



March 13, 2011 – First Sunday of Lent

REFLECTION: During Lent, we embark on a journey to deepen our relationship with Jesus Christ and to live more faithfully as his disciples. Our theme for Lent is “Our Journey Toward Selfless Love.” Over the six weeks of Lent we will reflect on principles of Catholic social teaching on respect for all human life from conception until natural death. On your own or perhaps as a family, you will have the opportunity to reflect each week on the questions which will guide us in considering how we might better live out Christ’s selfless love. You will also find some web sites to broaden and deepen your understanding of what our Church teaches about human life and dignity.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING: *The Life and Dignity of the Human Person* – The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching. In our society, human life is under direct attack from abortion and euthanasia. The value of human life is being threatened by cloning, embryonic stem cell research, and the use of the death penalty. The intentional targeting of civilians in war or terrorist attacks is always wrong. Catholic teaching also calls on us to work to avoid war. Nations must protect the right to life by finding increasingly effective ways to prevent conflicts and resolve them by peaceful means. 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.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS: Do I respect the life and dignity of every human person from conception through natural death? Do I recognize the face of Christ reflected in all others around me whatever their race, class, age, or abilities? Do I work to protect the dignity of others when it is being threatened? Am I committed to both protecting human life and to ensuring that every human being is able to live in dignity?

WEBSITES: www.usccb.org/prolife
www.usccb.org/jphd



March 20, 2011 - Second Sunday of Lent

REFLECTION: We have been made in the image and likeness of God. In Christ we see the fullness of human life and dignity. Lent is an opportunity for us to realize the fullness of our dignity made visible in Christ's transfiguration. Lent calls us to become our best selves, to contribute to society and to be the daughter and son God has called us to be. This week let us reflect on our call to Family, Community and Participation.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING: *Call to Family, Community and Participation* – The person is not only sacred but also social. How we organize our society—in economics and politics, in law and policy—directly affects human dignity and the capacity of

individuals to grow in community. Marriage and the family are the central social institutions that must be supported and strengthened, not undermined. 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.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION: Do I try to make positive contributions in my family and in my community? Are my beliefs, attitudes, and choices such that they strengthen or undermine the institution of the family? Am I aware of problems facing my local community and involved in efforts to find solutions? Do I stay informed and make my voice heard when needed? Do I support the efforts of poor persons to work for change in their neighborhoods and communities? Do my attitudes and interactions empower or disempower others?

WEBSITES: foryourmarriage.org
www.faithfulcitizenship.org
www.usccb.org/cchd



March 27, 2011 - Third Sunday of Lent

REFLECTION: As we continue our journey towards selfless love during Lent, we encounter Christ's compassion and care for the Samaritan woman. His openness toward her and the time he gave to her changed her life. Let us consider this week our responsibilities to help others and to uphold human dignity.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING: *Rights and Responsibilities* – The Catholic tradition teaches that human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Therefore, every person has a fundamental right to life and a right

to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities--to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS: Do I recognize and respect the economic, social, political, and cultural rights of others? Do I live in material comfort and excess while remaining insensitive to the needs of others whose rights are unfulfilled? Do I take seriously my responsibility to ensure the rights of persons in need are realized? Do I urge those in power to implement programs and policies that give priority to the human dignity and rights of all, especially the vulnerable?

WEBSITES: www.usccb.org/jphd
www.usccb.org/prolife



April 3, 2011 - Fourth Sunday of Lent

REFLECTION: This week we hear of the man born blind and how Christ restored his sight. We too, sometimes are blind, especially when we fail to see the plight of the poor and the vulnerable. We are called this week to open our eyes to see the pain of others and to show the selfless love Christ gave the blind man.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING: *Option for the Poor and Vulnerable* – A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. In a society marred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, our tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgment (Mt 25:31-46) and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS: Do I give special attention to the needs of the poor and vulnerable in my community and in the world? Am I disproportionately concerned for my own good at the expense of others? Do I engage in service and advocacy work that protects the dignity of poor and vulnerable persons?

WEBSITES: www.catholiccharitiesusa.org
www.crs.org
www.povertyusa.org
www.usccb.org/globalpoverty



April 10, 2011 - Fifth Sunday of Lent

REFLECTION: Each of us has gifts to share with others. Martha and Mary were very different from one another but each had something to give. As Christ called Lazarus from death to life, he calls us to use our gifts and our work to build up the human family. We reflect this week on the dignity of work as our contribution to life.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING: *The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers* – The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected--the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to the organization and joining of unions, to private property, and to economic initiative

REFLECTION QUESTIONS: As a worker, do I give my employer a fair day's work for my wages? As an owner, do I treat workers fairly? Do I treat all workers with whom I interact with respect, no matter their position or class? Do I support the rights of all workers? Do my purchasing choices take into account the hands involved in the production of what I buy? When possible, do I buy products produced by workers whose rights and dignity were respected?

WEBSITES: www.usccb.org/jphd
www.justfaith.org



April 17 – Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion

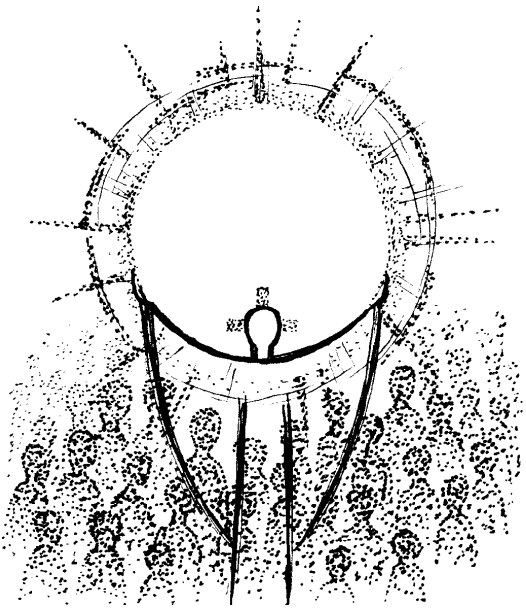
REFLECTION: As Lent comes to an end, we have tried to understand better and live more fully our call to selfless love in imitation of Christ. We have seen that we are united with all of our sisters and brothers and bear responsibility to uphold the life and dignity of the unborn and of all human life. We bear responsibility for one another, for we are one in Christ. This makes demands on us, even as Christ bore his Cross for us.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING: *Solidarity* – We are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they may be. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world. At the core of the virtue of solidarity is the pursuit of justice and peace. Pope Paul VI taught that "if you want peace, work for justice."¹ The Gospel calls us to be peacemakers. Our love for all our sisters and brothers demands that we promote peace in a world surrounded by violence and conflict.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS: Does the way I spend my time reflect a genuine concern for others? Is solidarity incorporated into my prayer and spirituality? Do I lift up vulnerable people throughout the world in my prayer, or is it reserved for only my personal concerns? Am I attentive only to my local neighbors or also those across the globe? Do I see all members of the human family as my brothers and sisters?

WEBSITES: www.crs.org
www.justiceforimmigrants.org
www.usccb.org/scdc

April 24, 2011 - Easter Sunday



REFLECTION: Alleluia! Alleluia! Christ is Risen! Part of our journey this Lent has been to roll away the stones of selfishness, blindness and indifference and replace them with the light of Christ's selfless love. We are called as Catholics to be in solidarity with one another in respecting the life and dignity of the human person from conception to natural death and to be good stewards of God's creation. We are called not to be detractors or observers but participants in forming a community where life and dignity of the person are valued and respected.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING: *Care for Creation* – We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day

slogan, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS: Do I live out my responsibility to care for God's creation? Do I see my care for creation as connected to my concern for poor persons, who are most at risk from environmental problems? Do I litter? Live wastefully? Use energy too freely? Are there ways I could reduce consumption in my life? Are there ways I could change my daily practices and those of my family, school, workplace, or community to better conserve the earth's resources for future generations?

WEBSITES: www.catholiccoalitiononclimatechange.org
www.ncrlc.com

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL on the Theme: “Lent: Our Journey towards Selfless Love”

Please feel free to use these petitions during the Prayer of the Faithful for each of the Sundays of Lent as well as Easter Sunday.

March 13th: Lent I

Like Christ who was tempted in the desert, we must choose life or choose death. May this Lenten season inspire us to live as Christ lived, choosing life and upholding the dignity of all. Let us pray to the Lord,

March 20th: Lent II

We pray with gratitude for all those who have helped us to learn the meaning of selfless love. May we inspire others to be people who care for life and uphold the dignity of all human life from conception to natural death. Let us pray to the Lord,

March 27th: Lent III

Let us pray for all the marginalized in our society who like the Samaritan woman are not welcomed or treated with the dignity they deserve as human beings. Let us pray that in all we say and all we do, we treat others with respect and dignity. Let us pray to the Lord,

April 3rd: Lent IV

Mindful of people with a disability and the unborn whose lives are terminated because of disability, we pray this Lent that we might remove the blindness that keeps us from seeing the value and dignity of all. Let us pray to the Lord,

April 10th: Lent V

Let us pray that all in our Church and in our community recognize the dignity of all human life. Let us pray that each of us, by the gifts and talents God has given us, will contribute to building a society where each one of us is respectful of the dignity of all. Let us pray to the Lord,

April 17th: Palm Sunday

In our Journey towards selfless love this Lent, we pray that we might learn how to love by walking with Christ, through His passion, death and resurrection. Let us pray to the Lord.

April 24th: Easter Sunday

Let us pray that Christ's Resurrection will inspire us to live our lives more faithfully as disciples of Jesus Christ, loving as He loved, serving as He served, caring as He cared. Let us pray to the Lord,

Prayer for Lent 2011: “Our Journey toward Selfless Love”

Gracious and loving God, you call us to walk with your son, Jesus Christ, in this Lenten journey. Help us to grow more like him in overcoming temptations to be self-centered, to attend only to our own needs. Help us to recognize the dignity of every human being, welcoming, accepting and understanding others as Christ did. Help us to see the pain of others and to respond with Christ’s compassion and forgiveness. Unite us in our efforts to uphold the life and dignity of all from conception to natural death. As we journey with Christ through His passion, death and resurrection, may we learn from Him, the meaning of selfless love. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.