Matthew 25:31-46: "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ...

James 1:27: Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

Introduction: Strong, faith-filled families are the foundation of our parishes, our Church and society. The Eparchy of Saskatoon is committed to helping parents and grandparents pass on the faith to our children and youth. This is a lifelong process. It is a great responsibility, but an even greater joy.

High hopes for our kids... To be 'good' people! We all have high hopes for our kids, as we want the very best for them. We hope that they will not only be able to look after themselves but also that they will care for others, especially those in need, and make a positive contribution to the community and world around them. Jesus tells us 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these

brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.' (Matt. 25:40) How do we respond?

To Love our neighbor is part of our faith tradition: To truly 'live' the Divine Liturgy we are called to try and see the 'face of Christ' in every human person, however difficult that is or however distorted that image has become. When our children are very little that will mean learning to treat others with respect, and kindness, as well as practicing as a family the 'art' of hospitality. As they get older it will mean working together to make a difference in the world. As always, parents must be leaders.

Pope Francis and his Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* As the shock waves of Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), settle, its impact is becoming clear. Addressed to the Church, rather than the entire world (as papal encyclicals are), it nonetheless seems that, suddenly, the whole world is listening.

But it remains first an exhortation to the faithful—to respond to the Gospel, to live it more fully and more deeply, to reach out to the poor and broken, to end injustice, to build peace. And to find the joy in all of it.

And so rejoice we do at the challenge he lays before us—a challenge the Church is taking up by setting a goal no less ambitious than ending hunger by 2025.

Below we share some excerpts from *Evangelii Gaudium* that underpin the challenge—and the joy—the Holy Father has laid before us.

37. Works of love directed to one's neighbor are the most perfect external manifestation of the interior grace of the Spirit....

48. We have to state, without mincing words, that there is an inseparable bond between our faith and the poor. May we never abandon them.

53. Just as the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" sets a clear limit in order to safeguard the value of human life, today we also have to say "thou shalt not" to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills.

How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points? This is a case of exclusion. Can we continue to stand by when food is thrown away while people are starving? This is a case of inequality.

54. Almost without being aware of it, we end up being incapable of feeling compassion at the outcry of the poor, weeping for other people's pain, and

feeling a need to help them, as though all this were someone else's responsibility and not our own.

The culture of prosperity deadens us; we are thrilled if the market offers us something new to purchase. In the meantime, all those lives stunted for lack of opportunity seem a mere spectacle; they fail to move us.

57. I encourage financial experts and political leaders to ponder the words of [Saint John Chrysostom], one of the sages of antiquity: "Not to share one's wealth with the poor is to steal from them and to take away their livelihood. It is not our own goods which we hold, but theirs.

177. ...at the very heart of the Gospel is life in community and engagement with others. The content of the first proclamation has an immediate moral implication centered on charity.

187. Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society. This demands that we be docile and attentive to the cry of the poor and to come to their aid.

188. In this context, we can understand Jesus' command to his disciples: "You yourselves give them something to eat!" (Mk 6:37): it means working to eliminate the structural causes of poverty and to promote the integral development of the poor, as well as small daily acts of solidarity in meeting the real needs which we encounter.

189. The private ownership of goods is justified by the need to protect and increase them, so that they can better serve the common good; for this reason, solidarity must be lived as the decision to restore to the poor what belongs to them.

191. In all places and circumstances, Christians, with the help of their pastors, are called to hear the cry of the poor.... Seeing their poverty, hearing their cries and knowing their sufferings, we are scandalized because we know that there is enough food for everyone and that hunger is the result of a poor distribution of goods and income.

198. This is why I want a Church which is poor and for the poor. They have much to teach us. Not only do they share in the *sensus fidei*, but in their difficulties they know the suffering Christ. We need to let ourselves be evangelized by them....

201. ...none of us can think we are exempt from concern for the poor and for social justice....

203. The dignity of each human person and the pursuit of the common good are concerns which ought to shape all economic policies.

Seven themes of Catholic Social Teaching (from <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/seven-themes-of-catholic-social-teaching.cfm>)

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. Modern Catholic social teaching has been articulated through a tradition of papal, conciliar, and episcopal documents. The depth and richness of this tradition can be understood best through a direct reading of these documents. In these brief reflections, we highlight several of the key themes that are at the heart of our Catholic social tradition.

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. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching. In our society, human life is under direct attack from abortion and euthanasia. The value of human life is being threatened by cloning, embryonic stem cell research, and the use of the death penalty. The intentional targeting of civilians in war or terrorist attacks is always wrong. Catholic teaching also calls on us to work to avoid war. Nations must protect the right to life by finding increasingly effective ways to prevent conflicts and resolve them by peaceful means. We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.

Call to Family, Community, and Participation The person is not only sacred but also social. How we organize our society -- in economics and politics, in law and policy -- directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. Marriage and the family are the central social institutions that must be supported and strengthened, not undermined. We believe people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.

Rights and 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. Therefore, every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities--to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. In a society marred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, our tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgment (Mt 25:31-46) and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers The economy must serve people, not the other way around. 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 the organization and joining of unions, to private property, and to economic initiative.

Solidarity We are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. We are our brothers and sisters keepers, wherever they may be. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world. At the core of the virtue of solidarity is the pursuit of justice and peace. Pope Paul VI taught that if you want peace, work for justice.¹ The Gospel calls us to be peacemakers. Our love for all our sisters and brothers demands that we promote peace in a world surrounded by violence and conflict.

Care for God's Creation 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.

This summary should only be a starting point for those interested in Catholic social teaching. A full understanding can only be achieved by reading the papal, conciliar, and episcopal documents that make up this rich tradition.

From Eparchy of Saskatoon Sobor Document 2005:

The basis of the Church's social mission is the very person of Jesus Christ, who came "to bring glad news to the poor... proclaim liberty to the captives ... and release to prisoners" (Lk 4:18). Jesus identifies himself as "one of the least of these", (Mt 24:45) having nowhere to rest His head. He commands His disciples to lead lives of service, especially among the poor and vulnerable. Today, the social teachings of the Church emphasize the call of Jesus to discipleship. The Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Church's social documents state that "respect for the human person proceeds by way of respect for the principle that everyone should look upon his/her neighbor as another self, above all bearing in mind his/her life and the means necessary for living it with dignity" (Gaudium et spes, n. 27).

The sacred dignity of

the human person is the basis for the Church's social teachings. The Church teaches that each and every person has fundamental rights to freedom, food, housing, health care, a living wage, and family and community relationships. These rights constitute essential elements of full humanity, bestowed on each human person by the Creator in whose image we all are created. Furthermore, the Church's social mission is characterized by a preferential love for the poor, marginalized and vulnerable, ensuring that people have the basic human necessities for life. Our work for justice is a constitutive, essential component and dimension of the proclamation of the Holy Gospel. This basic orientation identifies us as Jesus' disciples, followers and Christians, called to continue His mission of compassionate love, service and justice. If you want peace, then work for justice.

Service and Family Faith Formation Inventory "Every step in our journey in faith brings us closer to Christ—even small changes can make a big difference. Begin your plan to build your 'domestic church with this self-assessment:

1. We understand and discuss current events, popular culture and media in the light of our values and beliefs as Ukrainian Greek Catholics
a. never b. rarely c. sometimes d. frequently
2. As a parent/grandparent I work to model discipleship (following Christ in works of love and mercy).
a. never b. rarely c. sometimes d. frequently
3. We make it a priority to communicate to our children not only that they are gifts from God, but also that every human person has the same dignity and significance.
a. never b. rarely c. sometimes d. frequently
4. I make it a priority to work as a family to serve others, especially the poor.
a. never b. rarely c. sometimes d. frequently