

Living Our Faith

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

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Introduction

Greetings from our JustFAITH community at OMOS!

Our JustFaith participants are learning to live their faith through a thirty-week adult formation program at Our Mother of Sorrows. This program provides a context in which we can grow in our commitment to the care of the vulnerable and become advocates for justice.

We will offer quarterly short reflections highlighting the *Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching* and how we might incorporate them into our prayer and actions in our lives.

Thank you for living your faith by actively serving and praying for others. We look forward to learning from one another and welcome comments or suggestions for improvement of our newsletter. Comments or suggestions can be directed to Jean Fedigan at jeanfedigan@juno.com or Jose Hanchi at jose.hanchi@gmail.com.

Please pray for our formation as we pray for you as we reflect on these issues under the light of the Seven Themes Of Catholic Social Teaching and the Consistent Ethic of Life.

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.”

As we make decisions in our personal and public lives, we are called to honor the sacredness of all life by honoring the dignity and right to life of all humans. We do so when we shape public policy with our votes and how we speak to one another and how we teach our values to our children.

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.

March/2006 calendar

- 1st ♦ Ash Wednesday
♦ International Day for the abolition of the Death Penalty. See www.usccb.org.
- 3rd ♦ World Day of Prayer
www.worlddayofprayer.net.
- 5th ♦ International Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
- 19th ♦ St. Joseph
♦ Start of the War in Iraq (2003). Pray for peace.
- 21st ♦ International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- 22nd ♦ World Water Day
- 24th ♦ Archbishop Oscar Romero's assassination (1980)
- 25th ♦ Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary
- 26th ♦ Populorum Progressio (Encyclical Of Pope Paul VI on the Development Of Peoples, 1967)

March's Key Theme: Life And Dignity Of The Human Person

Every person is created in the image of God. All social laws, practices, and institutions must protect, not undermine, human life and human dignity – from conception through natural death.

March 1st, Ash Wednesday, marks the beginning of Lent. This is the time when we walk with Christ through His passion and death. He was innocent yet found guilty. He brought the new Law yet was tried. He gave life yet was condemned to death. It seems appropriate that March 1st, is also the *International Day for the Abolition of the Death Penalty*, a time to reflect on the social and moral dimensions of this violent act.

How effective is the death penalty?

- During the past three decades, nearly 1,000 people have been put to death in the United States. Among developed countries, the US stands alone in its regular use of the death penalty.
- Since 1970, 120 people who were on death row have been exonerated and others proven innocent post mortem.
- States with more executions do not generally have lower murder or crime rates. There is no clear evidence that the death penalty deters or prevents crime.

Life is a gift from God. We are called to respect life and the dignity of every human being, even when they commit great evil. We are called to protect ourselves without ending a human life. Our faith calls us to examine and re-write public policies that treat some lives as unworthy of protection and work to reform a broken criminal justice system so that all members of society are protected. In John 8: 1-11, Jesus seeks to remind us not to quickly judge others when he refuses to condemn the woman accused of adultery. He asks us to look for redemption and reform.

Prayer/Reflection:

Let us ask when do we find it most difficult to recognize the human dignity of our neighbor? In what ways do we support or reject the violence reflected in our society? What can we do to help change the culture of death and show respect for all human life, from womb to the tomb?

Challenges / Actions:

- Pray the *Our Father* and reflect on the meaning of forgiving
- Read what the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) says about the death penalty
<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/national/deathpenalty>
- Search/read the Vatican's website for the Encyclical "Evangelium Vitae":
http://www.vatican.va/phome_en.htm
- The death penalty is used in Arizona. What can I do about it?

April/2006 calendar

- 3rd, 4th, 5th ♦ OMOS Parish Mission
- 7th ♦ World Health Day
- 9th ♦ Palm Sunday
- 11th ♦ Pacem in Terris (Encyclical of Pope John XXIII, 1963)
- 13th ♦ Holy Thursday
- 14th ♦ Good Friday
- 15th ♦ Holy Saturday
- 16th ♦ Easter Sunday
- 22nd ♦ Earth Day
- 24th ♦ Death of Cesar Chavez (1993)
- 27th ♦ Murder of Bishop Juan Gerardi Conedera (1998)

April's Key Theme: Care for God's creation

In the book of Genesis, God gave humanity responsibility for nature. As stewards of God's creation, we do not own creation but are caretakers for God and one another. We are not separate from the world of nature, but are part of it and companions on the journey of faith and life.

Jesus constantly used creation to illustrate His teachings. He spoke about bread, wine, oil and water to symbolize the new covenant. He spoke about the fig tree, fields of wheat, sparrows, and lilies. We all can tell at least one parable of Jesus using creation as a symbol. The earth and its fruits have become sacred in our worship as the bread and wine, once consecrated, become the body and blood of our Lord.

When we embrace our faith by protecting and caring for all creation, we acknowledge the link between the consistent ethic of life and creation. To be good stewards we must connect our care and love of creation with the common good of our global community.

We are reminded of our responsibility to protect the rights of all so they might live with dignity. We are also called to protect the earth for future generations. This respect for the common good takes priority over individual wants and needs.

Prayer/Reflection:

During the month of April, we will celebrate Earth Day on April 22. It is a good time to reflect on our stewardship and responsibilities for all creation.

The National Catholic Rural Life Conference began the campaign called "Eating is a Moral Act". Let us reflect on the following: "How do our food and agricultural policies enhance or diminish the life, dignity and rights of the human person? What is their impact on human life, hungry people, farm families, and the land that sustains us?"

(continued)

April's Key Theme: Care for God's creation (cont.)*Challenges / Actions:*

- Search/read about the campaign "Eating is a Moral Act" on the NCRL webpage. <http://www.ncrlc.com>
- Open the bible and find passages to reflect upon and pray for wisdom
- Become involved in legislation for the rights of farm workers and equal distribution of food in our global community
- Be more conscious of the foods you purchase at the grocery store: what is their origin?
- Have you looked for a farmers market to support local/small farmers? Contact Community Food Bank at 622-0525 for locations.
- Pray for all creation

May's Key Theme : Solidarity

"We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences." - (US Catholic Bishops: Sharing Catholic Teaching: Challenges and Directions)

Easy to say, harder to do. Yet, solidarity is as ancient and essential as the covenants God made with Abraham and Moses and as new as Jesus' calling us to love our neighbor. Solidarity calls the faithful to work toward the common good of all humanity.

If we are bound together as one human family, it is impossible for a wealthy nation to be indifferent to the misery and poverty of others. We have become more and more aware of the interdependence of nations in this time of global travel and trade. Our neighbor no longer lives next door, but in the next town or country half a world away. God has called us into stewardship of all creation with one another. As Christians we have accepted His covenant to care for all creation.

We cannot expect peace until we build mutual trust between nations. Mutual trust must be built with a desire to promote peace by working toward the common good. Trust is destroyed when one nation fears another nation's weapons.

Not only must we work to abolish war, but we must work to end the violence of abortion, capital punishment, poverty, racism and mercy killing. The *Consistent Ethic of Life* reminds us each human life is sacred, from the womb to the tomb. It also reminds us to actively live our covenant with God.

Prayer/Reflection

- Read Isaiah 2:1-4; Micah 4:1-3 and Galatians 3:28
- Who is my neighbor? Describe your neighbor in your community, town and another country. What can you do to help?
- What do I have in common with people of poverty?
- How do I reflect solidarity with people of another race, religion or third world country?

Challenges / Actions:

- Pray for peace
- Become knowledgeable about local, state and national policies and vote
- Become actively involved in Pima County Interfaith Council (You can participate through OMOS)
- Write your congressman to express your desire to end the war and support policies that provide for the common good of all the nations..

May/2006 calendar

1st ♦ St. Joseph the Worker

3rd ♦ The Challenge of Peace -
US Bishops

4th ♦ National Day of Prayer
USA

14th ♦ Mother's Day

15th ♦ International Day of
Families

25th ♦ Ascension of Christ
♦ Week of Solidarity with
Peoples of Non Self
Governing Territories

29th ♦ Memorial Day
♦ International Day of United
Nations Peacekeepers

Notes:

Pointers

<http://www.vatican.va>

The Vatican's website

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/lent/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20050929_lent-2006_en.html

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI FOR LENT 2006

<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/harvest.htm>

The Harvest of Justice is Sown in Peace

A Reflection of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops on the Tenth Anniversary of The Challenge of Peace

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum_en.html

POPULORUM PROGRESSIO

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html

GAUDIUM ET SPES

<http://www.usccb.org/index.shtml>

U.S. Conference Of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)

<http://www.usccb.org/statements.shtml>

USCCB Statements & Speeches

<http://www.ncrlc.com/>

National Catholic Rural Life Conference

http://www.ncrlc.com/ncrlc-RP-webpages/web01_ncrlcRP.html

Eating is a Moral Act

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

Pima County Interfaith Council's Information Page at Arizona Interfaith Network

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