

**Fr. Juniper Schneider – Pastor,
St. Joseph Catholic Church -- Roseburg, OR**
Scriptural and Sacramental Foundations of the Catholic Social Mission

We say that we “feel good” after perpetual adoration or attending Mass, but change do we make in our lives when we exit the Church or what actions do we take? Is it about “feeling good”?

Christ gave away his entire life, but we so steadfastly cling to our own lives and the desires we have.

Christ is calling us to give our lives.

It's not very politically correct, and probably unpatriotic, but after 9-11, do we act “patriotic” and follow the wishes of our country's leaders or are we following Christ. It's very “unpatriotic,” particularly now, to talk of “turning the other cheek.”

Catholic Social Teaching is not about 7 or 9 basic tenets or about politics.

** Our faith is about nothing other than relationship – to God, others, self, culture.

We need to ask: Are we proclaiming principles or struggling to live the Word of God?

We have to ask ourselves first: how am I living the gospel? How am I walking the life of Jesus? We must learn to follow Jesus better and more closely, to discern together how Jesus is calling us to live our life today.

We need to teach our children about Jesus who went to any length to say “I love you.”

Though in Mass, we say we liked the Liturgy, the homily, the singing, etc. We look to “get something” from Mass. (We look for the homilist to be inspiring.) But do we really look: Is there anything in there that makes us change our life or that makes us really want to see, hear and know the price of love? It's not about “what did I get from Mass?”

We need to be passionate about prayer, Eucharist, the Gospel, Jesus.

If Christ and Mary were sitting watching the installation of Pope Benedict, Jesus might say, “where did they get all of this stuff from?” (all of the pomp & circumstance) When the important question is: Do we love God?

Does God disappear when we open our wallets?

Do we really love Jesus? Do we spend quiet moments with him?

Someone said we should think globally and act locally. I think it should think globally and act parochially. We need to be connected to the parish if we are doing social justice work.

An icon for social justice work is Dorothy Day, who marched with anarchists and fought against war AND spent time with God praying for those poor whom she loved. She talked about progress AND piety. We need to be progressive and pious, to not only preach, but embrace the Gospel as a lover of the Lord.

If I'm not willing to hear the voice of the people God has sent into my parish, am I really being authentic and really loving as God would?

The worse it is with people (the more difficult they seem to us), the more thankful we should be because Jesus gave us an opportunity to carry our cross, to spend time in the garden, and to say from our cross "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

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Closing Challenge

For parishioners who are participating in the 30 week Just Faith program, sponsored by Catholic Campaign for Human Development, Catholic Relief Services and Catholic Charities USA, I ask them to go to reconciliation once a week. (This adult faith program has been brought into many parishes across the nation).

Although I'm Franciscan, I like to talk with people about the Spiritual Exercise of St. Ignatius.

1. Begin the Examen with reflection on God's goodness, God's love, and how this is a gift to me. I need to appreciate the beauty that is God.
2. Be thankful for the incredible relationship with God. Stop and pray for the grace to be thankful.
3. Ask a very simple question – If this is a gift from God, what have I done to respond to God's love? Where am I in poverty (where am I spiritually poor). And go to confession.
4. What do I need to fill my bowl with the grace to respond to what God has given me and to his call.

The lesson of reconciliation is to know that despite everything, God still loves me.

Jung talks about "shadow." This is the part of ourselves that is not comfortable, the opposite of our desires, interests, talents and urges. We need to embrace the shadow in ourselves (to own it) and in others.

** We need the grace to recognize the need to control as an unloving way to deal with our fears.

The lesson I'm meant to learn through all of the sin and the shadow is that I really cannot do it without God.

St. Ignatius said "you can find God, even in your sin."

The purpose of our shadow is to teach us that without God, we cannot overcome it.

"Three times I asked the Lord to take it away and the Lord said No, because where you are weak, I am strong." We need to struggle in our sin and shadow and realize that we are nothing without him, and that in love and divine mercy, he heals and calls us to join with him.

When we recognize that my bowl is empty, then that's where God can come in and fill it.

What we all have in common is our shadow, that we have an empty bowl, that we come before God, and that we need Him.

** When people allow us to walk on their life's journey with them, this is where our hearts are truly touched. (It is a place of divinity to share and touch those deep places of their hearts.)

** We need to start on our knees and open our hearts. Then we are able to see the shadow that makes others desperate too.

When we come to the community as fellow pilgrims, all struggling with our own shadow and wanting to come before God, we can be Gift for one another.

(** It's all about relationship, dialogue and connection with one another – dialogue both quiet and boisterous, at all levels of heart, head, mind, body & spirit).

Dr. Byron Plumley – Director, Peace & Justice Studies
Regis University
Parish Social Ministry

To engage scripture:

1. Take a section of the Gospel and dialogue with Jesus about it
2. Try reading the Gospel through another person's eyes – through other cultural lenses
3. Paraphrase – rewrite scripture for the current situation and context

Social justice is constitutive to our faith. Social ministry should be integrated into all areas of the parish.

Over the years at various Bishop's synods, they have offered a number of thoughts...

We cannot be Catholic unless we serve all those in need.

The key message with ministry is participation.

We may want to start with a justice and ministry audit at the parish level. We need to say to everyone that everything counts – whether caring for aging parents or children. We need to do what's right in front of us. But, it would also be helpful to find out what everyone is doing. Ask people what they do, because we may find out that our social ministry is much broader than we expected – we may be engaged in ministry and social justice (which should be considered as separate but related actions) both internally at the parish and externally within the community that we were not even aware of as a parish? (We need to paint the larger picture and map out which ministries and social justice actions that people are involved in. Then we need to take a look at what is still needed within the parish and externally in the community and examine the gap between what we're doing and what we need to be doing. Then we do pastoral planning for moving forward).

We need to spend time in reflection of the tension between law and compassion. Laws have to be confronted and challenged when necessary.

Social Justice:

Disobey Laws – We must demonstrate what the church teaches us in “preferential option for the poor”

Immigration – A bishop said recently, we must provide and education for undocumented children.

Non-partisan – We must root out our politicians who will speak on behalf of decency and human dignity, and not be held to partisan views.

Advocate – We need to call our congressional leaders about national and local laws.

Community Organizing – We need to put together people for social change, working with churches and schools.

Seed of Solidarity – We need to be about building bridges and crossing boundaries. Look at what do boundaries keep in and keep out.

Accompaniment – How do we walk hand in hand with someone? – because my liberation is bound up with that person?

Presence – Social ministry is a ministry of presence – solidarity with someone. Someone who needs us to be fully present to them.

Diversity – If we want to be inclusive, we have to ** Dialogue about everything with everyone. It is the only way we will be inclusive.

Structure – What would it look like if the church structure was round, and not hierarchical?

Again participation of the parish in social ministry and social justice is critical.

Paul Lobe wrote “The Soul of a Citizen.” He also wrote “The Impossible Will Take a Little While.” The Army Corps of Engineers used to say, “The difficult can be done today, the impossible will take a little while.”

Anyway, Paul Lobe collected stories of people from around the world who have been involved in social justice and change.

It’s helpful for people engaged in parish social ministry and justice, to read “Communities of Salt & Light” written by the USCCB.

Shirley Whiteside is someone to get to know. She has been doing ministry on the streets for over 30 years. (She may be in Denver??)

Also check out the World Social Forum (Latin America). 80-100K people attend the world social forum. They ask and grapple with the question of what would social justice look like if it were grass roots?

**Tom Ulrich – Director, Constituency Relations & Support
Catholic Relief Services**

Leadership of Parish Social Ministry & Organizing Your Parish

The primary function of a leader/organizer of parish social ministry is to Build. To build something that others will want to come and be a part of. We also need Do-ers – those people who will engage and participate and work with leaders of parish social ministry and justice.

I've met a lot of people who worked in parish social ministry who were "on fire." But being on fire is not enough. You must also be a leader/organizer.

"Communities of Salt & Light" is a bible of parish social ministry. It talks of the MISSION: to help parishioners understand and act on Catholic Social Teaching. And the METHOD: to organize teams to mobilize and act on specific ministry areas.

Parishes also need to connect with all of the resources available to them:

1. Catholic Campaign for Human Development
2. Catholic Charities USA and the Local Catholic Charities offices
3. Catholic Relief Services
4. St. Vincent de Paul
5. the State's Catholic Conference
6. USCCB

The more concrete the activity that people can engage in, the more likely they are to engage.

We must get to know people – their talents and gifts. This is the mindset of an organizer. But both the leader/organizer and the do-er are in relationship with others.

In order to do parish social ministry and justice work, you must understand what is happening in the community and in the parish – who's doing what. A true leader/organizer is one who is getting to know people, and who is connecting the gifts and talents of people with needs.

(People need to be invited personally and directly to ministry and social justice work. Have something in mind to ask a person to do or be a part of, and then approach them individually.)

Responsibilities of a Leader/Organizer of parish social ministry and justice work:

1. educate
2. communicate
3. plan
4. coordinate
5. recruit others
6. mobilize
7. train & mentor others
8. invite & encourage
9. (remain open to new ideas and people)
10. scan the organization and community
11. build relationships
12. minister to ministers
13. be present to others

Responsibilities of a Do-er of parish social ministry and justice work:

1. recruit others
2. remain open to new ideas and people
3. train & mentor others
4. build relationships
5. be present to others

Organizing Steps:

1. Find others
2. Engage pastor and leaders for their support
3. Prayer
4. Developing a vision
5. Do a parish & community scan

Virginia Longoria – Manager, Prevention & Community Support
American Human Association (community organizer)
Michael Kromrey, Executive Director
Metro Organizations for People (PICO affiliate)
Social Action – Community Organizing

Community Organizing

There's a distinct difference between the activities of Community Organizing, Community Building and Community Development. All three are needed for social change and for building a community.

It's important to develop an organizing committee.

The steps to community organizing are as follows. Sometimes people look at the individual 1-1 visits as typically only done when the church wants MONEY, but these visits are important for community organizing and its important to let people know that you're visiting to gather their ideas and hopes:

1. Visit the parish and just listen to people and then have a meeting with a group of them. Gather hopes and interests.
2. Then schedule and have 1-1 meetings with people. Go out and visit them. These are intentional conversations to gather the interests, hopes and talents/gifts of others. This is a personal contact visit – not a survey! Encourage people to be involved. Never do for others what they can do for themselves. Engage people to use their own voice and take action.
3. Establish priorities
4. Do research around the priorities
5. Take action
6. Evaluate successes

It would be helpful for those who want to engage in community organizing to look at PICO, which is a national network of faith-based organizations. MOP is the local Denver affiliate for PICO – MOP is Metro Organization for People.

There are ways to get people involved together in parishes. For instance, every ministry in the parish could gather together and they could listen to one another and what they do. Also, schedule a half hour regularly for intentional visiting and listening to one another in the parish. Or this could be done as part of a Mass (though likely shorter in length).

Sr. Mary Alice Murphy, OLVN – Coordinator, Social Justice Committee, St. Joseph Church

David Frick, St. Joseph Church – Ft. Collins, CO

Fr. Ken Koehler – Pastor, St. Mark’s Church, Westminster, CO

Leadership of Parish Social Ministry: Engaging the Parish

If you do social justice ministry, if you’re living the Gospel, you’re not afraid of poverty, or of speaking out. For the pastor, this means not being afraid to speak about issues and concerns that may be controversial or uncomfortable, and it may mean that parishioners don’t give what they might in offertory or that people leave. But if people are really listening and trying to also live the Gospel, they understand and appreciate the challenges and the tension of this uncomfortable place at times.

This is really about a conversion of people’s hearts.

When we were involved in a huge capital building campaign for a new church, I said, let’s pledge 5% of this building project to the poor. This was very controversial and caused at least one person to withdraw their pledge. But eventually we built the church, and we gave \$250K to the poor.

Not everyone was happy, but it’s a conversion, and it’s a slow process. It was important to get groups of people together to talk (** dialogue and relationship).

Even with a huge debt, if you’re not doing a building project, you still have a commitment to the poor.

Another example of something controversial that we did was to have a soup kitchen in a school’s cafeteria. We also “accidentally” left the church open at night. Then eventually we started an overnight shelter in the school.

Finally we started an emergency assistance desk at the church, because people felt comfortable coming to the church for help. We then moved to starting an affordable housing program.

The pastor was initially involved more, but then he did not have to be involved so much. It’s about trust. We (our committee) proved that we could get things done and not do anything to surprise him, and so he trusted us to act on our own. If he’s able to trust the staff and the committees, because we operate in a way that builds trust, then we don’t have to take up his time for everything.

It’s also very important in our faith to be INCLUSIVE and CONNECT with other groups in the community, other parishes, other faiths/denominations, etc. We are part of a larger world community. It’s important how all of these are interconnected. And look outside of your own parish for support in doing this.

If no one is heading up social and justice ministry on your staff – full-time, part-time, volunteers, then the efforts will die.

We need to foster a prayerful, respectful atmosphere in meetings, but this does not mean that we cannot disagree with one another and offer differing opinions.

Also, set aside money in the parish budget so that parishioners can be trained, not just staff.

When you have immigrants and people with language issues during Masses, you may want to consider purchasing an FM transmitter and give each person who wants translation, an FM receiver headset. This will provide simultaneous translation. For each language, a person who is doing translation will need to sit in a separate area and will broadcast through an FM designation, the translated words of the priest and other liturgical ministers.

Joahim Viens, Ed.D. – Director Theologian in Residence
Blessed John University Parish -- Ft. Collins, CO
The Pastoral Circle

This is a circular process of working in social ministry.

1. Insertion/Contact with poor, others, etc.
2. Social Analysis
3. Theological Reflection
4. Pastoral Planning

This circle can't get going though without conversion in our lives.

Read "The New Catholicity: Theology Caught Between the Global and the Local"

1. Insertion/Contact – the basic experience of contact with poor and oppressed i.e. with social justice work and/or direct service, stories, travel & solidarity.

A call from the poor, oppressed, marginalized --- a call from God.

A call to compassion and response – conversion.

2. Social Analysis – Effort to obtain a more complete picture of the social situation by exploring its historical and structural relationships. (** Relationship & Dialogue)

Diagnosis: Using all available methods, identify actions and power centers. Makes sense of the basic experiences, the larger context.

Read the book "Pastoral Circles Revisited." This book tells the stories of how this process has been used around the world in all levels of education and background. There is a story from Africa of a woman who is trying to sell her tomatoes to support her family, but she is struggling to do this. So the group of people that has been trained in pastoral circles engages her in a conversation. They ask questions such as: Who is involved with your efforts to sell tomatoes? What needs to happen in order to make this happen? Etc.

Every member of community is able to participate according to each person's life and nature or ability and dignity.

3. Theological Reflection

This is really discernment. It is in light of faith and religious conversion.

Theology needs to be dialogical and beyond – many values, many theologies, and we need to be in dialogue with one another.

*** What we really need in this country is a good debate where serious issues are brought out on all sides and dialogued about and considered and respected, and then action is taken to plan what to do together.

4. Pastoral Planning

The development of responsive strategies in light of the conversion experience, social analysis and theological reflection.

Response: one cannot jump from concern to action.

Strategic Planning – well I like to say Strategic Theology.

** As many people as possible have to be included in the discussion (inclusiveness)

Strategic theology will be contextual, but also look at global. We need intercultural communication and reconciliation.

Random Thoughts from Other Speakers

Meaning of charity. Read “Mere Christianity” by CS Lewis. Charity is a matter of will, not emotion. We need to be learning to regard others as we regard ourselves. Also read Thomas Merton’s “Life and Holiness.” Merton, Lewis & Nouwen all speak of stillness before God and prayer.

Social Challenges

1. Success for people can mean success at work or money, car, home, children, travel, lifestyle, materialistic things. We need to challenge this cultural norm. Did Jesus have any of these things. Did he call us to be “successful” or to be fruitful? Are these the things that mean “success” to me? If I was speaking with Jesus right now, what would I say about these things? What about the difficult things to which I am being called, which may be less “successful” in the eyes of so many in our culture??
2. Politicians unwilling to take a stand. Partisan views rule over human dignity. How do we continue to act with “political correctness” versus being willing to challenge and be different in the way that God calls us?

How to: Critical Engagement

1. Affirm, and also challenge.
2. “Conflicting opinions locked in civil conversations”
3. Consider interconnectedness of humanity

4. Openness – willingness to engage in dialogue, particularly where things are unclear, uncomfortable or in opposition to one another
5. Share those views and listen. Listen and share again.
6. Don't shy away from civil conversations where there are conflicting opinions
7. Prudential judgment – using prudence in discussions to effect change

When we fail in situations, we have a tendency to attribute it to the situation. When others fail, we have a tendency to attribute it to flawed character.

Each of us must help each person uncover and express their vision for the organization they are a part of, and common vision will emerge from dialogue.

Each person needs to ask him/herself: How can I support the goals, vision, ministry, of the church, but also how can I respond to God's call – how can I love?