



GUIDELINES FOR CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES AND SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Diocese of Lansing

PURPOSE

“Love of neighbor, grounded in the love of God, is first and foremost a responsibility for each individual member of the faithful, but it is also a responsibility for the entire ecclesial community at every level: from the local community to the particular Church and to the Church universal in its entirety. As a community, the Church must practice love. Love thus needs to be an ordered service to the community.” *Deus Caritas Est* 20

The mission of parish charitable and social justice activities is the work of the Catholic Church, to share the love of God by performing the spiritual and corporal works of mercy and by promoting the Social teachings of the Church.

The corporal works of mercy call us to give drink to the thirsty, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, house the homeless, visit the sick and imprisoned, and to bury the dead. The spiritual works of mercy call us to convert the sinner, instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, console the sorrowful, bear wrongs patiently, forgive injuries, and to pray for the living and the dead. *CCC 2447*

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has provided us with seven principles of Catholic social teaching/doctrine to help us understand and carry out the Gospel mandate to love our neighbor. *Mt 22:36* These principles are ordered in a logical sequence that reflects the synthesis of faith and reason. The preeminent and first principle is the Life and Dignity of the Human Person. Once human life is fully embraced, welcomed and protected it is possible to focus on the second principle: Family, Community, and Participation. The family is the basic unit of society and rightly called the domestic church. The third principle builds on the first two, Rights and Responsibilities. Here we learn that in order for human dignity to be protected everyone needs to assure individual rights are protected and that individual responsibilities are fulfilled. Preferential Option for the Poor, the fourth principle, recognizes that the spiritually and materially poor have a special place in God’s heart. The fifth principle, The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers, builds upon the four prior principles. It teaches that we are called to be co-creators with God and that workers are to be treated with dignity. Solidarity, principle six, reminds us that we are our brothers’ keepers. The seventh and final principle is Care of God’s Creation. If we are living the first six principles it will be visible in our proper stewardship of God’s gift of creation.

John Paul II said Catholic Charities “exist for only one reason: to proclaim the Gospel.” He also stated that Catholic Charities “must help the faithful to think and act in full accord with the Gospel, overcoming all separation between faith and life, but must also offer a clear institutional testimony of the saving truth.” *Adlimina* visit of the bishops of Portland, Seattle, and Anchorage - June 24, 2004

ORGANIZATION

In response to the Magisterium and the path laid out by our bishop the Diocese has organized its charitable and social justice activities into two major forms overseen by the Department of Catholic Charities.

First are the Diocesan offices located in the Department of Catholic Charities:

Life Justice: Promotes pro-life issues and coordinates advocacy efforts at the federal, state, and local levels at the direction of our bishop and in conjunction with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Michigan Catholic Conference.

Family Life, Catholic Campaign for Human Development, Catholic Relief Services, Outreach Ministries, Disaster Relief: Marriage preparation and family enrichment, national and local anti-poverty programs, international relief, disasters relief, Befriender, Project Rachel, Bishop's Council on Alcohol and other Drugs, Separated and Divorced, etc.

Multicultural Evangelization: Ministry to ethnic and racial minorities, migrant workers, and transients (33 licensed migrant camps).

Restorative Justice: Ministry to prisons and jails (1 federal, 12 state, 10 county, and youth facilities).

Ministry to Persons with disAbilities: Retreats, CCD, physical accessibility, Braille, Faith on tape, etc.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing: Ministry to deaf and those with hearing problems. Organize Mass, CCD, retreats, trainings, signing, etc.

Natural Family Planning: Train married and engaged couples in Natural Family Planning methods (5 types). Teach introduction course as part of marriage preparation.

Secondly are the local Catholic Charities agencies:

Catholic Outreach (Flint)
Catholic Charities of Shiawassee and Genesee Counties (Flint and Owosso)
Catholic Charities of Jackson, Lenawee, and Hillsdale Counties (Adrian and Jackson)
Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County (Ann Arbor)
Livingston County Catholic Charities (Howell)
Cristo Rey Community Center (Lansing)
St. Vincent Catholic Charities (Lansing)

These agencies provide numerous programs that address the social, physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of the poor and vulnerable in our communities. Each agency is part of the Church and performs charitable and social justice activities on behalf of the Diocesan Bishop. As such, they are extensions of the parishes and do what no single parish could accomplish. They are part of larger efforts including: Catholic Charities of Michigan, Catholic Charities USA, Caritas Internationales, and the Vatican Dicastery Cor Unum.

The charitable and social justice activities at the parish are most effective when they mirror the Diocesan structure. Members should be recruited to reflect the Diocesan offices. One or two parishioners should be recruited who have a heart for the work of each office, i.e. Life Justice, Family Life/CCHD/CRS/Outreach/Disaster Relief, Multicultural Evangelization, Restorative Justice, Ministry to Persons with disAbilities, Deaf/HH, or NFP. These individuals act as liaisons to the corresponding Diocesan office.

Each member, especially the leader(s), commits to participate in the ongoing educational and formational opportunities offered through the Department of Catholic Charities. They are also encouraged to participate in convenings organized for parish representatives by Diocesan Charities staff.

Parish charitable and social justice activities should also be linked with the local Catholic Charities agency(ies). Linkages provide parishes opportunities to participate in the charitable and social justice activities of the agencies and the agencies can provide professional support and assistance to parish based initiatives. Close collaboration between parish and agency not only enriches the work of both, it becomes a sign of unity and a source of strength.

ORGANIZING A PARISH COMMITTEE TO OVERSEE CHARITABLE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTIVITIES

Anyone interested in establishing organized parish based charitable and social justice activities needs to contact the pastor. The pastor can direct those interested to contact the Department of Catholic Charities. Diocesan staff can work with the parish to recruit parishioners to participate in the charitable and social justice work. Once sufficient members have been recruited the Diocese will provide a professional training along with a comprehensive orientation, job description, and organizational structure. Following the initial training, Diocesan staff will meet with the individuals representing particular offices/activities. Diocesan staff will continue to help recruit, form, and support parishioners and to enhance the ability of the parishioners to participate in the salvation of souls.

Parishioners engaged in the organized parish charitable and social justice activities will be introduced to the leadership and key staff of the local Catholic Charities agency(ies). A strong personal relationship will help the parish and agency carry out the Church's charitable and social justice work while helping the agency to better understand and meet the needs of the parish, parishioners, and community.

RESOURCES

Catholic social teaching/doctrine:

Rerum Novarum (On the Condition of Labor) -- Pope Leo XIII, 1891

Quadragesimo Anno (After Forty Years) -- Pope Pius XI, 1931

Mater et Magistra (Christianity and Social Progress) -- Pope John XXIII, 1961

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

Gaudium et Spes (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World) --
Vatican Council II, 1965

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

Octogesima Adveniens (A Call to Action) -- Pope Paul VI, 1971

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

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

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

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

Fides et Ratio (Faith and Reason) -- Pope John Paul II, 1998

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

Spe Salvi (Saved by Hope) -- Pope Benedict XVI, 2007

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

The Catechism of the Catholic Church -- The Vatican, 1992

The Social Agenda -- Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2000

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church -- Pontifical Council for Justice and
Peace, 2005

The Participation of Catholics in Political Life -- Congregation for the Doctrine of the
Faith, 2002

DIOCESAN CONTACT INFORMATION:

Department of Catholic Charities
228 North Walnut Street
Lansing, MI 48933
(517) 342-2465

LOCAL CATHOLIC CHARITIES AGENCIES:

Catholic Charities of Jackson, Lenawee, and Hillsdale Counties
199 N. Broad Street 1000 East Porter
Adrian, MI 49221 Jackson, MI 49202
(517) 263-2191 (517) 782-2551

Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw County
4925 Packard Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
(734) 971-9781

Livingston County Catholic Charities
2020 E. Grand River Ave., Suite 104
Howell, MI 48834
(517) 545-5944

Catholic Outreach
509 North Grand Traverse
P.O. Box 815
Flint, MI 48501
(810) 234-4693

Catholic Charities of Shiawassee and Genesee Counties
901 Chippewa Street 120 West Exchange Street
Flint, MI 48503 Owosso, MI 48867
(810) 232-9950 (989) 723-8239

Cristo Rey Community Center
1717 North High Street
Lansing, MI 48906
(517) 372-4700

St. Vincent Catholic Charities
2800 West Willow Street
Lansing, MI 48917
(517) 323-4734