

Faith Works

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

JANUARY – MARCH / 2008

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1

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.”



January's Theme: Dignity of Work and Worker's Rights

By Barbara Padilla

A few weeks before Christmas I opened the newspaper and read this story:

“Christmas ornaments sold in Walmart stores are made in sweatshops in China. Employees, many of them children, were forced to work 16 hour shifts, and were paid less than China’s minimum wage. The conditions under which the mostly young women workers in China produce goods for Walmart are dehumanizing.”

I tried to put a face on the young Chinese women, and imagined a hot, noisy, crowded factory, not much smiling or socializing going on, a lot of sighing and wiping of brows. I imagined what I might feel like after spending 16 hours a day, every day, working hard for a paycheck that doesn’t even pay my bills. I looked at my Christmas tree and wondered which ornament I had hung was worth all of that? Was that blue sparkly one made by a child who should have been in school?? Was that gold one made by a single mother who has to work 2 shifts just to buy the ornaments back for her own family tree?

The fifth theme of the Catholic social teachings is the dignity of work and the rights of workers. It stresses that workers have the right to things like decent work, just wages, and safe working conditions. But how am I to know the conditions of factories around the world? How can I possibly know which ones are “the good ones”? The only way I can know for sure is to buy fair trade. There are seven principles of fair trade that coincide with the themes of Catholic Social Teachings: like receiving a fair price for products or labor, no exploitive child labor, healthy safe working conditions, equal opportunity. There are fair trade alternatives for every product we buy, from eggs to Christmas ornaments. It allows people a choice besides migration, and builds relationships between farmers and consumers. When consumers make conscious decisions about how to spend money on items that do not depend on the exploitation of human labor or the destruction of the environment, they are voting with their dollars for the kind of world they want to live in. Conscious shopping takes a little more time and effort at first, but doesn’t it feel good to support responsible businesses? As one farmer states, “We all have to go shopping, Fair Trade is just shopping with respect”. In purchasing Fair Trade you are entering a network of right relationships that respect human relationships, promote economic justice, and cultivate global solidarity.

* Buy locally! Do some shopping at one of the many farmers markets happening all around Tucson. When shopping in stores, look for fair trade or sweat free labels.

*stop by the kiosk! You’ll find your very own CRS Fair Trade Ambassador, Barb Padilla! Along with Café Justo, Divine Chocolate, and lots more!

February's Theme: Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

By Charlotte Spears

When I was asked to write about Casa Maria I felt I knew so little, even though I have lived here two months, I didn't know what I could say. Casa Maria is so much more than passing out soup and lunches and giving out clothing. Part of the Catholic Worker philosophy is to spend half of your time on direct works of charity and the other half working to change the system that lets hunger, homelessness, etc., in our society, exist. I have learned so much, yet know there is so much more for me to learn.

There is so much in Scripture and in the teachings of the Church that challenges us to look beyond our own comfort to the welfare of others. On the day of Judgment, in Jesus' own words, we will be judged on whether we have fed the hungry, given drink to the thirsty, welcomed the stranger, clothed the naked, visited the prisoner, helped the least of our brothers and sisters. Who are the least in our society? They are the ones who live on the streets, the addicted, the immigrant, the poor, the mentally ill. These are some of the people we serve at Casa Maria.

A lady came up to me the other afternoon when I was walking my dog. "If you find another dog you let me know. Somebody must of took mine. He kept me warm at night and he was my protection. I live over there in the alley behind the library. See, there's my cart." And there was a grocery cart piled with all her earthly belongings. This lady has coffee with us every morning and soup and a sack lunch later. I saw her a few days later with her cart fallen over on the railroad track. She was hurriedly picking up her things.

Every morning before day light there is a group of 8 to 10 men sitting around on railroad ties drinking coffee and eating day old donuts or rolls. From what I overhear of their conversation they are all veterans from World II to Vietnam.

I start out each weekday morning at 5:30 helping Phil make sandwiches. Phil has been getting ready for the day since 4:30. There needs to be 17 crates of lunches ready before we start handing them out at 8:30. At six-o'clock one of the men from the streets and I get in the van to pick up food at the Safeway on Prince and Campbell. After that load is brought back to Casa and unloaded I return to helping make sandwiches, or lunches, or soup or washing pots and pans. We have volunteers coming in to help all morning. A volunteer and I go out for another pickup around 8:30; this time to Food City on Valencia and I-10. One day we took 10 crates of good produce out of the dumpster. There are other volunteers who bring in food from around the City. We serve over 600 single lunches a day and pass out 200 family bags. Many of those in line are the working poor or the elderly from the neighborhood. There are often young children with their grandparents.

The word some of my friends from Our Mother of Sorrows have used after helping out here for the first time is "dumbfounded". It is truly a world not many in Tucson see. I finish my morning at Casa Maria by going to noon mass at the Cathedral. I know it is through prayer that God has given me such a love for this work. I know it is where the good Lord has put me and I am grateful.

Reflection:

Mark 9:35 "If anyone wishes to be first he shall be the last of all and the servant of all."

Luke 16:19-31 The rich man and Lazarus

Psalm 100 "Give thanks to God and bless his name."

PRAYER: Lord Open Our Eyes by Kathryn Spink

Lord, open our eyes, that we may see you in our brothers and sisters.

Lord open our ears that we may hear the cries of the hungry, the cold, the frightened, the oppressed.

Lord, open our hearts, that we may love each other as you love us.

Renew in us your spirit Lord, free us and make us one.

March's Theme: Call to Family, Community and Participation in Society*By Jean Fedigan*

This week, I read a wonderful article in the *Liguorian* magazine entitled “Simple Ways to Help the World – The Practice of Catholic Social Teaching.” As Catholics, we are called to practice social teaching in our everyday lives and most of the time we do without calling it by name. This particular article gave me pause to reflect on how I live the gospel in my life.

Jesus gave us two great commandments: love God totally and love our neighbor as ourselves. How do I love God and how do I show it? I pray both formal and informal prayers throughout the day. I come to daily Mass to give thanks for the day and to ask for God's help for the remainder of the day. Do I finally get through my litany of lists and noisy prayer to listen for His word? Do I simply sit in silence, even for a few minutes, and let His Spirit and Presence fill my heart? I believe God calls me through prayer to open my heart and mind to others. Do I pray, listen and act? Do I throw open my arms to those in need and offer not only help, but listening, sharing and understanding? If I am to totally love God and trust Him above all others, then I must pray for His guidance in everything I do throughout my day. I can't give God part of the day and then go on my merry way. In my faith, I have discovered that God wants me all of the time and I want Him in every moment of my day.

The ministry of Jesus reveals how we are to love our neighbor, seeking to help those who are poor and vulnerable. Out of prayer will come the understanding and desire to help others: donating to St. Vincent de Paul or to Haiti, buying JustCoffee or other fair trade items, and bringing clothes and household items to Casa Maria or Primavera. We see people in need in our family and neighborhood and lift a helping hand or a shoulder for tears and listening. We smile and welcome all who come to worship in our Church. We perform social justice when we work for change through legislation, or vote for the candidate that most reflects our values or pick a movie that is not offensive to those same values. We love our neighbor when we stand for their rights for work and dignity, even when it means we must give something of ourselves. Working and praying with others and developing those relationships will sustain us. As the man said, the other day after a conversation, “Well, I must be about my brother's business.” “Don't you mean your Father's business?” the other asked. And he answered, “My Father's business is my brother's business.”

Catholic Social Teaching is simply bringing the gospel message to the social issues of our time. Do I speak out or am I part of the silent crowd. Do people know I am Catholic because of my actions at work or in the supermarket? Do my children see my values acted out in every day activities?

I know that what sustains me is prayer that my heart is open to hear with the love of Christ and that out of my prayer will come the desire and willingness to reach out. I have come to understand that nothing endures in my life without being grounded in prayer. It is God in His great love for me that opens my heart and nudges me toward action. It is God who uses my hands and feet to do His work. I just have to let Him.

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://omoscl.org/>
- U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)
<http://www.usccb.org>

Pima County Interfaith Council's Information Page
<http://www.pimacountyinterfaith.org/>

Casa Maria
<http://www.casamariatucson.org/>

Catholic Relief Services' Fair Trade Web site.
www.crsfairtrade.org

National Catholic Rural Life
www.NCRLC.com. Click on "Eating is a Moral Act"

Justice & Peace Shall Kiss
<http://psalm85.blogspot.com>

The New American Bible (*online*)
<http://www.nccbuscc.org/nab/bible>

Calendar:**January/2008 Poverty Awareness Month**

1 Mary Mother of God & World Day for Peace	17 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
6 Epiphany of Our Lord	21 Martin Luther King Day
16 World Food Day	30 Ghandi's Death 1948

February/2008 African American History Month

2 Presentation of the Lord	14 Valentine's Day
6 Ash Wednesday – beginning of Lent	18 President's Day
11 World Day of the Sick	22 Chair of St. Peter, Apostle (Feast)

March/2008

3 St. Katherine Drexel (Memorial)	22 Holy Saturday
16 Passion Sunday (Psalm)	23 Easter Sunday
20 Holy Thursday	24 Archbishop Oscar Romero
21 Good Friday	31 The Annunciation of the Lord

Faith Works

A newsletter from JustFaith @ OMOS
1800 S. Kolb Rd; Tucson, AZ 85710