

RCIA – Symbolon Lessons 19 & 20: Catholic Social Teaching

Opening Prayer: O God, our Creator, all life is in your hands from conception to natural death. Help us to cherish everyone you put in our lives – especially the most vulnerable – the unborn, the infirmed, the poor, the sick, and the elderly. May all people live in the dignity and love you intend for us. Bless all those who defend the rights of the vulnerable and those on the margins of society. Enlighten and be merciful to us when we fail to love our brothers and sisters as you call us to love them. Lead us to be reflections of Your love for each of us to everyone we encounter, that we may truly live Your commandment to Love God with all our Hearts, all our minds, and all our soul, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. Amen.

- **Song: Whatsoever You Do**

- **Catechism References for Further Reflection:**

- Respect for the Human Person: CCC 1928-1933
- Solidarity as Part of Social Justice: CCC 1939-1942
- Love of Neighbor: CCC 1878
- Human Person at the Center of Every Social Organization: CCC 1892
- Dignity of Human Life: CCC 2258
- Opposition to Abortion: CCC 2270-2275

- **A Few Scriptural references (use these passages for lectio divina):**

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. Live on in my love. You will live in my love if you keep my commandments, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and live in his love. All this I tell you that my joy may be yours and your joy may be complete. This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you. (John 15: 9-12)

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels of heaven, he will sit upon his throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. Then he will separate two groups, as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. The sheep he will place on his right hand, the goats on his left. The king will say to those on his right: 'Come. You have my Father's blessing! Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me. I was ill and you comforted me, in prison and you came to visit me.' Then the just will ask him: 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or see you thirsty and give you drink? When did we welcome you away from home or clothe you in your nakedness? When did we visit you when you were ill or in prison?' The king will answer them: 'I assure you, as often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me.' (Matthew 25:31-40)

My brothers, what good is it to profess faith without practicing it? Such faith has no power to save one, has it? If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and no food for the day, and you say to them, "Goodbye and good luck! Keep warm and well fed," but do not meet their bodily needs, what good is that? So it is with faith that does nothing in practice. It is thoroughly lifeless. (James 2:14-17)

- **Key Terms and Concepts in the videos:**

- **Solidarity:** the firm and persevering determination of members within society to commit themselves to the common good; to the good of all and each individual. A sincere gift of self: where one is willing to serve the other instead of oppress him. This applies to individuals, groups, and nations. Solidarity helps us to see the "other"-whether a person, people or nation – not just as some kind of instrument, with a work capacity and physical strength to be exploited, but as our "neighbor," a "helper," our “brother or sister” to be made a sharer, on a par with ourselves, in the banquet of life to which all are equally invited by God.

- **Universal Distribution of Goods:** We owe everything we have to God. “*God destined the earth and all it contains for all men and all peoples so that all created things would be shared fairly by all mankind under the guidance of justice tempered by charity.*” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 69). God has entrusted each of us with gifts, talents, material goods, etc. in order for us to exercise good stewardship over them for our benefit and for the common good. Private property is good and just as long as we are good stewards of the material blessings God gives us, we use them for our needs and the common good, and they do not become an end in themselves.

- **Questions for Discussion:**

1. What are your thoughts on the concepts of “solidarity” and “the universal destination of goods?” How does American society view these issues?
2. Why is it important for us to do works of charity? Why was Mother Teresa convinced that charity must begin in the home and with those close to us?
3. Why does the Church emphasize the family as being the core element of society so much?
4. What challenges will you as a faithful Catholic experience in living out the Church’s teaching on the inherent dignity of all human beings in today’s society?
5. What are some of the opportunities available in our diocese, parish, and local community to put the message of the Gospel (especially the social teachings) into action and truly become the “hands and feet” of Jesus in the world today?

- **Preparation for the Rite of Sending and Rite of Election**