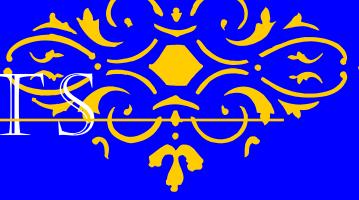


LIVING LIKE SAINTS



A PASTORAL PLAN AND RESOURCES FOR
THE EVANGELIZATION OF AFRICAN
AMERICANS IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF CHARLESTON

A FIVE YEAR
PLAN OF
ACTION AND
RESOURCES

·2013-2018



LIVING LIKE SAINTS

A Pastoral Plan and Resources for the Evangelization of African Americans in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Charleston

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CHARLESTON
OFFICE OF BLACK CATHOLIC MINISTRY

COMPILED BY KATHLEEN MERRITT AND EDITED BY
PATRICIA WEGMAN

The Diocese of Charleston's Office of Black Catholic Ministry is part of a continuum of activity developed in response to the desire of Black Catholics across the nation to see Catholicism reflect their lives and experiences. The development of this ministry responds to those unique experiences and gifts they produce.

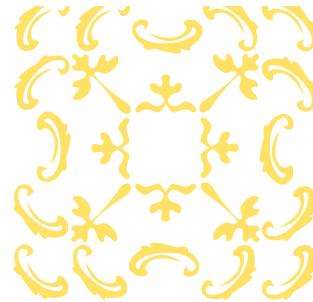


LIVING LIKE SAINTS

PASTORAL PLAN FOR THE
EVANGELIZATION OF
AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE
ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE
OF CHARLESTON

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INTRODUCTION LIVING LIKE SAINTS

“LIVING LIKE SAINTS” was adopted from the National Black Catholic Congress Pastoral Plan for African American Catholics in the United States. A delegation of twenty-five delegates representing our historically African American parishes and other parishes represented the Charleston Diocese at the NBCC Congress XI, held in Indianapolis, IN. July 19-21, 2012. The Director of the Office of Ethnic Ministries, Kathleen Merritt, and the Vicar for Black Catholics, Fr. Michael Okere, were also a part of the delegation.

On November 10, 2012, the Most Reverend Robert E. Guglielmone, Bishop of Charleston spoke at the Diocesan Black Catholics’ Day of Reflection and provided his insights on the national pastoral plan, that was presented in Indianapolis, and its implications for African Americans in the Charleston Diocese. The Day of Reflection was held at St. Patrick’s Fr. Egbert J. Figaro Hall, in Charleston, SC.

“LIVING LIKE SAINTS” pastoral plan contains the 10 goals of the national plan ,with modifications that reflect the needs and reality of Black Catholics in South Carolina. The modified plan was later reviewed by the Office of Black Catholics Advisory Board and later presented to over 170 Catholics at the Black Catholics’ Day of Reflection, “Walking the Walk and Talking the Talk on the Leader’s Path to Sainthood.” This day of reflection was held on June 28, 2014, at St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church in Columbia, S.C.

The goals and objectives contained in this plan were developed with the intent that all parishes , schools, and missions in the Diocese of Charleston would assist in its implementation. Its success depends on the participation of all. The resources provided can be duplicated and shared with others. Being hands-on with a particular objective in the plan is not the only way to participate. Understanding and compassion of the spiritual needs of our African American brothers and sisters in Christ will make a difference.

For questions, concerns or additional resources, please contact the Office of Ethnic Ministries . We would love to hear from you.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

“We are especially grateful for the leadership, support and love that our Bishop, the Most Reverend Robert E. Guglielmone, has given to Black Catholic ministry for the evangelization of Black Catholics in the Diocese of Charleston. Thank you Bishop Guglielmone for all that you do for all of God’s people.”

Fr. Michael Okere, Vicar for Black Catholics

Kathleen Merritt, Director of the Office of Ethnic Ministries



I. HOLINESS OF LIFE

Goal:

To commit ourselves to conversion of and holiness of life and to renew our commitment to the sacramental life of the Church, especially the Mass, Eucharistic Adoration and the Sacrament of Penance.

Objective:

To be educated about the sacraments and embrace them in our everyday lives.

Strategy 1: Host celebrations when the sacraments are received in the parish.

Strategy 2: Make available on parish websites and diocesan websites resources for enhancing prayer services at gatherings in the Church and in the homes of parishioners.

Strategy 3: Make hours of confession a regular part of Sunday announcements.

Strategy 4: Talk to a priest, or someone you respect in the Church, if you find yourself not wanting to attend Mass every Sunday. Find out why and agree upon a solution.

Strategy 5: Receive the Body and Blood of Christ. If in grave sin, begin a process of absolution with a priest.

Strategy 6: Share success stories of reconciliation with the Lord to encourage others.

Action Item: To meet the spiritual needs of traditional African American parishes as they relate to the liturgy. The “*Lead Me, Guide Me*” hymnal to be used in parishes whose primary mission is the evangelization of Black Catholics.

II. LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

Goal:

To protect the sacredness and dignity of all human life from conception to natural death.

Objective:

Through advocacy and education, preserve our people, African Americans, and promote the culture of life. Treat every human being with dignity and respect.

Strategy 1: Abortions in the African American Community

Action Item 1: Provide educational resources that are culturally sensitive and non-biased by avoiding too much emphasis on numbers by race.

Action Item 2: Host a “Respect Life” event for parish and neighborhood youth. Include a segment during all gatherings that involve youth for building self esteem. Avoid calling educational

workshops for youth negative stereotypical titles such as, “Violence Prevention for Youth.” Teach respect for life as a positive subject.

Strategy 2: The prison system disproportionately affects Black Americans.

Action Item 1: Provide educational editorials in the parish lobby regarding racial fairness in our judicial system that are easy to comprehend on adult and youth levels.

Action Item 2: Contact legislature to enact laws for racial fairness in sentencing.

Strategy 3: Attacks against human dignity throughout the world, war, violence against women and children, and discrimination against persons with disabilities

Action Item: Advocate, educate and speak out against violence and discrimination on social media, in meetings, among family and friends and in your parish.

Strategy 4: Violence against African Americans

Action Item 1: Educate and be educated on gun control laws, and support legislation that will impact the killing of African American males ages 14-33.

Action Item 2: Include on the Diocesan Office of Ethnic Ministries, parishes, personal and work calendars and websites the monthly observances of “Respect Life” issues designated by the National Black Catholic Apostolate of Life. Go to <http://blackcatholicsforlife.org/> to participate in the respect life activities as scheduled. Participation includes meeting agendas and special programs.



FERGUSON-RICARD Nov-25-2014 (590 words) With photos. xxxn

Catholics should 'rekindle' commitment to end racism, bishop says

By Carol Zimmermann

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- The scenes of chaos and violence in Ferguson, Missouri, Nov. 24 following the grand jury's decision not to indict the white police officer in the shooting death of Michael Brown, an African-American teenager, reveal deeper issues going on in the country, said one of the country's black Catholic bishops.

"The racial divide that exists between blacks and whites is not addressed adequately except when tragedies such as this happen," said retired Bishop John H. Ricard of Pensacola-Tallahassee, Florida, who is president of the National Black Catholic Congress.

The smashed windows, lootings, car and building fires when the grand jury's decision was announced were "part of a cycle of violence that is going to continue spiraling," he added.

The reactions also went against the Brown family's wishes to keep "protests peaceful."

In a statement, the family urged the public to channel their "frustration in ways that will make a positive change. We need to work together to fix the system that allowed this to happen."

When asked what can be done to work toward this "positive change," particularly by the Catholic community, the bishop said Catholics should return to the passion many of them showed during the civil rights movement.

"We need to rekindle that commitment and not be so silent and only react when there is a great tragedy that forces us to," he said Nov. 25 from St. Joseph's Seminary in Washington where he is rector for the Josephites, the order founded to serve newly freed slaves in the United States and now ministers in African-American communities.



St. Louis Archbishop Robert J. Carlson greets parishioners at Blessed Teresa of Calcutta Church in Ferguson, Mo., Nov. 24 following a prayer service. The service was held the same evening as violence began to erupt following the announcement that a St. Louis County grand jury would not indict a Ferguson police officer in the Aug. 9 shooting death of Michael Brown. (CNS/Lisa Johnston, St. Louis Review)

"The church took an active role" back then, he noted and added that church leaders in St. Louis have made efforts but overall the church as a whole has not been as "visibly active."

Bishop Ricard, who grew up in the segregated South in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and was a seminarian in Washington when the Civil Rights Act passed, does not have a simple reason for why the church has not been as outspoken in recent years but he thinks complacency is partly to blame.

"People throw up their hands in air when there aren't clear solutions or they are distracted by other things going on," he told Catholic News Service.

What he would like to see happen in the wake of the Ferguson decision and reaction is for parishes or dioceses to convene to discuss racism.

"We have structures in place," he said, noting that it also takes courage and the "will and leadership to determine we're going to take this step."

Because as he sees it, these types of violent situations and reactions will continue "and if anything, get worse" if nothing is done.

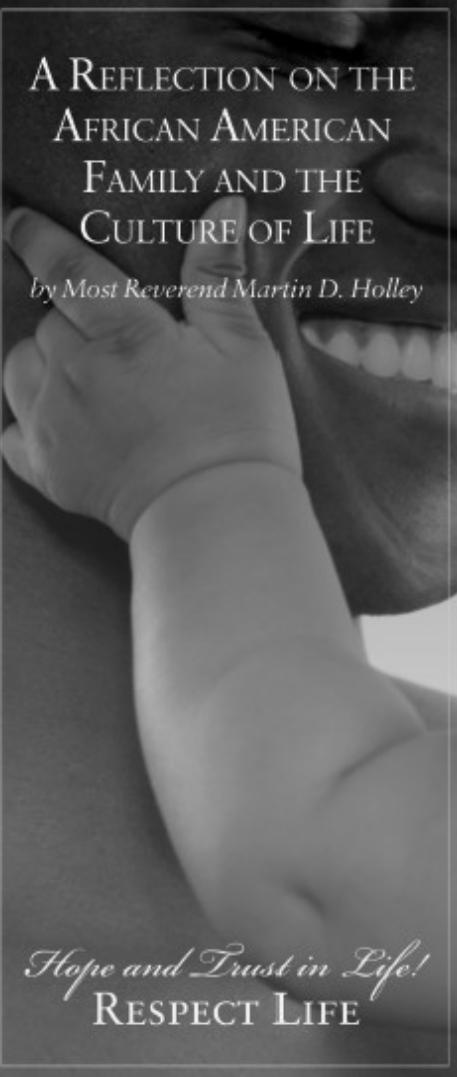
He described the situation in Ferguson as a "very tragic event to see two lives, two families damaged."

He also said it "raises questions on both sides on the use of violence and police reaction," adding that in this country there seems to be a "consistent pattern of excessive force used against African-American men."

In an interview with CNS this summer, he said that "racism is still a part of the fabric of our environment -- of the air we breathe. It's still part of the DNA of most Americans."

He said it is so embedded in society that "no one group is going to solve it" and it will take "a lot of courage, forethought, imagination to address this well."

END



A REFLECTION ON THE AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILY AND THE CULTURE OF LIFE

by Most Reverend Martin D. Holley

Hope and Trust in Life!
RESPECT LIFE

What Can Be Done?

First and foremost, the local Ordinary and his diocesan staff need to make the issue of abortion in the African American community a priority. This entails a commitment to allocate funds to conduct workshops to train the laity in Pope John Paul II's "theology of the body" and his encyclical *The Gospel of Life*, along with the encyclicals of Pope Benedict XVI, all of which promote the Culture of Life.

African American Catholic laity should be welcomed by their pastor and parish staff to be trained in the various life issues and become more involved with the parish pro-life committee.

At the same time, we have a profound social justice obligation to continue to provide funding and volunteer support for programs that offer assistance to unwed pregnant teens, women and families in the Black community, both Catholic and non-Catholic.

Because the Black family has been affected physically, psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually by racism and social injustices, and is being damaged even further by the trauma of abortion, there is an urgent need to offer healing to all those involved in an abortion decision. The invitation of Pope John Paul the Great to women who have had an abortion needs to resound in every Catholic church:

In a September 2007 visit to Austria, Pope Benedict XVI expressed his great concern about the future of Europe. He stated that Europe "may extinguish itself, in numbers and spirit, if it embraces abortion and rejects Christianity." He proposed that "rather than legalize abortion, governments create a climate of joy and confidence in life ... in which children are not seen as a burden, but rather as a gift to all."

As an African American Catholic Bishop who was born in a family of fourteen children, it should not be surprising that the issue of abortion, particularly in the African American family, is of extreme importance to me. My knowledge that my father, mother, and siblings were all baptized into the Catholic Church on the same day (June 20, 1954), while my mother was six months' pregnant with me, had a lot to do with forming in me a pro-life attitude. The witness of my parents taught all my siblings and me to respect the dignity of every human person and to always welcome the gift of life. Our family priest also left a solid impression on all of us as he mailed every letter sealed with a stamp, "Stop Abortions." He understood the damage that abortion was doing to humanity and what it would eventually do to the Black family.

Over hundreds of years, African Americans have traditionally been pro-life. A pregnant unmarried couple could count on someone in their families to help raise, love and edu-

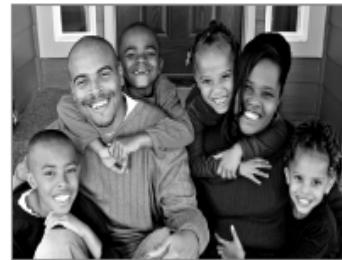
cate their child well into adulthood. This has happened more than once in my own family.

Today, discerning what is morally correct is a difficult challenge for many in the African American community because the *Roe v. Wade* decision of 1973 "legitimized" abortion as a legal "option." The voices that would normally alarm the community, in the pulpits of many of our predominantly Black churches, are now often silenced or muted.

In my own homilies, I have often referred to African Americans as an endangered species. Abortion is currently taking a deadly toll on pregnant Black women because abortion facilities, which promote the Culture of Death, seem strategically placed in or near African American neighborhoods to make abortions easily accessible, especially to the poor. Statistics show that abortion has the greatest impact on Black, unwed women who live in an urban environment where there may not be much support from family, friends or social service networks.

Since the *Roe v. Wade* decision, the number one cause of death in the African American community is abortion. We have lost over 13 million lives. To put that in perspective, that is one third of our present Black population. *1,452 Black children are lost each day to abortion!*

In my opinion, the abortion challenge in the African American community is deeply interwoven with many other concerns. The Black



family constantly strives for social justice in confronting racism, poverty, violence, a lack of education, high unemployment, substance abuse, incarceration, AIDS, teen pregnancy, a lack of affordable housing, and many other needs, especially in urban areas. This endless and seamless garment of social concerns often tends to push the primary moral issue of abortion onto the back burner, when in reality it clearly must be at the heart and center of our discussion on the survival of African American people.

Through evangelization, preaching, and solid catechesis, the Catholic Church will need to intensify its efforts to reach the broader African American community, to help everyone understand how critical this issue is for the survival of African Americans. Stated plainly: With abortion in the Black family, there is no future, only further extinction.

Do not lose hope. Try rather to understand what happened and face it honestly. ... Give yourselves over with humility and trust to repentance.

The Father of mercies is ready to give you his forgiveness and his peace in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. You will come to understand that nothing is definitively lost and you will be able to ask forgiveness from your child, who is now living in the Lord.

With the friendly and expert help and advice of other people, and as a result of your own painful experience, you can be among the most eloquent defenders of everyone's right to life. ... You will become promoters of a new way of looking at human life.

(The Gospel of Life, no. 99)

In addition to caring for those wounded by abortion through the Church's Project Rachel ministry, greater emphasis must be placed on helping the Christian family through better catechesis on the Sacrament of Marriage, the gift of children, and the resources of Natural Family Planning. As long as American culture persists in viewing sexual activity as recreational, marriage as optional, and children as burdens, it will be very difficult to build a Culture of Life. The Church should also offer counseling programs to help spouses and parents live out their roles in the Christian family.



Evangelization is truly the key, as it leads to developing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and to a deeper understanding of his teachings. This, in turn, promotes a desire to act according to the virtues exemplified by Jesus and taught by our Catholic faith. The Church should be willing and ready to share its resources, information and catechesis with our non-Catholic friends and leaders within the African American ecumenical community.

At its core, the Gospel of Life "is the proclamation of a living God who is close to us, who calls us to profound communion with himself and awakens in us the certain hope of eternal life. ... It is the proclamation that Jesus has a unique relationship with every person, which enables us to see in every human face the face of Christ" (no. 81). This is the hope, the *truth* that alone can conquer the fear and despair that drive women to seek abortion. Through clear catechesis, expanded pastoral efforts, vigorous engagement in our parishes and in

the public square, through love and prayer, we can end the scourge of abortion. The Culture of Death will be defeated in the African American community and throughout our nation when we—as individuals and as Church—proclaim and witness with our lives to God's love, the sacredness of human life, and the meaning of human sexuality and marriage. Let us embrace this task with the urgency and the enthusiasm it demands!

Bishop Martin D. Holley is an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C., chairman of the USCCB Subcommittee on African American Affairs, and a member of the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities.

The full-length version of this article is posted at <http://www.usccb.org/prolife/programs/rlp/holley.pdf>.



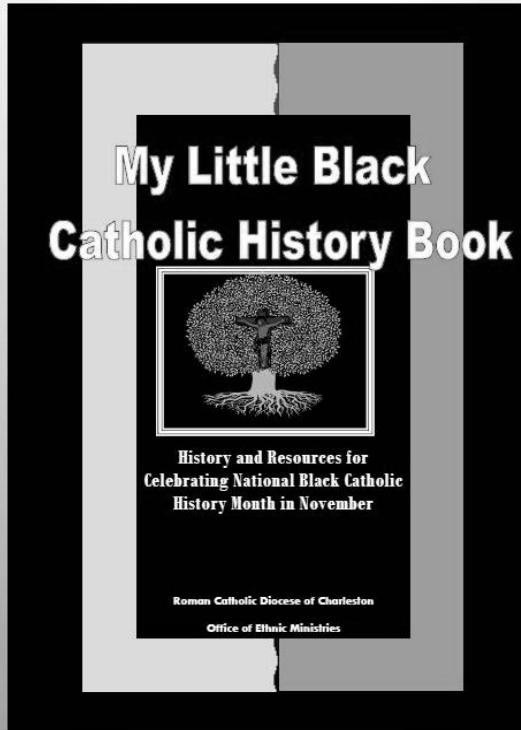
SECRETARIAT OF PRO-LIFE ACTIVITIES
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
3211 Fourth Street, N.E. • Washington, DC 20017-1194
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Website: www.usccb.org/prolife

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**NOVEMBER IS
NATIONAL BLACK CATHOLIC HISTORY
MONTH!**

**FOR A COPY OF
“MY LITTLE BLACK CATHOLIC HISTORY BOOK”
CONTACT THE DIOCESE OF CHARLESTON
OFFICE OF ETHNIC MINISTRIES.**



III. WALKING WITH THE SAINTS

Goal: To learn to live faithfully through the example of holy men and women before us - the saints who are both role models and intercessors.

Objective: To educate and support the canonization of the four Black candidates for sainthood: Venerable Mother Henriette Delille, Servant of God Mother Mary Lang, Servant of God Father Augustus Tolton and Venerable Pierre Toussaint.

Action Item 1: Provide scholarships for African American Catholics to attend conferences and workshops on “*Walking with the Saints*” with a requirement that the attendees give a written synopsis or oral presentation to their respective parishes on what they learned in those workshops.

Action Item 2: Designate the collection at the annual Heritage Mass to go to the various guilds created for the cause of canonization of each of the four exemplary African American Catholics.

Action Item 3: Use social media to post news and updates on pilgrimages, conferences and workshops on the cause for canonization.

Action Item 4: Include an educational component on ‘*Walking with the Saints*’ at diocesan and parish events.

IV. ENGAGED IN PARISH LIFE AND EVANGELIZATION

Goal: To nourish our faith, build a community of believers, and contribute our time, talents and treasure so that the community thrives.

Objective 1: Develop or enhance welcoming ministries in your parish in which the evangelization of Black Catholics is included in the Mission and is structured as a separate ministry of the parish. The work of the ministry should include the execution of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan for Black Ministry in the parishes.

Action Item 1: Conduct an assessment to determine if a separate ministry for Black Catholics is needed. Assessment tools to be developed by the Diocesan Office of Ethnic Ministries.

Action Item 2: Conduct a parish multicultural census and compare it to the actual number of families registered and a general count of what you actually see on any given Sunday. This data will be your starting point in measuring the outcome of your initiative.

Action Item 3: Open the doors of the Church to the community by

developing a schedule of community events and/or an ongoing ministry to the needy at the Church. Include attending Mass whenever appropriate, and always invite them to worship with you at Sunday Mass.

Action Item 4: Conduct a “ministry fair” once or twice a year so that parishioners can sign up for and be engaged in doing what is best suited to their talents and interests. A questionnaire addressing interests can be included in the registration form. Be sure that someone follows up when someone expresses an interest to serve on a committee or to just volunteer in general.

Objective 2: Develop creative ways to invite those who have left the Church to consider coming home.

Strategy 1: Media evangelization

Action Item: Historical Black parishes to raise funds to sponsor a “*Black Catholics Come Home for Christmas*” media campaign on the radio, internet or TV during the month of December.

Strategy 2: Find creative solutions to address financial and administrative obligations for parishes that are being considered for closure or merging.

Action Item 1: Become educated regarding current trends in generous giving among young adults (Generation X) and evaluate it in comparison to parish actual data. This information will determine what needs to happen in order to increase the probability of your success as a continuing parish as the elder population begins to contribute less.

Action Item 2: All parishes should hold a financial town hall meeting at least once a year so that parishioners fully understand where the parish is financially, what is needed to maintain financial security, the budget for the following year and begin planning ways to balance the budget as a parish family.

Action Item 3: To research, develop and distribute a resource document of best practices for stewardship and fund development for struggling parishes.

Action Item 4: To request that representation from the Black community be at the table when discussions on the closure of historical Black parishes are discussed on the diocesan level.

Strategy 3: When closure is unavoidable, plan for the pastoral after-care of those who have lost their parish.

Action Item 1: Pastor of the closing parish to send the database of parishioners to the Office of Ethnic Ministries for inclusion in Black Catholic diocesan and national evangelization initiatives and to assist in providing support as they search for another parish.

Action Item 2: To provide opportunities for those who have lost their parish opportunities to engage in parish life at the new parish on levels similar to what they were in at their other parish. Those in leadership positions will need opportunities to serve and use their leadership skills in the new parish. This holds true for musicians and those with other defined talents. We must all be willing to make room.

Action Item 3: Vicar and Director of the Office of Ethnic Ministries to send a letter offering support to the misplaced parishioners.

Strategy 4: To involve all priests in the diocese in the evangelization of Black Catholics.

Action Item: To make a presentation on the Evangelization of Black Catholics at a priests' convocation in the near future.



An Evening in the Upstate with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Charleston is a TV media evangelization project that has aired for the past two years on the evening of December 25th on FOX 21 in the Upstate of South Carolina. It's an evening filled with music, dancing and storytelling. Several priests are interviewed on topics centered on Christ in the world today. There is entertainment for the entire family.

You can view previous shows on our YouTube channel at <http://youtu.be/JTTjnjbqGEQ>?

V. FAITH INFORMED

Goal: Educate our Parishioners and the community about our faith, teach the faith and instill a strong Catholic identity in our children.

Objective 1: Provide a variety of educational opportunities about our faith at the parish focusing on adult learners.

Strategy: Be creative and open to new ways of engaging parishioners in learning your faith activities.

Action Item 1: Schedule Bible study, RCIA classes and biblically themed gatherings at times in which it is convenient for the matched interest group to attend.

Action Item 2: Movies that strengthen knowledge of our faith can take place as a popcorn and movie night. Book reviews on Catholicism can take place by forming a book club. Book clubs are favored by young adults.

Objective 2: Provide quality educational opportunities for teaching the faith and instilling a Catholic identity in our youth.

Strategy 1: Provide fun, exciting and proven educational opportunities for our youth to learn their faith.

Action Item 1: Hire a trained youth minister who will be consistent and can be held accountable.

Action Item 2: Incorporate an energy burner/fun activity in all gatherings involving youth.

Action Item 3: Use learning aides that African American youth can identify with and see Catholicism inclusive of African Americans. Example: multicultural bible for children and youth which is being developed by the National Black Catholic Congress.

Action Item 4: Create a cultural visual learning environment in which African American youth can see themselves as part of the Catholic faith.

Action Item 5: Create learning opportunities that take place outside of your parish, so that youth can see how living the faith happens in everyday life situations.

Strategy 2: Educate through social media.

Action Item 1: Advertise/show link on parish websites for the “Ministry Moment for Youth” on the diocesan website and Facebook

page.

Action Item 2: Share with Ethnic Ministries Afrocentric educational resources on Catholicism so that they may be shared with the larger group, or start your own Facebook page for posting resources and updates on your ministry with youth. You must gain approval from your priest and follow diocesan guidelines.

Objective 3: Honor "Black Catholic History Month" each November.

Action Item 1: Initiate an annual activity for parishes, in which youth can participate in Black Catholic History Month.

Action Item 2: Update the pictorial exhibit and essay on the History of Black Catholics in the Diocese of Charleston every ten years. Make exhibit and essay available to parishes and schools during the months of November and February.

Action Item 3: Parishes acknowledge a local or national "Black Catholic History Maker" during the month of November. Use social media to share your events with the general population.

Diocese of Charleston Office of Ethnic Ministries Media Evangelization Project

A Ministry Moment

Focusing on healthy relationships and the African American family, A Ministry Moment is a multimedia campaign designed for the African American community, especially those who are Catholic, as well as the "un-churched". Recognizing the many challenges all young adults face in today's world, A Ministry Moment addresses those challenges by focusing on relationships.

A Ministry Moment airs every Monday morning at 7:10 a.m. on 107.3 FM- JAMZ during the "Tom Joyner in the Morning Show." If you miss the broadcast, you will find each episode of A Ministry Moment on our website at www.sccatholic.org/ministrymoment.

Moreover, we have a team of Catholic leaders who can provide advice, rooted in Catholic faith, to those young adults who are looking for answers. If you would like to ask us a question go to <http://www.sccatholic.org/ministrymoment/relationship-questions>.

Some of our A Ministry Moment segments are based on the emails we receive. Like us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/AMinistryMoment>.





A Ministry Moment



Looking for happy, loving, fulfilling relationships?



Just ask us.

Roman Catholic
Diocese of Charleston

<http://sccatholic.org/ministrymoment/relationship-questions>

A MINISTRY MOMENT “DRESS TO IMPRESS”

Dear Ministry Moment

I have been told by several older women that my dress attire is inappropriate for Mass. Is there an official dress code from the Catholic Church on how women should dress? If necessary, I am willing to do a complete wardrobe makeover that reflects the Christian woman I should be.

Signed: Shopping-girl

Answer:

Dear Shopping-girl,

First, let me commend you for the courage to be willing to change the way you dress so that it reflects you as being a Christian woman. Good for you! The Catholic Church does not have an official dress code, but does stress that modesty and common sense be used regarding clothing. Here are a few tips that may help. When wearing pants, if you cannot pull an inch from your thigh area, they are too tight. A sign that a top is too tight is when there is a gathering or stretching of material across the chest. If you’re wearing a garment with a lower neckline, wearing a tank or shell can help with modesty. When trying on dresses or skirts, be sure to sit down to see how far the dress comes up on your leg. Some dresses look fine while you are standing, but as you go to sit, the hemline may show more than a modest amount of leg. When looking in the mirror, if your eyes are easily directed to a certain part of your body, decide if that part is being emphasized too much. Keep in mind that one size does not fit all; make sure that what you wear complements your body type. Happy shopping girlfriend!

A MINISTRY MOMENT “THE PROPER APOLOGY”

Announcer: The ability to forgive is necessary for any type of long lasting relationship, especially in a marriage. After a while, saying “I’m sorry” gets old and stops working. One of the reasons why is because a proper apology consists of more than saying “I’m sorry.” There are 4 parts to a proper apology: 1. Expression of remorse; 2. Admitting responsibility; 3. Making amends; and 4. Committing to do better or vowing that it will not happen again.

Tom and Mary have been married for over 20 years. Mary calls Tom before he leaves the office, asking him to pick up a carton of milk, so that she can finish the casserole she is making for dinner. Tom arrives home without the milk.

Mary: Hey baby, where’s the milk?

Tom: Oh sweetie, I forgot. I know I’ve messed up your plans. Why don’t I take you out to dinner and we can pick up the milk on the way home? Next time I’m going to put a reminder on my smartphone; that way I won’t forget. That casserole will be great for dinner tomorrow night. So, where would you like to go?

Mary: Oh... thank you baby, I love you so much!

A MINISTRY MOMENT “CHRISTMAS READY!”

Joseph: Hey Karl, how you doing man?

Karl: I’m good, family is good, and God is good.

Joseph: All the time...All the time ... Are you ready for Christmas?

Karl: Joseph, that’s what Advent is for. For Catholics, Advent begins the first Sunday in December and ends on Christmas Day. During this time, we engage in spiritual exploration for the coming of Christ our King.

Joseph: So what is that like man?

Karl: It’s like the joy expecting couples experience the months before a child is born: excitement, wonder, joy, even exhilaration at the life that will be in our midst. And at the same time, we hope and long for the day as we get things in order... get our spiritual life in order.

Joseph: Well that’s the first time anyone answered like that. Folks usually respond to the “Are you ready for Christmas” question with an update on Christmas shopping and the who, what when and where the Christmas meal will take place. To be honest, I hate being asked that question. It stresses me out when I think of all the money I spend during Christmas. From now on I’m doing Advent like you man. Jesus truly is the reason for the season.

**TAKING THE PULSE OF YOUR YOUTH
A YOUTH SURVEY IN PREPARATION OF CONGRESS XI**

**DIOCESE OF CHARLESTON OFFICE OF ETHNIC MINISTRIES
DIRECTOR: KATHLEEN MERRITT**

The question that guided this survey was : How engaged are our Black Catholic Youth? This questionnaire was given to the youth on Charleston's Diocesan Day of Reflection. A score sheet was developed to assist the facilitators for the youth track in their presentation. The actual survey is on the following page and below are the scoring criteria and total points summary.

POINT SYSTEM SHEET

(used to tally your survey form)

Give yourself:

2 points for every question that you answered "Agree"

1 point for every question that you answered "Disagree"

0 points for every question that you answered "Neither Agree Nor Disagree"

Total Points: _____ (*Please put this total in the upper right corner of your survey sheet.*)

20-26

Your parish is vibrant and growing. Youth ministry is a priority and adults are readily available to lead youth activities. You are fully engaged in your parish and have an appreciation for the uniqueness of Catholicism. You are the future leader of the Church.

13-19

You are not engaged in your parish on the level that encourages ownership . The youth ministry program at your parish is not meeting your spiritual and social needs. This could be contributed to factors such as you are not attending CCD or Youth ministry meetings, lack of a youth ministry program, lack of trained adult leaders and perhaps youth ministry may not be a priority at your parish. Talk to your parents, your priests and/or someone you look up to in your parish about your concerns and interest.

0-12

This level of engagement is of concern. Are you sure you are attending a Catholic Church? Please share your concerns with an adult before leaving the event.

YOUTH SURVEY

Please place a checkmark in front of the correct answer:

Age Range: _____ Middle school _____ High School

TOTAL POINTS:

Gender: _____ Female _____ Male

Ethnicity: _____ African-American _____ Caucasian/White

Other: _____

Please answer each question below and rate each question according to your feelings or experiences.

	Agree	Dis-agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree
I am excited about parish activities.			
I feel the youth are involved in the decisions of parish activities.			
There are adequate social activities for youth within the parish.			
My spiritual needs are being met by my church.			
I attend Mass to feel spiritually uplifted.			
The homily relates to my everyday living.			
The music at my parish is spiritually uplifting.			
It is most important for me to have my friends attend the same parish.			
I enjoy worshiping with the various cultural groups within my parish.			
I would rather worship with parishioners that are closer to my age.			
The Catholic Church has made significant gains toward the improvement of racial concerns.			
Attending an African American parish is more satisfying.			
I understand the church's teachings regarding "respect life" issues.			

Comments: (Please write any additional comments that you would like regarding the questions on this survey.)

VI. SCHOOLS TOO VALUABLE TO SELL

Goal: Sustain Catholic education in and for the Black community.

Objective: Develop our own means for sustaining Catholic education in the Black community.

Strategy: Develop a scholarship fund to assist Catholic students with their tuition.

Action Item 1: Parishes and individuals continue to support the Diocese of Charleston Fr. Paul Williams Catholic Education Scholarship Fund and the National Black Catholic Education Foundation.

Action Item 2: Create parish and/or Black Catholic organizational financial incentives for African American Catholic students who attend Catholic schools.

Action Item 3: Create a “college caper” for teens to visit Xavier University in New Orleans, so that they will consider attending. Offer parish-based scholarships for students who choose Xavier.

Amazing but True Facts on Catholic Education

- **FACT:** The Catholic School has been and remains one of the chief vehicles of evangelization within the Black community.
- **FACT:** Catholic schools represent both an opportunity for a quality education and a sign of stability in often-turbulent environments.
- **FACT:** Good Catholic schools provide many advantages over traditional public schools: They offer Christ-centered spiritual growth activities; discipline in student behavior, dress and accountability.
- **FACT:** We must recognize that Catholic schools in the Black community are a vital means of breaking the cycle of poverty by giving Black youth opportunities to develop academic skills and self-confidence.
- **FACT:** A strong Catholic philosophy and identity will manifest itself in a school climate that includes academic excellence, student spirituality, discipline and social justice awareness.
- **Fact:** Catholic schools have provided quality based on gospel values, and have helped thousands of African-American men and women to compete successfully in a world that often was unsympathetic to our right to participate equally in the American society.



Amazing but True Facts on Catholic Education



- **Fact:** Research conducted by the United States Department of Education, the National Catholic Education Association and other independent agencies demonstrates that Catholic schools make a major impact in closing the achievement gap for poor and minority students enrolled that live in inner-city environments. Catholic schools have a lower drop out rate (3.4 %) than both public (14.4%) and other private schools (11.9%). 99% of Catholic high school students graduate within four years and 97% continue on to pursue college or some form of post secondary education.
- **Fact:** The expectations of the students' academic achievement by their teachers is held high, the bar is raised and never lowered to accept excuses and myths that Black children cannot be successful based on the color of their skin, nor their socio-economic or turbulent environment.
- **Conclusion:** Yes, these facts are amazing yet true. **WOULD YOU AGREE THAT A CATHOLIC EDUCATION IS " THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE"?**
- Presentation by: Freida D. McCray at Congress X

Taking Action

Ten Things You Can Do to Promote Educational Solidarity

- Promote the development of a national foundation to endow our schools with financial support for generations to come. It is a goal of the NBCC Commission on Catholic Education to establish a foundation that will provide grants to schools in need. The success of this initiative will depend on your support.
- Ask your local Bishop to support Catholic schools. Letter writing is an effective communication tool. Organizing listening sessions with your Bishop and a committee of concerned Catholics can foster problem solving when schools are facing closure. It is ideal to pro-actively communicate with your Bishop before a school is in jeopardy of closing. Your Bishop's support certainly will impact your diocese, and may influence decisions on the national level, as well.
- Take ownership of Catholic schools by telling their success stories to others. Use opportunities in the community, such as social gatherings and public speaking engagements, to share an interesting, positive experience involving a Catholic school. Your story will demonstrate your commitment, and your audience certainly will find your compassion admirable.
- Adopt practices that contribute funds to Catholic schools. Many families choose to ask for financial donations to a Catholic school or educational foundation in lieu of flowers at funerals. The transmission of wealth and inheritance from one generation to the next is a sign of support that, if adopted, can provide future financial security for our Catholic schools.
- Encourage Catholic youth to take ownership of Catholic schools by instilling
- in them a desire to choose Catholic education over public education. Involve the community in making a youth's desire to attend a Catholic school a reality.
- Set a goal in support of Catholic education in your Parish's pastoral plan. Follow through and advance your goal to higher levels yearly.
- Support your diocesan office of Black Ministry. Confirm that support of Catholic education is a goal in the office's pastoral plan. To ensure that the voice of African Americans is heard, confirm that that an African American serves on your Bishop's curia.
- Include Xavier University as an option for college-bound students in your area. Educate diocesan leadership on the benefits of attending Xavier's Institute for Black Catholic Studies.
- Help to recruit African American administrators and teachers for Catholic schools. Volunteer to serve on search committees when vacancies become available. Establish programs for retired African American educators from the public sector to consider work in Catholic schools after retirement. (Many public school systems have programs of this nature in place.) These programs offer cost savings, as well as continuation of quality.
- Pray that our stand of solidarity proves successful in sustaining Catholic education in and for the Black Community.

VII. REACHING OUT TO THE NEXT GENERATIONS

Goal:

To develop a pastoral plan for youth and young adult ministry.

Action Item 1: Parishes appoint a minimum of 2 youth and 2 young adult representatives to serve on the diocesan Office of Black Catholics' Planning Board under the Office of Ethnic Ministries.

Action Item 2: Parishes to host an event for young adult Black Catholics to gather and discuss their needs.

VIII. VOCATIONS - EVERY CATHOLIC'S PRIORITY

Goal:

To promote the vocations in our parishes and schools and support our priests, deacons and religious brothers and sisters.

Objective:

Incorporate various ways of making informational resources on vocations available at every parish or diocesan event or activity.

Action Item 1: Invite African American priests, deacons and religious brothers and sisters to speak about vocations at our parishes, diocesan events and in our Catholic schools.

Action Item 2: Include religious vocations vendors/informational tables in parish and diocesan events and activities.

Action Item 3: Encourage and provide scholarships for young adults who are interested in the vocations to attend the diocesan Discernment Weekend for the Vocations.

IX. GETTING MARRIED AND STAYING MARRIED

Goal:

To affirm the sanctity of marriage as a sacramental bond between a man and woman and to find ways to address the high number of African American children living in single parent homes.

Strategy: To provide various educational and supportive resources for married couples and couples living together raising children.

Action Item 1: Invite local and national speakers to speak about best practices at parish and diocesan events.

Action Item 2: Develop an outreach program on single parenting ministry in parishes.

Action Item 3: Maintain informational resources on marriages on the “Ministry Moment” website and Facebook page.

X. THE SOCIAL APOSTOLATE

Goal: To educate and advocate for human life and dignity issues, act in solidarity with those who are poor and vulnerable, and in all other ways promote the common good and defend the universal destination of goods. To affirm the grave immorality of racism and any attitudes of prejudice and bias against any individual for any reason.

Objective: To make available culturally sensitive educational resources on Social Justice issues.

Action Item 1: Develop a resource/educational webpage on the Ethnic Ministries’ web page.

Action Item 2: Use social media to educate our youth on Catholic Social Justice issues in CCD classes and youth clubs.

Action Item 3: To participate in diocesan “Fortnight for Freedom” activities and events.

Action Item 4: To host a diocesan Social Justice conference.



Resources for Building Healthy Relationships

A part of the Initiative of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Topics include:

Divorce and Healing

Dating/Engaged Must Have Conversations

Social Benefits of Marriage

Infidelity-Overcoming Obstacles

Online Dating

For resources visit:

<http://sccatholic.org/ministrymoment/your-marriage>



CAMPUS MINISTRY CENTERS

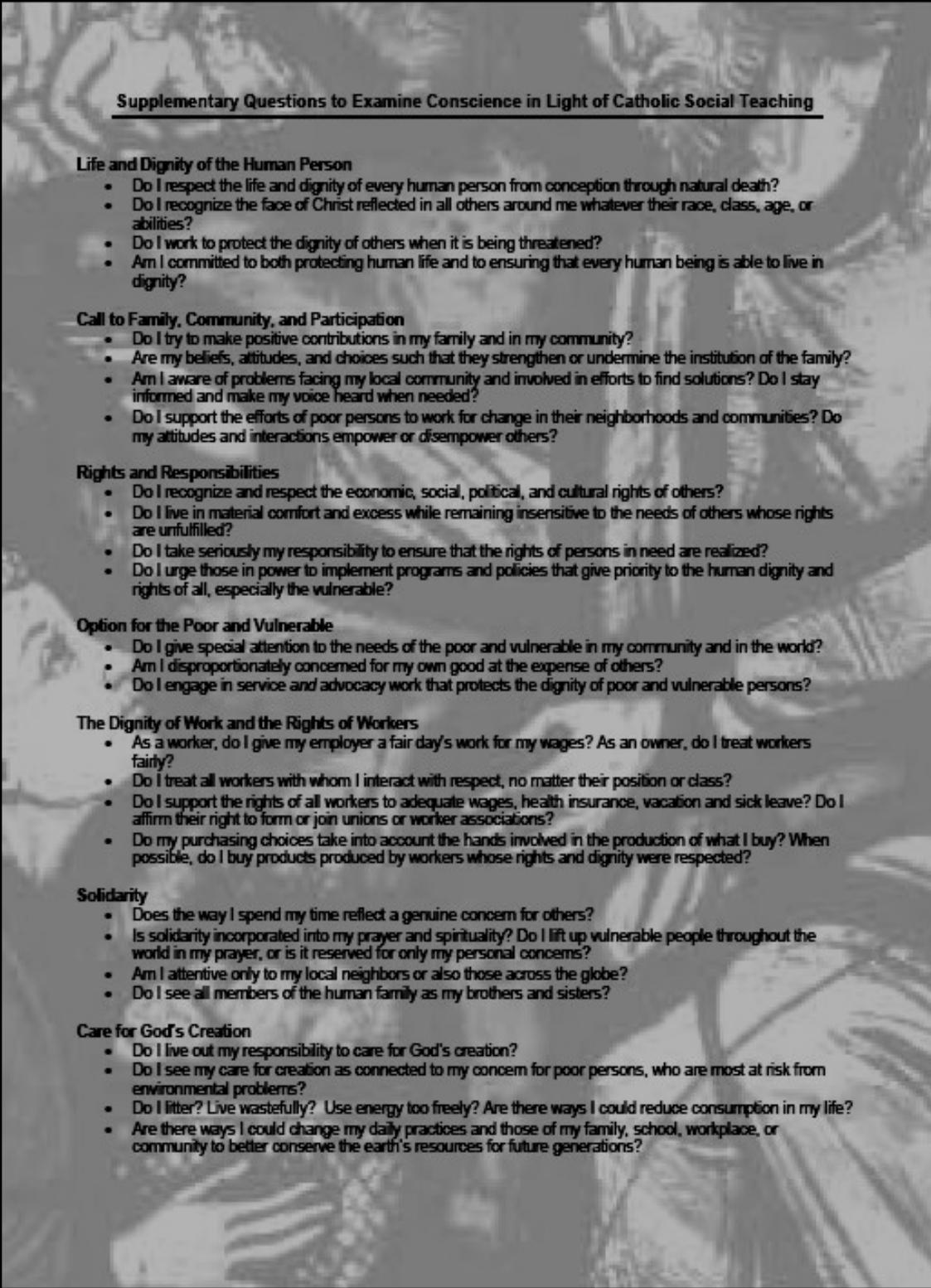
Because college years are a very significant time for young adults, it is only appropriate that the Church seeks to be a partner with the academic community in the cognitive and moral development of young adults. One of the roles of campus ministry is to help students to assess the knowledge they are acquiring through the eyes of faith and reflect on how they will use that knowledge in their chosen career. During the college years, Catholics are in the process of occupying leadership roles in society. It is important that the Church assist them as they engage in theological reflection and moral formation. (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1997)

There are many specific ways that you can minister on campus to create a climate of hope and a community of welcome. Begin by inviting your friends and neighbors to join you at Sunday Mass...

Letter to College Students from the U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1995, p.3

To locate a campus ministry program for a particular college or university contact the Diocesan Office in the institution's state.

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. (1997). *Sons and Daughters of the Light*. Washington, DC: USCCB Publishing.



Supplementary Questions to Examine Conscience in Light of Catholic Social Teaching

Life and Dignity of the Human Person

- Do I respect the life and dignity of every human person from conception through natural death?
- Do I recognize the face of Christ reflected in all others around me whatever their race, class, age, or abilities?
- Do I work to protect the dignity of others when it is being threatened?
- Am I committed to both protecting human life and to ensuring that every human being is able to live in dignity?

Call to Family, Community, and Participation

- Do I try to make positive contributions in my family and in my community?
- Are my beliefs, attitudes, and choices such that they strengthen or undermine the institution of the family?
- Am I aware of problems facing my local community and involved in efforts to find solutions? Do I stay informed and make my voice heard when needed?
- Do I support the efforts of poor persons to work for change in their neighborhoods and communities? Do my attitudes and interactions empower or disempower others?

Rights and Responsibilities

- Do I recognize and respect the economic, social, political, and cultural rights of others?
- Do I live in material comfort and excess while remaining insensitive to the needs of others whose rights are unfulfilled?
- Do I take seriously my responsibility to ensure that the rights of persons in need are realized?
- Do I urge those in power to implement programs and policies that give priority to the human dignity and rights of all, especially the vulnerable?

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

- Do I give special attention to the needs of the poor and vulnerable in my community and in the world?
- Am I disproportionately concerned for my own good at the expense of others?
- Do I engage in service and advocacy work that protects the dignity of poor and vulnerable persons?

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

- As a worker, do I give my employer a fair day's work for my wages? As an owner, do I treat workers fairly?
- Do I treat all workers with whom I interact with respect, no matter their position or class?
- Do I support the rights of all workers to adequate wages, health insurance, vacation and sick leave? Do I affirm their right to form or join unions or worker associations?
- Do my purchasing choices take into account the hands involved in the production of what I buy? When possible, do I buy products produced by workers whose rights and dignity were respected?

Solidarity

- Does the way I spend my time reflect a genuine concern for others?
- Is solidarity incorporated into my prayer and spirituality? Do I lift up vulnerable people throughout the world in my prayer, or is it reserved for only my personal concerns?
- Am I attentive only to my local neighbors or also those across the globe?
- Do I see all members of the human family as my brothers and sisters?

Care for God's Creation

- Do I live out my responsibility to care for God's creation?
- Do I see my care for creation as connected to my concern for poor persons, who are most at risk from environmental problems?
- Do I litter? Live wastefully? Use energy too freely? Are there ways I could reduce consumption in my life?
- Are there ways I could change my daily practices and those of my family, school, workplace, or community to better conserve the earth's resources for future generations?

Themes of Catholic Social Teaching

The Church's social teaching is a rich treasure of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of modern society. Modern Catholic social teaching has been articulated through a tradition of papal, conciliar, and episcopal documents. The depth and richness of this tradition can be understood best through a direct reading of these documents. In these brief reflections, we highlight several of the key themes that are at the heart of our Catholic social tradition.

Life and Dignity of the Human Person

The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching. In our society, human life is under direct attack from abortion and euthanasia. The value of human life is being threatened by cloning, embryonic stem cell research, and the use of the death penalty. The intentional targeting of civilians in war or terrorist attacks is always wrong. Catholic teaching also calls on us to work to avoid war. Nations must protect the right to life by finding increasingly effective ways to prevent conflicts and resolve them by peaceful means. We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.

Call to Family, Community, and Participation

The person is not only sacred but also social. How we organize our society—in economics and politics, in law and policy—directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. Marriage and the family are the central social institutions that must be supported and strengthened, not undermined. We believe people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.

Rights and Responsibilities

The Catholic tradition teaches that human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Therefore, every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities—to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. In a society marred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, our tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgment (Mt 25:31-46) and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected—the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to the organization and joining of unions, to private property, and to economic initiative.

Solidarity

We are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they may be. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world. At the core of the virtue of solidarity is the pursuit of justice and peace. Pope Paul VI taught that "If you want peace, work for justice."¹ The Gospel calls us to be peacemakers. Our love for all our sisters and brothers demands that we promote peace in a world surrounded by violence and conflict.

Care for God's Creation

We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.

This summary is drawn from Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions (Washington, DC: USCCB, 1998) and Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2003) and should only be a starting point for those interested in Catholic social teaching. A full understanding can only be achieved by reading the papal, conciliar, and episcopal documents that make up this rich tradition. For a copy of the complete text of Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions (No. 5-281) and other social teaching documents, call 800-235-8722.

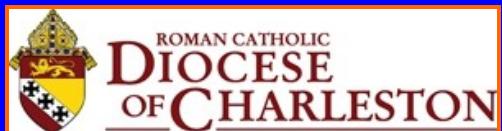
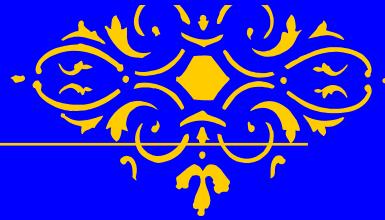
¹ Paul VI, *For the Celebration of the Day Of Peace* (Rome: January 1, 1972).

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