

Lenten Reflections on Solidarity



One of the fundamental principles of Catholic social teaching is solidarity with the most vulnerable members of society. Like branches on a vine, we are intimately bound to each person throughout the world through our common descent from Adam.

In Baptism we, though many, are incorporated into one body—the body of Jesus Christ. We become members of a spiritual family, spiritual sons and daughters of our heavenly Father. Receiving the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist reinforces our union. This spiritual food deepens our bond to such an extent that we can truly “bear one another's burdens” (Galatians 6:2) by ministering to and praying for each other.

God Speaks

I am the vine, you are the branches;
he who abides in Me and I in him,
he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you
can do nothing

John 15:5

The Church Speaks

Solidarity is a Christian virtue. It seeks to go beyond itself to total gratuity, forgiveness, and reconciliation. It leads to a new vision of the unity of humankind, a reflection of God's triune intimate life...

Pope John Paul II
On Social Concern, (40), 1987

Did you know?

**30,000 children die
each day due to
poverty.**

Each week during Lent this series will focus on a particular group of our brothers and sisters who need our attention and offer simple ways to address their needs through the traditional Lenten practice of prayer, fasting and almsgiving.



To Do:

Father, you have given all peoples one common origin, and your will is to gather them as one family in Yourself. By sharing the good things you gave us, may we secure justice and equality for every human being, an end to all division, and a human society built on love.

Prayer

Fasting

Fasting is giving up something that we desire in union with Christ's suffering on the cross. This week, offer up something that you love for the sake of your brothers and sisters throughout the world.

Almsgiving

This week we focus on Operation Rice Bowl as a way of expressing solidarity with those in need throughout the world. Operation Rice Bowl encourages Catholics to pray and fast in solidarity with those who hunger and make almsgiving.

Remember to pick up your Operation Rice Bowl materials at your parish or visit www.crs.org and pick up your materials online.

Lenten Reflections on The Environment



We live on a beautiful planet fine tuned to sustain life - ours and those of “our companions in creation” as our Holy Father has called other living creatures. We owe it to our Creator to tend the garden carefully to sustain the lives of all human beings while still allowing other creatures to survive. We particularly have a responsibility to consider the needs of future generations.

Unfortunately, we are in danger of losing many of the beautiful creatures God has put on this earth because of overexploitation for immediate profit. Many stocks of fish and other edible sea creatures have drastically declined due to poorly regulated commercial fishing.

God Speaks

And the Lord God took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden to watch it and keep it.

Genesis 2:15

The Church Speaks

God destined the earth and all it contains for all people and nations so that all created things would be shared fairly by all humankind under the guidance of justice tempered by charity.

The Church in the Modern World
(69), Second Vatican Council , 1965

Did you know?

25% of the planet's biological diversity is in danger of extinction within the next 30 years.



To Do: Father, God of goodness, you give man the land to provide him with food. May the produce we harvest sustain our lives, and may we always use it for your glory and the good of all.

Prayer

Fasting

Make a conscious endeavor this week to fast from fish that is in danger of extinction, or give up for God a food that you love.

Almsgiving

As we practice our Lenten obligation to abstain from meat on Fridays, let us select fish and other sea creatures that are not in danger of extinction. Use the list below from the Monterey Bay Aquarium when choosing seafood during Lent and throughout the year.

For more information visit www.seafoodwatch.org.

BEST CHOICES	GOOD ALTERNATIVES	AVOID
Abalone (farmed)	Basa/Tra (farmed)	Chilean Seabass/ Toothfish*
Barramundi (US farmed)	Clams, Oysters* (wild)	Cod: Atlantic
Catfish (US farmed)	Cod: Pacific (trawled)	Crab: King (imported)
Clams, Mussels, Oysters (farmed)	Crab: King (Alaska), Snow, Imitation	Dogfish (US)*
Cod: Pacific (Alaska longline)*	Dogfish (BC)*	Grenadier/Pacific Roughy
Crab: Dungeness	Flounders, Soles (Pacific)	Lobster: Spiny (imported)
Halibut: Pacific*	Lingcod*	Mahi mahi/Dolphinfish (import)
Lobster: Spiny (US)	Lobster: American/Maine	Monkfish; Orange
Pollock (Alaska wild)*	Mahi mahi/Dolphinfish (US)	Roughy*
Rockfish: Black (CA, OR)	Rockfish (Alaska, BC hook & line)	Rockfish (trawled)
Salmon (Alaska wild)*	Sablefish/Black Cod (CA, OR, WA)	Salmon (farmed, incl. Atlantic)*
Sardines	Salmon (CA, OR, WA wild)	Scallops: Sea (Mid-Atlantic)
Scallops: Bay (farmed)	Sanddabs: Pacific	Sharks*; Sturgeon*, Caviar (imported wild)
Shrimp: Pink (OR)	Scallops: Sea (Canada and Northeast)	Swordfish (imported)*
Spot Prawn (BC)	Shrimp (US farmed or wild)	Tuna: Albacore, Bigeye, Yellowfin (longline)*
Striped Bass (farmed)	Spot Prawn (US); Squid	Tuna: Bluefin*
Sturgeon, Caviar (farmed)	Sturgeon (OR, WA wild)	
Tilapia (US farmed)	Swordfish (US longline)*	
Trout: Rainbow (farmed)	Tuna: canned light,	
Tuna: Skipjack (troll/pole)	Tuna: canned white/Albacore*	
White Seabass		

Lenten Reflections on Labor & Fair Trade



One of the principles of Catholic social teaching is the dignity of work as a means of participating in God's ongoing creative activity. All legitimate work that contributes to the common good has intrinsic value that should be reflected in adequate compensation.

When the Honduran government entered a trade agreement that opened its markets to U.S. imports in the early 1990s, Maria Angeles Amaya of Santa Cruz de Yojoa lost her rice farm. Honduran rice farmers could not compete with the low prices of the U.S.-subsidized rice that was flooding their country. Growers such as Maria and her husband lost their livelihoods and had to leave their communities to find work elsewhere. What was once a source of reliable income that allowed farmers to afford education and healthcare and meet other family needs had become a source of poverty.

God Speaks

And let justice roll down like mighty waters and righteousness like an ever flowing stream.

Amos 5:24

The Church Speaks

The economy should work for people, and not the other way around.

Economic Justice for All
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1986

Did you know?

Since NAFTA in 1994, two million peasant farmers have had to leave Mexico's countryside.

To support small farmers like Maria, Catholic Relief Services and other organizations established a fair trade certification process that guarantees a just price be given to farmers for their produce regardless of fluctuations of the international market.



To DO:

God our Father, by the labor of man you govern and guide to perfection the work of creation. Hear the prayers of your people and give all men work that enhances their human dignity and draws them together in the service of others.

Prayer

Fasting

This week offer your prayers and sacrifices for all those who are forced to leave their hometowns and even their homelands to find work in the U.S. and abroad.

Almsgiving

When we consumers make the conscious decision to purchase Fair Trade items like coffee, tea, fruit, chocolate, and crafts, we are putting our values and faith into action, and working to realize our vision of economic justice.

To find out where fair trade products are available to purchase, visit www.transfairusa.org

To buy fair trade coffee and tea in bulk for personal or parish use, visit www.crsfairtrade.org



Lenten Reflections on Persecution



Next in importance to the right to life is the right to freedom of conscience: the right to speak and associate on the basis of one's beliefs. Since it is our intellect and free will that distinguishes us from other creatures, this right is essential to human dignity.

God Speaks

Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

Matthew 5:11

The Church Speaks

Catholic social teaching more than anything else insists that we are one family; it calls us to overcome barriers of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, economic status, and nationality. We are all one in Christ Jesus (cf Gal 3:28) - beyond our differences and boundaries.

Communities of Salt and Light,
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1993

Did you know?

In some countries around the world, it is illegal to convert to Christianity.

Many Christians and other religious groups are suffering severe persecution throughout the world because they do not adhere to the majority religion or ideology. Christians are rounded up and arrested in China. In Iraq, churches are burned and priests are assassinated.

Our Palestinian brothers and sisters are caught between extremists on both sides of the conflict in the Holy Land. Unfortunately most of them have left their homeland because they can no longer find work, leaving only a small remnant in the land that Jesus walked.



TO DO:

Father, in your mysterious providence, your Church must share in the sufferings of Christ your Son. Give the spirit of patience and love to those who are persecuted for their faith in you that they may always be true and faithful witnesses to your promise of eternal life.

Prayer

Fasting

This week offer your prayers and sacrifice on behalf of those who have injured you.

Almsgiving

Those Palestinians still living in the Holy Land are trying to survive by selling abroad beautiful devotional objects made from olive wood.

A good Lenten resolution would be to make our homes look more Catholic by purchasing and displaying some of these olive wood objects, such as crucifixes and madonnas.

For more information, visit the Palestinian Association for Cultural Exchange website at www.pace.ps.



Lenten Reflections on Distributive Justice



One of the basic principles of Catholic social teaching is distributive justice. Distributive justice means that every human being has a right to the goods of the earth necessary for his or her flourishing.

In his Epiphany homily this January, the Holy Father has recently called attention to the fact that a large percentage of our brothers and sisters in developing countries lack this access due to an unfair distribution of wealth. We are called as Catholics to work toward the creation of just economic systems.

God Speaks

But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother's needs, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?

1 John 2:17

The Church Speaks

Competition, to be sure, is not to be excluded from commerce, but it must be kept within those limits which make it just and fair and therefore worthy of man.

On the Development of Peoples (61)

Paul VI, 1967

Did you know?

The GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of ¼ of the world's poorest countries is less than the wealth of the world's three richest people.



To DO: All powerful Father, God of goodness, you provide for all your creation. Give us an effective love for our brothers and sisters who suffer from lack of food. Help us do all we can to relieve their hunger, that they may serve you with carefree hearts.

Prayer

Fasting

During Lent we are asked to make small sacrifices daily as a way of participating in the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. When you fast with simple meals or make other sacrifices, set aside the money you would have spent for those in need.

Almsgiving

We as Catholic Christians are *all* called to give of ourselves during Lent.

For those who have participated in Operation Rice Bowl or some other Lenten giving program, this is the week that we will make our offering to the Lord.

As we offer our gifts this week, let us recall Mother Teresa's words, "it is not how much we give, but how much love we put in the giving," and as she says, "this is the meaning of truest love, to give until it hurts."

For more information visit www.crs.org.

