



Pastoral Recommendations Project
By the baptized - For the baptized

Supporting Social Justice Outreach

Supporting Social Justice Efforts through the Archdiocese, Parishes,
Schools, Religious Communities, Agencies and Ecumenical Outreach

*You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart,
mind, soul and body, and your neighbor as yourself.*
(Deuteronomy 6:5)

In this invitation of Jesus is the crux of our responsibility to serve the persons around us who are in need. The American Bishops have set the stage by giving us the Principles of Catholic Social Teaching (Appendix SJ#1). The corporal and spiritual works of mercy suggest the kinds of ministry we are to give in the name of justice and mercy (Appendix SJ#2). Pope Francis provides a very real model of just and merciful behavior.

"He's electrified the world because he embodies the basic tenets of Catholic social doctrine that also cuts across all great faiths - everyone is entitled to be treated with dignity, we have an obligation to help the poor, we have responsibilities to one another and to our planet."

(Joe Biden, VP of the U.S., Time Magazine 5/19/2016, pg. 62)

There are many significant and effective social justice efforts in this Archdiocese at present and across time. The Social Justice Office of Catholic Charities, formerly a separate office in the Archdiocese, the twelve parish social justice committees and commissions, school social justice trips to help folks in needy areas of our country and world, and religious communities of women who have helped move the "human trafficking" tragedy to the forefront for legislative and merciful action-all are examples of groups working tirelessly for change and in service to others.

In this Year of Mercy in our Church the time is ripe to re-evaluate our commitment to social justice and to make it a priority with a focus on youth and young adult involvement.

The recommendations listed below are focused on justice and mercy to our neighbors. Some are structural changes and some aim for cultural change in the way we view our obligations. There is so much need in our society and on our planet that there is always more we can do. Social justice efforts must become a priority and a hallmark of our faith.

See how they love one another! (Tertullian)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE OUTREACH

1. A "poor church for the poor" (Pope Francis)

Pope Francis admonished that the Church itself must be poor for the poor. In an effort to align ourselves with this stance the Archdiocese, we suggest that each parish and other Catholic organizations evaluate their holdings of money, properties and artifacts and identify what can be reallocated for the needs of the poor in our midst.

Even with bankruptcy the Archdiocese has more and varied kinds of wealth than the poor.

Guardian Angels Parish in Oakdale is using an unneeded rectory as a short term homeless shelter.

2. Social Justice Office

Since social justice outreach as a priority needs a reboot in our Archdiocese and because there is a difference between justice and charity, a reevaluation of the need to return to a separate Archdiocesan Social Justice Office seems appropriate.

This recommendation comes with kudos for the excellent work being done in the current Office for Social Justice within Catholic Charities.

Everything that we do has some relevance, some importance in this great plan of what God has for the world.

(Archbishop Hebda, UST, April, 2016)

3. Archdiocesan Focus

YEARLY, in order to define a unified focus and significant yearly outcomes, the central corporation of the Archdiocese, individual parishes, religious communities, schools, etc. are encouraged to identify ONE different focus of justice outreach to support each year with human and financial resources. The endorsement of the Archbishop is crucial.

Laudato Si, Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical letter on "Care for our Common Home" might be an example of one focus.

"...I will advance some broader proposals for dialogue and action which would involve each of us as individuals, and also affect international policies."

4. Global Citizenry

We are GLOBAL CITIZENS and should work more directly with organizations such as the United Nations whose purpose is to serve people around the world. The Archdiocese, parishes and others might establish a joint NGO (non-governmental organization at the UN) through the Social Justice Office and support the "sustainable development goals for 2030" of the UN. (Appendix SJ#3).

An example of UN focus is the fate of women which the Vatican's permanent observer at the UN identifies. This quote appeared in 'The Catholic Spirit' recently. *"Women and girls continue to experience violence, including rape as a weapon of armed conflicts. Trafficking for sexual exploitation, forced abortion, forced marriage, and forced conversion to other faiths..."* *Education and adequate health care must not be denied to any woman or girl."*

(Catholic Spirit, March 31, 2016 page 11B)

5. Funding Youth Social Justice Actions

Young persons in our Church are generous, compassionate and looking for active ways to live out their faith. A fund set up in the Social Justice Office of the Archdiocese for social justice projects directed by youth and young adults could enhance their faith and might reestablish their church connections. These young persons might request small grants of money (up to \$5,000) to use for a social justice project. This will strengthen their religious values concerning the responsibility of caring for our neighbors.

6. Social Justice as a Priority in Education of Youth

Social Justice information and action needs to be addressed in our schools and Religious Educations programs in order to prioritize care for our neighbor and our planet as a religious tenet. Social media is the world of youth and could be a useful vehicle to help them (and adults, too) stay in touch with justice projects around the Archdiocese and the world.

Pope Francis tweets nearly every day

(#PopeFrancis)

500 fifth and sixth graders from 11 Catholic elementary schools participated in a 2-day event in January 2016, packing a total of 108,000 meals for Feed My Starving Children. The event was sponsored by the Catholic Schools Center of Excellence (Catholic Spirit, April 2016)

7. Parish Focus

There are 180 parishes in this Archdiocese and there are many and varied efforts for social justice being initiated. To make Social Justice an Archdiocesan priority we suggest that each parish either establish or reenergize a Social Justice organization with a specified coordinator and budget. Several parishes might do this work together.

8. Parish Tithing for Social Justice

Because social justice work is a priority each parish is challenged to set aside a **dedicated** portion of parish income specifically for social justice programs and staff support.

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