

# Faith Works

Our Mother Of Sorrows Catholic Church  
(OMOS) - 1800 S. Kolb Road  
Tucson, AZ 85710

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Welcome! Our contributors for this issue of the newsletter of the JustFaith group at OMOS are

- Monsignor Tom Cahalane is back from his wonderful and refreshing mini sabbatical and has written a really fine article on the Consistent Ethic of Life and its meaning in our parish community.
- Tim Heinan is the Executive Director of the Blessed Nuno Society. We are fortunate to have Tim in our parish community and we support the Blessed Nuno Society through the gift of prayer for the orphanages developed and maintained for children along the Mexican border and throughout the world.
- Jean Fedigan is one of the co-facilitators for the JustFaith group in the parish and one of the core members of the Christian Life Commission.



## October's Theme: Consistent Ethic of Life

By Monsignor Tom Cahalane

As the parish re-establishes an active Consistent Ethic of Life Committee, the question may be asked, "Why this particular committee"? Ideally, the committee will become a focus group with the Pastor and Pastoral Staff in promoting, communicating, and proclaiming the values of the Gospel in our life. Life is a continuum from its first moment of conception to its last natural breath. Each and every human life has a unique dignity because it mirrors and reflects the image of the Creator. Any form of violence and neglect or disrespect against life on its journey from the Tabernacle of the womb to the tomb, is contrary to the basic teaching of Jesus on love. "*Love your neighbor as yourself.*" This is a universal call and does not admit to any exceptions. The command of Jesus is even more explicit. "*Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who persecute you.*"

Too often today, life issues are fragmented one from another. The stands of pro-life and right-to-life tend to be viewed as restricted to life in its most vulnerable beginning stages—in danger of attacks upon it through abortion—to the exclusion of consistently speaking out against the many other attacks on life outside the womb. The Consistent Ethic of Life calls us to see and cherish human life, not in isolated fragments, but as one beautiful mosaic made in the image and likeness of God. Our newly forming parish Consistent Ethic of Life Committee will endeavor to help us as a parish to deal with all life issues within this mosaic. If we believe in the intrinsic value of each human being, it is contradictory to advocate adamantly for life within the womb, while at the same time to allow or even support the destruction of human life via the death penalty, and to justify the violence and destruction of war.

### *Prayer/Reflection*

- Scriptures: Matthew 22:34-40, Matthew 5:43-48, Romans 13:8-10,
- How do I support the Consistent Ethic of Life in my ministry of everyday life?
- In what ways do I reach out in love for my neighbor?
- How do I seek reconciliation and understanding with those who have different views?

## *Consistent Ethic Of Life*

"Where life is involved, the service of charity must be profoundly consistent. It cannot tolerate bias and discrimination, for human life is sacred and inviolable at every stage and in every situation; it is an indivisible good." (The Gospel of Life, no. 87 by John Paul II).

Simply put, the teaching of our Catholic faith tells us that all life is sacred and must be protected, from the womb to the tomb. All people have a right to life. Violence against a human life for any reason is not a solution for any of the problems faced by our society.

Cardinal Bernardin stated that capital punishment, for example is not the same as abortion, but the issues are linked by the value and defense of life that is placed on both. "When human life is considered 'cheap' or easily expendable in one area, eventually nothing is held as sacred and all lives are in jeopardy."

## November's Theme: Human Dignity: Respect for Everyday Life

By Tim Heinan, Executive Director, Blessed Nuno Society

The issue of Human Dignity is primary in Catholic moral theology, the starting point for Catholic social teaching, and one of the first concepts that we encounter in Scripture. As such, it is a central and essential element of our faith.

At the very beginning of Scripture (Gen 1:26-27) God reveals that He made the human person in His own "image and likeness". In other words, the dignity of any person is not in what they earn, what they have done, or failed to do, or to which element of society they happened to have been born. Human dignity flows from having been created in the very image of One Who is Complete Love, Justice, Beauty and Existence. It isn't something we have earned nor is it something we can surrender. It is a gift, freely and eternally given to each of us by God.

Our introduction to humanity in Genesis includes the story of Cain, who we are told, brings murder into the world by initiating a "religious war" that wipes out twenty-five percent of the world's population. Yet even after such an atrocity, the God of Justice refuses to strip him of his human dignity.

By the time we reach the New Testament, the dignity of our entire race is elevated beyond even the farthest boundaries of our imagination. Now, God Himself, at the moment of the Incarnation, risks crossing the widest border that can exist, the border between the Infinite Creator and his finite creation. For the sake of His Love for each of us, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity risks becoming truly one of us.

If we could not see it in the Old Testament, it has to be clear now; our dignity as human beings flows from our common relationship to our Creator. Furthermore, we are undeniably related, not only to God, but to each other. Our dignity stems not from our own autonomy but from a divinely established relationship. The source of your dignity, the source of my dignity, is the same as the source from which flows the dignity of every human life on the planet.

Sadly, contemporary secular culture has moved beyond the sin of Cain. He, at least acknowledged that Abel was his brother. "Am I my brother's keeper?" Yes, I am.

Today, when we are willing to see a human being die, we are more likely to call that brother or sister of ours "the product of conception", or "illegal" or "monster" or perhaps some racial or ethnic slur. We seek to deny the undeniable relationship established by God.

The best the secular world can provide is a plea for tolerance. Christ reminds us that we are called not merely to tolerate our brothers and sisters, but to have compassion for them. If we love the One in Whose Image we have been made, we must love our neighbor as ourselves. Only then can we sincerely pray the words, "OUR Father".

### *Prayer/Reflection:*

- Scriptures: Gen 1: 26-27, John 13: 34-35, Matthew 6: 9-14
- Pray the "Our Father" and reflect on the meaning of the words.
- Do I live my life according to the instructions of Jesus?
- Please pray with us for the Blessed Nuno Society and its work for the children of the world who are included in the least among us.

## **December's Key Theme: Call to Family, Community and Participation in Society**

By Jean Fedigan

"God's nature is communal and social; therefore our nature, created in His image, is communal and social as well. We are communal and social because of the way we have been created and because of the One who has redeemed us." (United States Catholic Conference, *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching*.)

As I began this short article, I was trying to put words to my feelings of late. I love my Catholic faith and I have found great solace in the Gospel and learning about Catholic Social Teaching. Like so many others, I pray each day that God take my life into His hands and guide me according to His Will. Sounds easy, but for me it isn't. I struggle to understand how to live according to my beliefs in a culture that values individualism. I do not believe that I can accomplish living my faith in a vacuum. I seek a community of believers who are willing to come together in love for one another and to reach out to the least among us.

What does the community look like and how does it function? It is made up of parents, modeling their faith for their children and actively involving them in outreach programs within the parish and community. It is a group of believers who share a profound respect for the human dignity of all and come together to pray and worship God through their actions as a whole and individually in their everyday life. It is a community that listens to all its members with respect and comes together in love and reconciliation. In reflecting and praying the teachings of Jesus, the community is moved in a profound way to come together in communion and bonding and to reach out in solidarity to the global community.

I have found such a community here at Our Mother of Sorrows. This community reaches out to the least among us in many ways; from St. Vincent de Paul, Casa Maria, Blessed Nuno Society to the Haiti Committee and Just Coffee. We seek to support the family through the family mass, our school and Welcoming Children back to the Church program. We honor our youth through our various programs designed for their special needs. We reach out to include new members into our community through the ACA and the RCIA programs. We come together in care and comfort through Stephen Ministry and Moses. There are many, many more programs that are the foundation of our beliefs as parish and community.

Let us continue to deepen our prayer and worship together, supporting one another in our journey of faith as companions of the Lord. Let us continue to reach out to the least among us, offering our gifts in love as a community of believers. Let us listen carefully to all voices and reconcile differences in the light of Christ's love and example. In doing so, our faith will grow and our Christian bond will be made stronger and our community will be sustained in God's love to meet all challenges.

### *Prayer/Reflection*

- Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21, John 17:20-26
- How do I utilize my gifts within the community and support its outreach efforts
- Do I listen in love and understanding to others and seek reconciliation of differences?

## *Seven Key Themes Of Catholic Social Teaching*

1. **Life and Dignity of the Human Person:** 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.
2. **Call to Family, Community, and Participation:** 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.
3. **Rights and Responsibilities:** Every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency.
4. **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable:** Mt 25:31-46 instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.
5. **The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers:** If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected.
6. **Solidarity:** We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they live.
7. **Care for God's Creation:** We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation.

**Pointers:**

- The Vatican's Website  
<http://www.vatican.va>
- Our Mother of Sorrows Parish (Tucson, AZ) Christian Life Commission (find previous issues here)  
<http://omosclc.org/>
- U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)  
<http://www.usccb.org>

Pima County Interfaith Council's Information Page

<http://arizonainterfaith.org/pciaff.html>

The New American Bible (online)

<http://www.nccbuscc.org/nab/bible>

Calendar:

**October/2007 Respect for Life Month**

<b>2</b> Ghandi's birthday & Yom Kippur (Jewis)	<b>21</b> International Day of Peace
<b>4</b> Feast day of St. Francis of Assissi	<b>24</b> United Nations Day
<b>16</b> World Food Day	<b>24-30</b> Disarmament Week

**November/2007**

<b>1</b> All Saints Day	<b>16</b> International Day of Tolerance
<b>2</b> All Souls Day	<b>22</b> Thanksgiving
<b>11</b> Veterans Day	<b>25</b> Christ the King

**December/2007**

<b>1</b> World AIDS Day	<b>12</b> Our Lady of Guadalupe
<b>2</b> First Sunday of Advent and International Day for the abolition of Slavery	<b>14</b> St. John of the Cross
<b>8</b> Immaculate Conception	<b>25</b> Christmas
<b>10</b> Human Rights Day	<b>30</b> Feast of the Holy Family

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*A newsletter from JustFaith @ OMOS*

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