

Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation are above all values of the Kingdom of God. As such, God Himself is involved in and committed to the task of making the world a place that is just and reconciled, providing a dignified life to all creatures. Among the values of the Kingdom of God, justice and peace receive a central place. Saint Francis was aware of God's mission as Creator, Liberator and Redeemer. As Franciscans, we are called like Saint Francis to rebuild the Church – restoring it to a place that is just and reconciled.

In the Beatitudes, Jesus declares that those are blessed who hunger and thirst for justice (Mt 5: 6). Equally blessed are the “peacemakers; they shall be called children of God” (Mt 5: 9). Jesus also indicates what is important in Christian life: “Seek first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness” (Mt 6: 33). Jesus Himself sought first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and showed hunger and thirst for justice and was persecuted because of it. He Himself was the source, the giver and the cause of peace.



The principles of the Church's social doctrine, which are based on the natural law, are then seen to be confirmed and strengthened, in the faith of the Church, by the Gospel of Christ.

In this light, men and women are invited above all to discover themselves as transcendent beings, in every dimension of their lives, including those related to social, economic and political contexts.

The proclamation of Jesus Christ, the “Good News” of salvation, love, justice and peace, is not readily received in today's world, devastated as it is by wars, poverty and injustices. For this very reason the men and women of our day have greater need than ever of the Gospel: of the faith that saves, of the hope that enlightens, of the charity that loves.

~ From the Introduction of the **Compendium of Social Doctrine of the Church**



We invoke the intercession of **Saint Francis of Assisi**, Deacon and Seraphic Founder of Three Orders and Patron of Ecology, so that this text will bear abundant fruit as an instrument for the proclamation of the Gospel, for justice, compassion and for peace.

To Our Lady, Queen of the Angels, Immaculate Mother of God, Patroness and Queen of the Three Franciscan Orders, pray for us.

***“As far as the Church is concerned, the social message
of the Gospel must not be considered a theory,
but above all else a basis and a motivation for action.”
~ Centesimus Annus, 57***



A Reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

(Rom 12:5-16ab)

Brothers and sisters:

We, though many, are one Body in Christ
and individually parts of one another.

Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us,
let us exercise them:

if prophecy, in proportion to the faith;

if ministry, in ministering;

if one is a teacher, in teaching;

if one exhorts, in exhortation;

if one contributes, in generosity;

if one is over others, with diligence;

if one does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

Let love be sincere;

hate what is evil,

hold on to what is good;

love one another with mutual affection;

anticipate one another in showing honor.

Do not grow slack in zeal,

be fervent in spirit,

serve the Lord.

Rejoice in hope,

endure in affliction,

persevere in prayer.

Contribute to the needs of the holy ones,

exercise hospitality.

Bless those who persecute you,

bless and do not curse them.

Rejoice with those who rejoice,

weep with those who weep.

Have the same regard for one another;

do not be haughty but associate with the lowly.

Psalm 34

The Lord hears the cry of the poor, Blessed be the Lord.

I will bless the Lord at all times
With praise ever in my mouth;
Let my soul glory in the Lord
Who will hear the cry of the poor.

The Lord hears the cry of the poor, Blessed be the Lord.

Let the lowly hear and be glad
The Lord listens to their pleas;
And to hearts broken God is near
Who will hear the cry of the poor.

The Lord hears the cry of the poor, Blessed be the Lord.

A Reading from the Holy Gospel According to Matthew

(Matthew 25:34-45)

“Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.’ Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.’

“Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.’ Then they themselves also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?’ Then He will answer them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’”



**A Reading from the Pastoral Constitution on the Church
in the Modern World from the Second Vatican Council**

The Christian duty of working for peace

Christians should cooperate, willingly and wholeheartedly, in building an international order based on genuine respect for legitimate freedom and on a brotherhood of universal friendship. This is all the more urgent because the greater part of the world still experiences such poverty that in the voices of the poor Christ himself can be heard, crying out for charity from his followers. There are nations – many of them with a majority of Christians – which enjoy an abundance of goods, while others are deprived of the necessities of life, and suffer from hunger, disease and all kinds of afflictions. This scandal must be removed from among men, for the glory of Christ's Church and its testimony to the world are the spirit of poverty and the spirit of love.

Christians, especially young Christians, deserve praise and support when they offer themselves voluntarily in the service of other people, with bishops giving a lead by word and example, to do all in their power to relieve the sufferings of our times, following the age-old custom of the Church in giving not only what they can spare but also what they need for themselves.

Without being uniform or inflexible, a method of collecting and distributing contributions should be established in each diocese and nation and on a world-wide level. Whenever it seems appropriate, there should be joint action between Catholics and other Christians. The spirit of Charity, far from forbidding prudence and orderliness in social and charitable action, in fact demands them. Those intending to serve the developing countries must therefore undergo appropriate and systematic training.

In order to foster and encourage cooperation among men, the Church must be present and active in the community of nations. It must work through its own public organizations with the full and sincere cooperation of all Christians in their one desire to serve all mankind.

This end will be more effectively achieved if the faithful are themselves conscious of their human and Christian responsibilities and seek to awaken among those in their own walk of life a readiness to cooperate with the international community. Special care should be taken to give this kind of formation to young people in their religious and secular education.

Finally, it is to be hoped that, in carrying out their responsibilities in the international community, Catholics will seek to cooperate actively and constructively with other Christians, who profess the same Gospel of love, and with all men who hunger and thirst for true peace.



The Franciscan Call As Gospel People

Encouraged by the teaching found in documents like *Rerum Novarum* (1891), many in the Church were increasingly concerned with finding solutions to social and political problems. But it was with the Second Vatican Council, especially *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), that a clear commitment to social and political action became directly associated with the mission received from Christ: “*Christ did not bequeath to the Church a mission in the political, economic or social order; the purpose he assigned to it was a religious one. But this religious mission can be the source of commitment, direction and vigor to establish and consolidate the human community according to the law of God*” (GS 42).

In *Gaudium et Spes* there is a positive evaluation of the world as something that has been created by God, redeemed by Christ and called to fullness. There is an appreciation for historical reality, the place where God reveals Himself as the Redeemer of humankind. The Second Vatican Council directed the whole Church and every Christian to serve the world by building the Kingdom. This orientation is described in the famous opening statement of *Gaudium et Spes*: “The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of our time, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, are the joys and the hopes the griefs and the anxieties of the followers of Christ” (GS 1).

The **Spirituality of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation** was defined by Pope Paul VI: the mission of Justice and Peace is that of “keeping the eyes of the Church open, its heart sensitive and its hand prepared for the work of charity which it is called upon to realize in the world.”

Our fraternities are clearly called to help the brothers and sisters live their faith in the world, helping them to understand and act on the social dimensions of the gospel in their everyday lives. Like Saint Francis, we are not only called to rebuild the church, we are called to be like our Incarnate God, who is attentive and present to all of life and creation.





The **JPIC BE-Attitudes Diagram** is our guiding force for this three-year term. The JPIC BE-Attitudes are the way of BE-ing, then doing, peace and justice. We begin with the **Four Pillars**, which were created by the **Brothers and Sisters of Saint Francis Region** in 2004. These four pillars, Spirituality, Fraternity, Formation and Apostolate, are the foundations we use to access how deeply we are living our Franciscan vocation – how we are **being** Christ in the world.

The interplay among the Four Pillars addresses the content, the approach, the living, and the sharing of the Secular Franciscan life. The various pieces which constitute:

- ✚ *the **Spirituality Pillar** is aimed at providing the materials for a Franciscan identity and mindset; with this material;*
- ✚ *the **Formation Pillar** is intended to mold and shape the individual progressively throughout Orientation, Initial Formation, and Ongoing Formation;*
- ✚ *the **Fraternity Pillar** is the interactive piece aimed at living the formed spirituality of those who are on the same journey;*
- ✚ *the **Apostolate Pillar** has a twofold intent — working with and for — working with fellow Franciscans in a cooperative, collaborative manner, respecting the gifts and person of each member of the group. The service rendered is a Gospel response, in and of itself laudable, yet the added factor is this service is done by a group who is “of one mine and one heart” — a seamless garment, if you will — communicating an example of the early Christian community. In fraternity the ideal is to recognize the gifts God provides in brothers and sisters, forging a bond and this community of brothers and sisters*

simultaneously ministering not only to the needs of others but also witnessing to the Franciscan identity by the manner in which the ministry is dispensed.

*The Four Pillars give us developed focus to live authentically the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order. ~ From the **BSSF Regional Formators' Guidelines for Orientation and Initial Formation***

Then, the guiding texts for being a Secular who does justice are the **Gospels**, our **Holy Rule** and our rich and prolific **Catholic Social Teaching**. Studying and following these texts on a consistent basis must be an inherent part of being a Secular Franciscan.

Finally, we must not forget about the interior life. Mother Teresa said everything begins in prayer! Not merely passing or casual prayer; but deeply discerning and contemplation. That discernment should begin with the question: “*Who am I?*” Not merely what are my roles and responsibilities; but who am I when all of the roles and responsibilities no longer define. After your period of discernment and the Holy Spirit reveals what is your to do, then you need to educate yourself on the issues that speak to you. Education is not just reading a lot of books. It includes active listening – listening to the stories of those affected by the plight you are undertaking. After prayerful study and reflection, then and only then, are you prepared to animate others. It is said you cannot give away what you do not have. Fill up your own spirit tank before you attempt to fill up your brother's or sister's tank.

The Role of Secular Franciscans in Society

As Secular Franciscans, we commit ourselves to live the Gospel according to Franciscan spirituality in our secular state. We are called to make our own contribution, inspired by the person and message of our Seraphic Father Francis, towards a world in which the dignity of the human person, shared responsibility, and peace and love may be living realities.

Let us give thanks to our God and Father, our brother and Redeemer, Jesus and the Spirit of Love for the holy charism that was poured forth by our Seraphic Father Francis.

“Franciscans are social in nature. Franciscans live the Gospel in public, in the public sphere, not in individual privacy. The Incarnation was and is a social event. I repeat: a social event. It’s a big party! Let’s make it good! Our “evangelical life” orients us toward engaging society and its members. We care for everyone in society, and thus the common good has a prominent role in the Franciscan tradition. There is universality to our social vision, and we should be able to contribute something to the globalization of human culture today.

“Franciscans are action-oriented. For us, learning, study, and philosophy are, at least in part, derivative of a human social experience, of action, of serving, of loving. This too is rooted in the Incarnation: Christ’s embodied action.

“We practice a spirituality of social engagement, in dialogue with society, the needs of its members, especially the suffering and vulnerable. At our best, we Franciscans are creative, manifesting the creativity of God through our social innovation. This may be pastoral, practical, prophetic, or some combination of the above.

“Franciscans are not content with understanding alone. We want to express our understandings through love, through practical action.”

~ Keith Douglass Warner, OFM



The values of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation are an essential element of our Christian life. The declaration of Jesus in Chapter 4 of Luke’s Gospel, taken from Isaiah, underlines this idea:

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,
Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”*

The bishops declared that: *“Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel” (Justice in the World, Synod of Bishops, 1971).*

These values cannot simply remain on paper; they must be lived out in concrete ways in our daily lives. The task becomes more difficult in a world that is increasingly complex and violent. Our Rule has taken seriously the challenge to incarnate the values of JPIC.

“Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives. Especially in the field of public life, they should make definite choices in harmony with their faith.

“Mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon. Messengers of perfect joy in every circumstance, they should strive to bring joy and hope to others.”

~ From Articles 15 & 19, OFS Rule

From the Apostolic Commissions to Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

Through prayer and study, the Ad Hoc Committee discerned that a Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) model, would at this time, best serve the Secular Franciscan Order in fostering greater understanding and living of the Gospel.

The proposal of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Commissions on October 5, 2007: *The structure of the Apostolic Commissions will cease in its current form. In its place will be a Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) team (up to 4 persons) with a keen awareness of Articles 14 – 19 of the Rule and of the social issues before the USCCB.*

The task was not simply to create a new structure but rather to re-integrate Articles 14-19 into our lived expression of the Rule. The motion at the October 2007 Chapter was: *“to accept the recommendations of the ad hoc committee on the Commissions to restructure the Apostolic Commissions to one Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Committee.”* The proposal was accepted by all voting members at the NAFRA Chapter.

“While remaining autonomous, this change in title and structure will give the Secular Franciscan Order a closer partnering with other entities in the Franciscan family and the Church.” (From the proposal document)

The National Executive Council (NEC) expects regional fraternities to collaborate with the JPIC team and to disseminate information to the local fraternities. The NEC expects the regional fraternities to consider a JPIC person or team focus.

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, which encompasses family, work, ecology, and peace and justice; **encourages the living of the Rule as related to the apostolic activities from the point of view of who we are.**

The intention is to renew the vision of who we are called to be. *“In the spirit of conversion, they should live out their love for the renewal of the Church, which should be accompanied by personal and communal renewal. The fruits of conversion, which is a response to the love of God, as works of charity are the interactions with the brothers and sisters”* (General Constitutions, Art. 13.2).

~ From TAU-USA Winter 2007



“Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, fully living the Secular Franciscan Rule, responds to the call of the Church in the twenty-first century. The apostolic commissions, combined to form JPIC, allow for the maturation of the secular Franciscan charism.” ~ Pat Brandwein-Ball, TAU-USA, Summer 2008

In May of 2008, members of the JPIC Transition Committee met to work out a structure for JPIC. The intentions then are much the same as today:

- ✓ Continue apostolic works in which you are currently engaged
- ✓ Appoint a JPIC coordinator to disseminate information
- ✓ Collaborate with your respective formation commission in reviewing ways to stimulate theological reflection and discussion of materials from CIOFS
- ✓ Explore local parish and diocesan websites for information on issues pertinent to your area; develop a personal Franciscan response
- ✓ Sign up for the SFOPJNET Group
- ✓ Develop a database of contact persons for each fraternity for JPIC purposes

The initial emphasis on JPIC grounds us in an examination of our Rule and General Constitutions. Recall that the Constitutions give flesh to the meaning of the day to day manifestation of our life as a penitent. The penitential life draws us ever more deeply into union with God by His grace and our conversion – turning from the ways of the world to the ways of a Gospel life. Jesus, the Incarnate Word of the Father, entered human history to make known the way to the Father.

Our Rule comes out of the Vatican II Council. But...all of the laity are called to conversion and evangelization: acting from grace to bring Christ into the world directly. This takes many forms and each of us is gifted in diverse ways. All of our gifts are necessary to build up the Kingdom already begun in this life. Our particular *penitential way* draws us by Profession into the life and mission of the Church more intimately.

~ Pat Brandwein-Ball, TAU-USA, 2008



JPIC Mission Statement

The mission of JPIC is to assist the Professed Secular Franciscans as they reflect on their relationship with God as manifested in the fruits of conversion in their lives. This with special regard to the daily choices made in the areas of justice, peace making and respect for all created things and people; as brothers and sisters of penance, bringing life to the Gospel and the Gospel to Life.

Goals of JPIC

- ✚ To foster an atmosphere in fraternity, the privileged place, where with openness and trust, we may share with each other, the manner in which our personal conversions are shaping our Franciscan lives.
- ✚ To reinforce the appreciation of the dignity of the human person in the choices made in our professed lives by responding in charity and patience to all we meet and to respond as Franciscans to anything which would denigrate the dignity of the human person, beginning with our own personal communications with one another.
- ✚ To assist in the living out of obedience to the common good as intended by God so that the professed Secular Franciscan builds up all that is good for all of Creation and does nothing which would damage the fabric of communal interdependence.
- ✚ To strengthen the professed Secular Franciscans' commitment to solidarity with all of Creation enabling them to make those choices in life which would bring about a more fraternal and evangelical world.

~ From the **FUN Manual**



RESOURCES FOR REGIONAL JPIC ANIMATORS

The National JPIC Commission suggests that each Regional JPIC Animator have the following resources:

- ✓ The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order
- ✓ The General Constitutions of the Secular Franciscan Order
- ✓ The National Statutes of the National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order in the USA
- ✓ The Ritual of the Secular Franciscan Order
- ✓ Regional Guidelines (Each region should have these in place)
- ✓ The Holy Gospels
- ✓ The “For Up to Now” (FUN) Manual PLUS accompanying CD-Rom (includes essential documents of Catholic Social Teaching)
- ✓ Compendium of Social Doctrine of the Church by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2007



Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation is simply the Rule of the Secular Franciscan in action. Our Rule is based on the Gospels; JPIC is also based on the Gospels. It bubbles up from the Gospels. It is lived out from the Gospels. JPIC is not just something we do, it is who we are, as followers of Jesus in the way of Saint Francis of Assisi. It is an attitude that influences what we do and how we minister, with God, with ourselves, with other people and with creation.

The former Apostolic Commissions focused specifically on Articles 14-19 of our rule; pulling out peace and justice, work, family and ecology. JPIC embraces the wholeness of the rule, as do we who profess to that rule. The wholeness of the rule also includes prayer and contemplation, which is first and foremost, our fraternal communities as well as all our other communities – our parishes, our homes, wherever we congregate and minister, as well as Our Blessed Mother Mary, as Francis placed the protection of the Order in her hands.

Friar Francisco O’Conaire, OFM, Executive Secretary of the Interreligious JPIC Commission says: *The focus of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation is to support the restoration of “right relationships”; with God, in oneself, between people and with creation. JPIC is about building a more just and harmonious world by making a preferential option for the most vulnerable in our societies, including the integrity and care for creation. JPIC is not just something we do, it is who we are. It is an attitude, a vision that influences what we do and how we minister.*

Fr. Francisco goes on to say, *“The role of JPIC Animation is to remind us of the importance of living and promoting this dimension of the gospel. The role of a JPIC Animator is to help each person and community or fraternity to identify his/her own particular way of living and promoting JPIC values.”*

We have a Rule of Life that gives us the guidelines to being and doing peace, compassion, justice, and joy; of promoting JPIC values – building bridges of hope, of faith, of peace and compassion.

In his Letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul wrote: *If possible and as much as depends on you, live peaceably with everyone* (Romans 12:18). Notice he did not say to live peaceably only if the other is peaceful as well. Knowing that peace begins within, Paul expressly says *“as much as depends on you.”* This means that your peace is your responsibility. There is a global tendency to point the finger of blame when there is a lack of peace. We blame our government, our nation, our enemies, our relatives, our bosses, and even our God. Again, this behavior takes the ownership off ourselves and places it outside of ourselves where we are powerless to do anything about it.

“Peace begins within each of us. It is a process of repeatedly showing mercy to ourselves, forgiving ourselves, befriending ourselves, accepting ourselves, and loving ourselves. As we learn to appreciate ourselves and accept God’s gift of peace, we begin to radiate peace and love to others.” ~ Rev. John Dear

“United by their vocation as ‘brothers and sisters of penance,’ and motivated by the dynamic power of the gospel, let them conform their thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by means of that radical interior change which the gospel itself calls ‘conversion.’ ~ From Article 7, OFS Rule

Conversion happens when the Spirit prompts us to question our priorities, our desires, and our very selves. That prompting unsettles us and at the same time, enlightens and inspires us. But conversion isn’t just about you and me – it’s about Jesus. We not only see ourselves in a new light, but we also see Jesus in all His glory – as in the Transfiguration. It becomes a Mount Tabor experience. Seeing who Jesus is, we also get a glimpse of who we can become. As the Apostle Paul says, “Christ in me is the hope of glory!” That hope, that vision is so compelling that we turn fully towards peace and compassion – and away from that which is not peace or compassion.

Pope Emeritus, Benedict XVI says, *“Peace concerns the human person as a whole, and it involves complete commitment. It is peace with God through a life lived according to his will. It is interior peace with oneself, and exterior peace with our neighbors and all creation.”*

He also says, *“Like Francis, always start with yourselves. We are the first house that God wants to restore. If you are always able to renew yourselves in the spirit of the Gospel, you will continue to assist the pastors of the Church to make more and more beautiful the Church's face, that of the bride of Christ.”*

Peace is a gift before it becomes a task. It is gift from Jesus *“My peace I bequeath to you, my own peace I give to you. A peace the world cannot give, this is my gift to you” (Jn 14:27).*



From the **ANIMATE PEACE PROGRAM**, we can begin by following the **PEACE Principles**, which embody the themes of our Catholic Social Teaching as well as our Gospel values.

PRAYER is the source and summit. Henri Nouwen once wrote, *“Prayer is the beginning and the end, the source and the fruit, the core and the content, the basis and the goal of all peacemaking. When we sit down to pray, we enter the presence of the God of peace who disarms our hearts. We make our peace with God, and God gives us the gift of peace. That’s where it all starts.”*

Article 8 of our Rule begins: *“As Jesus was the true worshipper of the Father, so let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all they are and do.”* Everything we are and do must be embodied in a spirit of prayer. In the life of prayer, our wills and God’s grace act together. When we pray, we surrender our will to that of the God of peace.

In **Called to Follow Christ**, Fr. Benet Fonck’s commentary on our rule, he says, *“Prayer as an essential element of our Franciscan way of life puts us in intimate communication with God, puts us in touch with our own identity, and gives us the energy, strength, and determination to live the gospel more effectively.”*

EMPATHY is *the ability to imagine yourself in another’s place and understand the other’s feelings, desires, ideas, and actions; putting yourself in the shoes of the other. Instead of empathy, we tend instead to have a strong urge to give advice or reassurance and to explain our own position or feeling.* In **The Empathic Civilization**, author Jeremy Rifkin points out that empathy is essentially communicative and collaborative and not oriented to finger-pointing and competition. Empathy invites mutuality and hospitality.

Believing we have to “fix” the situation and make others feel better prevents us from being present. The key ingredient of empathy is presence: we are wholly present with the other and what they are experiencing.

*“People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did,
but people will never forget how you made them feel.”*

ACTIVE LISTENING – *When we hear, we hear with just the ears. When we listen, we listen with the whole body – ears, eyes, heart, posture, mind – open and empty.* Many people wrongly assume that listening is a passive process of being silent while another person speaks. We may even believe that we are good listeners, but what we are often doing is listening selectively, making judgments about what is being said, thinking of ways to end the conversation or redirect the conversation in ways more pleasing to ourselves.

Dr. Marshall Rosenberg, author and animator of **Nonviolent Communication**, says, if someone is confronting you in a threatening manner, the most tactical question to ask is: **What do you need me to understand?** Then, just listen to them. Remember, the line in the **Peace Prayer**: *First seek to understand, then to be understood.* Most people who are confrontational just need to be heard.

COMPASSION – Author Robert Wright said, *“In the beginning there was compassion.”*

Compassion is the recognition of another person’s suffering accompanied by the disposition to alleviate that suffering. You witness the suffering of another, and your heart is moved to do something about it. This can only happen when your heart is at peace and not at war.

Compassion moves us from something to something else: from empathy to action.

EVANGELICAL LOVE – In the English language, we generally associate love with a feeling, and usually positive feelings. **Agapé** describes an unconditional love rooted in behavior toward others without regard to their due. It is the love of deliberate choice. When Jesus speaks of love in the Gospels, the word *agapé* is used, a love of behavior and choice, not a love of feeling.

Jesus left us two great Commandments: *Love God and love our neighbor as ourselves.* So, the greatest commandment is to love. It is next to impossible to *command* somebody to feel a certain way. But Jesus is saying that we ought to *behave* in a certain way. I cannot always control how I feel about other people but I certainly am in control of how I behave toward them. Feelings can come and go depending upon the weather or your mood! “Love your enemies...” It is hard to feel good about our enemies; we are asked to act for their real good.

St. Thomas Aquinas said, **“Love is the effective willing of the good of the other.”**

Love is not an emotion, it is not a feeling – love is a choice, it is an act of the will; it is something that we do. Love is not something that happens to you, it is something that you do; it is a choice that you make. *What are you choosing? You are choosing the good of the other.* Not your good, but the good of the other. What is the best for the other?

So, how do we **do** love? We read in Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians: *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.* (1 Cor. 13: 4-8)

We do love by being patient, kind, humble, respectful, selfless, forgiving, honest and committed. Love is not about how you *feel* toward others but how you *behave* toward others.

In his **Testament**, Francis tells us that “*the Lord revealed a greeting to me that we should say: ‘May the Lord give you peace.’*” Saint Bonaventure recalls, “*At the beginning and end of every sermon [Francis] announced peace; in every greeting he wished for peace.*” Both Francis and Clare greeted the people of Assisi with *Pace e Bene! Peace and Good!* As Franciscans, peace must be at the center of all our comings and goings.



What is Catholic Social Teaching?

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) has been referred to as “The Church’s Best Kept Secret”.

Catholic Social Teaching begins from a perspective of faith. It is the Church reflecting on its mission in the world today, helping us to think about how we relate to the world around us and the problems that we face. In fact it is one of the greatest treasures of our Catholic tradition.

Most would accept that CST in its current form began with the encyclical **Rerum Novarum** – “Of New Things” in 1891 and has continued until the present with **Caritas in Veritate** – “Charity in Truth” in 2009 and **Evangelii Gaudium** – “The Joy of the Gospel” in 2013.

Drawing upon the Scriptures, its traditions and its knowledge of social and economic traditions around the world, the Church has produced a formidable body of principles by which social and economic activity can be judged.

The **Catechism of the Catholic Church** (#2423) gives three reasons for CST:

- ✚ To propose principles for reflection
- ✚ To provide criteria for judgment
- ✚ To give guidelines for action

It can be summarized as:

- ✚ authoritative Church teaching on social, political and economic issues;
- ✚ informed by Gospel values and the lived experience of Christian reflection;
- ✚ analyzing that experience from different historical, political and social contexts;
- ✚ providing principles for reflection, criteria for judgment and guidelines for action;
- ✚ thus helping us in our struggle to live our faith in justice and peace.



The Two Feet of Love *in Action*

Catholic disciples on mission are called to put Two Feet of Love in Action! This foundational tool describes two distinct, but complementary, ways we can put the Gospel in action in response to God's love: *social justice* (addressing systemic, root causes of problems that affect many people) and *charitable works* (short-term, emergency assistance for individuals).



Social Justice
"concerns the social, political, and economic aspects and, above all, the structural dimension of problems and their respective solutions" (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 201). We step with this foot when we work to address the *root causes* of problems facing our communities by advocating for just

public policies and helping to change the social structures that contribute to suffering and injustice at home and around the world.

Charitable Works are our "response to immediate needs and specific situations: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for and healing the sick, visiting those in prison, etc." (*Deus Caritas Est*, no. 31). We step with the Charitable Works foot when we work to aid or assist others both locally and globally to meet their immediate, short-term needs. Examples include engaging in direct service or providing food, clothing, shelter, or monetary assistance to help those in need.

~ The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)

120 YEARS OF PAPAL SOCIAL TEACHING

Since the end of the nineteenth century, popes have regularly written encyclicals dealing with the social, political, and economic concerns of their day (e.g., economic disparity, social revolutions, industrialization, war, etc.). These encyclicals, which are the foundation of modern Catholic social teaching, utilize the Church's scriptural, philosophical, and theological wisdom in order to propose a new way of living, based on true charity and justice.

Rerum Novarum (Of New Things) Pope Leo XIII, 1891

Pope Leo XIII wrote the first social encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, in response to the changes brought on by the Industrial Revolution and political upheaval in Europe. Pope Leo rejected socialism as a solution to the unequal distribution of wealth and instead upheld the right to private property and the right of workers to form associations.



Quadragesimo Anno (In the Fortieth Year) Pope Pius XI, 1931



Pope Pius XI wrote *Quadragesimo Anno* to commemorate the 40th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*. Rejecting both communism and unbridled capitalism, Pius warned against the excessive concentrations of economic and political power, and articulated the principle of subsidiarity, namely that no higher level of organization should do what lesser and subordinate organizations can do.

Mater et Magistra (Mother and Teacher) Pope John XXIII, 1961

Pope John XXIII wrote on the anniversaries of *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*. Affirming the role of the Church as a mother and teacher of all nations, he reiterated the teaching of his two predecessors and focused on the new social questions of his time: the plight of depressed agricultural economies in relation to industrial ones, international aid and development, and scientific and technical advancements.



Pacem in Terris (Peace on Earth) Pope John XXIII, 1963

Covering the entire spectrum of relations between individuals, between the individual and public authorities, and between nations, John XXIII affirmed the inviolability of human rights and the Christian obligation to work toward lasting peace by following God's laws. Recognizing the threat of nuclear arms, he called for their elimination.



Populorum Progressio (On the Development of Peoples)
Pope Paul VI, 1967

The first pope to travel extensively around the globe, Pope Paul VI highlighted the ethical dimensions of global development. Peace is not just the absence of war, it is spiritual and human development.

Octagesima Adveniens (Eightieth Anniversary)

Pope Paul VI, 1971

In his apostolic letter written on the 80th anniversary of Rerum Novarum, Paul VI called on Christians (particularly the laity) to live up to the duty of participating in social and political reform as a way of discovering the truth and living out the Gospel.

Laborem Exercens (On Human Work)
Pope John Paul II, 1981

Celebrating the 90th anniversary of Rerum Novarum, Pope John Paul II explained that work is fundamental to human existence for it is a sharing in God's creation. Labor has a special dignity and priority over capital.

Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (On Social Concern)
Pope John Paul II, 1987

Pope John Paul II celebrated the 20th anniversary of Populorum Progressio by updating and extending Paul VI's teaching. Neither communism nor capitalism by themselves can ensure authentic development. While the Church has no technical solutions to offer, it is an "expert in humanity" that has something to say about what constitutes true progress.

Centesimus Annus (Hundredth Year)
Pope John Paul II, 1991

Writing on the 100th anniversary of Rerum Novarum and soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Pope John Paul II recognized the merits of market-based economies, but warned of the dangers of consumerism. Humanity has an essential "capacity for transcendence" which the Church safeguards.

Evangelium Vitae (The Gospel of Life)
Pope John Paul II, 1995

Pope John Paul II wrote Evangelium Vitae to highlight the most basic of all principles – the value and sacredness of all human life – and to call on Christians to build a new culture of life. Science and technology have produced new threats to human life: contraception, abortion, artificial reproduction, and euthanasia. He also articulated the Church's objections to capital punishment.





Deus Caritas Est (God Is Love)
Pope Benedict XVI, 2005

In a world where the name of God is sometimes associated with vengeance or even hatred, Pope Benedict XVI spoke of God's limitless love and the distinctive nature of Christian charity that we must show to one another.

Caritas in Veritate (Charity in Truth)
Pope Benedict XVI, 2009

Charity in truth, Pope Benedict wrote, to which Jesus Christ bore witness, is the principal driving force behind the authentic development of every person and of all humanity. The book of nature is one and indivisible: environment, human life, sexuality, marriage, family, social relations. Authentic development requires that we protect and nourish all these while relying on God's love and providence.

~ Adapted from the USCCB and the Office of Social Justice, Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis ~ April 2011

Gaudium et Spes – (The Joys and Hopes)

A 1965 document of the Second Vatican Council (1962 – 1965), promulgated by Pope Paul VI

This document underlines the need of the church to be completely immersed in human affairs and for the church to share the joys and hopes of all people.

Dignitatis Humanae – (Human Dignity)

A 1965 document of the Second Vatican Council (1962 – 1965)

This document is essentially a declaration of religious freedom and the call for all Christians to respect religious freedom; a freedom which must also be permitted by states. The church must be allowed to work freely, but compulsion or force must play no part in a person's response to God.

Justitia in Mundo – (Justice in the World) – 1971 Synod of Bishops

'Justice is a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel...' The Church must examine its conscience about its lifestyle and so witness to the Gospel. This document also stresses the importance of education for justice.



Pope Francis I is the 266th and current Pope and Bishop of Rome. Throughout his life, Pope Francis has been noted for his humility, his concern for the poor, and his commitment to dialogue as a way to build bridges between people of all backgrounds, beliefs, and faiths.

Evangelii Gaudium (Joy of the Gospel)
Pope Francis I, 2013

“The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus” – thus begins the Apostolic Exhortation, by which Pope Francis develops the theme of the proclamation of the Gospel in the contemporary world, drawn from, among other sources, the contribution of the work of the Synod held in the Vatican in October 2012 on the theme “The new evangelization for the transmission of the faith.”



PRAY THE OFS RULE

O Lord, our God, we intend to make present the charism of our Seraphic Father Francis in the life and mission of the Church, in various ways and forms but in life-giving union with one another. By our profession, we pledge ourselves to live the Gospel in the manner of St Francis by means of our Rule approved by the Church (Arts. 1-3). Help us, we pray, so that daily we may:

- ✠ observe the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by following the example of Saint Francis, going from gospel to life and from life to the gospel (Art. 4);
- ✠ seek to encounter the living and active person of Jesus Christ in our brothers and sisters, in sacred scripture, in the Church and in the Eucharist (Art. 5);
- ✠ go forth as witnesses and instruments of the Church's mission among people, proclaiming Christ by our life and words (Art. 6);
- ✠ conform our thoughts and deeds to those of Christ by the radical interior change which the Gospel calls "conversion", making use of the sacrament of reconciliation on the way to renewal (Art. 7);
- ✠ let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all we are and do (Art. 8);
- ✠ imitate the Virgin Mary's complete self-giving in her openness to your every word and call (Art. 9);
- ✠ faithfully fulfill the duties proper to our various circumstances in life (Art. 10);
- ✠ seek the proper spirit of detachment and purify our hearts from every tendency and yearning for possession and power (Art. 11);
- ✠ acquire the purity of heart needed to set ourselves free to love God and our brothers and sisters (Art. 12);
- ✠ accept all people as your gift, Lord, and an image of Christ (Art. 13);
- ✠ exercise our responsibilities competently in the Christian spirit of service (Art. 14);
- ✠ be in the forefront of promoting justice by the testimony of our human lives and by courageous initiatives (Art. 15);
- ✠ esteem work both as a gift and as a sharing in the creation, redemption and service of the human community (Art. 16);
- ✠ cultivate the Franciscan spirit of peace, fidelity and respect for life in our families, striving to make it a sign of a world already renewed in Christ (Art. 17);
- ✠ respect all creatures, animate and inanimate "as bearing the imprint of the Most High" (Art. 18);
- ✠ be bearers of peace and messengers of perfect joy in every circumstance, as immersed in the resurrection of Christ, we serenely tend towards Sister Death and our ultimate encounter with you, our Father (19).

All this we ask through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Brother. Amen.



Notes: