

Divine Savior Spring Social Justice Series....Week 4

Catholic Social Teaching: Life & Dignity of the Human Person

DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON. RESPECT each person. Each is a creation of God, made in His image. This is THE foundational tenet of Christianity. Catholic Social Justice Teachings clearly establish this as the bedrock of our faith. How we live this gospel message, reflected in every breath we take; every action we engage in; every interaction gives expression and witness to this belief and conviction. It takes a lifetime of learning, praying, reflecting, trying, and frequently failing. As I review the principles of Catholic Social Justice, I can more readily identify and give examples of how I am living them in my daily life through ministry activities such as feeding the poor, donations to groups of poor, marginalized, immigrants, incarcerated, people struggling with homelessness and addictions. These are tangible and action oriented.



Yet, have I adequately achieved expressing the DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON? I have to say I have fallen far short of this. I can give tangibles and yet leave rooted the discomfort, scorn, & irritations I still hold in the center of my chest. What is missing here? This to me is the challenge of fully expressing the foundational tenet of my faith---dignity to each of God's beloved. Where do I go from here? Although we can describe and suggest ways to make visible the expression of dignity to each person we meet, the real work is INTERIORLY within myself. As I pray and reflect on what God is asking of me in this principle, I hear His voice clearly telling me that my VISION is foggy and my ATTITUDE is off kilter. I need to put on his eyes and see each person as imbued with His love & the same right to a peaceful life with basic needs met. That treatment for each person is based on fairness, justice, and access to opportunities for living and being the best that each can be. So, as I work to view each person & situation through God's lenses, I am working on doing a few things differently:

1. Instead of looking away, I am focusing on the person, and not the mess surrounding them.
2. I am silently sending a pray on their behalf for their courage, calm, and guidance to seek services or assistance as they need.
3. For those suffering hardships caused by nature or acts of war, I'm sending prayers their way as well for their safety, and for their leaders to act wisely in the best interest of the people.
4. For social issues of which I'm aware, I'm seeking to understand what changes can be made to programs, policies, laws, access to material relief and especially what the outcomes of changes may actually entail or how they will impact all groups of people. Then, my prayer is that I can support and promote what brings dignity to others.
5. I am putting on my 'God Lenses' and asking for grace and understanding to see others as God sees them.

Let's all put on the Eyes of God! Let's all strive to root out our interior attitudes which prevent us from seeing and accepting each person with God-given dignity.

-Jan Bencken

