

Pledge for Charity, Justice and Peace

A Catholic Commitment for the Third Millennium "*The Jubilee of our Lord's birth called us to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind, and release to prisoners.*" (Luke 4:18)

As disciples of Jesus in the Third Millennium, I/we pledge to:

1. *Pray* regularly for greater justice and peace;
2. *Learn* more about Catholic social teaching and its call to protect human life, stand with the poor, and care for creation;
3. *Reach* across boundaries of religion, race, ethnicity, gender, and disabling conditions;
4. *Live* justly in family life, school, work, the marketplace, and the political arena;
5. *Serve* those who are poor and vulnerable, sharing more time and talent;
6. *Give* more generously to those in need at home and abroad; and
7. *Advocate* public policies that protect human life, promote human dignity, preserve God's creation, and build peace.
8. *Encourage* others to work for greater charity, justice, and peace.

To learn more about the parish's social justice programs and initiatives; a myriad of volunteer opportunities; and/or the Social Justice Committee at the Ave Maria Catholic Church, please visit: www.avemariaonline.org.

If you are interested, you are personally invited to attend and participate in our parish's Social Justice Committee. Check the bulletin for details.



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Ave Maria Catholic Church

SOCIAL JUSTICE

"The pursuit of justice and peace is an essential part of what makes a parish Catholic."

(*"Communities of Salt and Light"* — U.S. Catholic Bishops, @1994)



The Seven Major Themes of Catholic Social Teaching

1. Life and Dignity of the Human Person
2. Call to Family, Community, and Participation
3. Rights and Responsibilities
4. Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
5. The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
6. Solidarity
7. Care for God's Creation

(Revised: January 29, 2009)

The "Two Feet" of Parish Social Ministry:

Charity & Justice



The U.S. bishops refer to social justice as part of a larger umbrella of activities called *social ministry*. This broad term includes direct services that most Catholics would call charity: food pantries, clothing drives, and homeless shelters. Our faith calls us to respond immediately to the requests of individual families by providing them with the temporary assistance they need: a bag of groceries, a winter coat, or a place to sleep. But it is only one part of social ministry. The other part is the social-justice side. This includes actions aimed at resolving the root causes of injustices. Social justice involves working for change that is focused on systems (the economic system, the health care system) and institutions (banks, schools, governments) rather than addressing the specific needs of individual families. Public policies which do not uphold the dignity of the human person are unjust. The goal of social justice is to transform public policies to be more responsive to human needs over the long-term. (*"In the Footsteps of Jesus"*, USCCB, @2004)

Good Samaritan Story (Luke 10:25-27)

The Gospel story does not attempt to survey the causes of highway banditry. The Samaritan provides temporary and immediate relief.

- Individual acts of love and mercy.
- Responds to immediate (short-term) need.
- Provides direct service: food, clothing, shelter.
- Directed at the effects of injustice: symptoms.

Examples: Homeless shelters, food pantries, clothing drives, emergency services.

Exodus Story (Book of Exodus)

Moses does not ask for food and medicine for the Jewish slave-labor force. He challenges the institutional system. The message: "*Let My People Go.*"

- Public, collective actions for the common good.
- Responds to the prolonged (long-term) need.
- Promotes social change in institutions.
- Directed at the root causes (not just the symptoms) of social injustice.

Examples: Legislative advocacy, changing corporate policies or practices, parish-based community organizing.

Social Justice Quiz

- The percentage of the U.S. population that is foreign-born now stands at approximately 11.5%; what was the percentage in the early 20th century?
- Of the world's 6.5 billion people, approximately what percentage live in an "undeveloped" country?
- Of people without health care in the U.S., what percentage have at least one adult in the household in the workforce?
- What percentage of Americans are officially classified as living in poverty at least 2 months out of the year? (prior to 2008 recession)
- In 2007, the U.S. spent approximately 440 billion dollars on military spending. How much would it cost to provide health insurance to the 9 million children in the U.S. without health insurance?
- During 2007, at least 1,250 people were executed in 24 countries and at least 3347 people were sentenced to death in 51 countries. What percent of the known executions took place in China, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United States?
- A single earner working full time at the current minimum wage (\$6.55 as of 7/24/08) earns approximately how much per year?
- Over 9.25 million people are held in prisons/jails throughout the world in 2007. How many are in the U.S.?
- What, if anything, have you done in the past year to help alleviate poverty or to help someone who is poor or otherwise in need?
 - Gave monetary donation to an organization helping the poor.
 - Gave a monetary or clothing donation, etc. for disaster relief.
 - Prayer.
 - Gave money directly to a poor person or someone in need.
 - Volunteered my time/talent to assist those in need.
 - Became involved with a church and/or community-based organization to address poverty or injustice.
 - Nothing. And now is the time for me to start!

Answers

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|---------------|---|
| A. 15% | F. 94% (60 people were executed in the U.S.) |
| B. 85% | G. \$13,000.00 |
| C. 80% | H. Slightly more than 2.2 million (762 per 100,000; 5 to 8 times that of any other highly developed country in the world) |
| D. 37% | |
| E. 18 billion | |