



2017-2018 Calendar

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2017-2018 EVENTS CALENDAR OVERVIEW

MONTHLY THEME OVERVIEW

December 6, 2017	Salt and Light Webinar Series
January 3, 2017	Salt and Light Webinar Series
January 10, 2018	Western Regional Social Ministry Gathering Our Lady of Nazareth, Roanoke
January 24, 2018	Eastern Regional Social Ministry Gathering Sacred Heart, Norfolk
February 7, 2018	Salt and Light Webinar Series
February 22, 2018	Central Regional Social Ministry Gathering Saint Ann, Colonial Heights
February 2018	Diocesan Health Wagon Collection
March 7, 2018	Salt and Light Webinar Series
April 4, 2018	Salt and Light Webinar Series
April 25, 2018	Eastern Regional Social Ministry Gathering Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Newport News
May 2, 2018	Salt and Light Webinar Series
May 9, 2018	Western Regional Social Ministry Gathering Jubilee Retreat Center, Abingdon
May 23, 2018	Central Regional Social Ministry Gathering Church of Incarnation, Charlottesville
June 6, 2018	Salt and Light Webinar Series
July 4, 2018	Salt and Light Webinar Series
August 1, 2018	Salt and Light Webinar Series
September 5, 2018	Salt and Light Webinar Series
October 3, 2018	Salt and Light Webinar Series

DECEMBER	<p>CALLED TO SERVE: CHARITY</p> <p>Option for the Poor and Vulnerable</p>
JANUARY	<p>POVERTY AWARENESS MONTH</p> <p>Option for the Poor and Vulnerable</p>
FEBRUARY	<p>FOOD SECURITY</p> <p>Option for the Poor and Vulnerable</p>
MARCH	<p>POWER OF ALMSGIVING</p> <p>Option for the Poor and Vulnerable</p>
APRIL	<p>CARE FOR GOD’S CREATION</p> <p>Care for God’s Creation</p>
MAY	<p>MIGRATION AWARENESS</p> <p>Solidarity</p>
JUNE	<p>REFUGEE AWARENESS MONTH</p> <p>Solidarity</p>
JULY	<p>JUSTICE THROUGH ADVOCACY</p> <p>Call to Family, Community, and Participation</p>
AUGUST	<p>GLOBAL SOLIDARITY & HAITI AWARENESS</p> <p>Solidarity</p>
SEPTEMBER	<p>DIGNITY OF WORK</p> <p>Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers</p>
OCTOBER	<p>RESPECT LIFE MONTH & PRISON MINISTRY</p> <p>Dignity of the Human Person</p>
NOVEMBER	<p>ETHICAL TRADE (ADVENT)</p> <p>Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers</p>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Catholic Relief Services
www.crsricebowl.org

Catholic Climate Covenant
www.catholicclimatecovenant.org

Catholic Relief Services
www.ethicaltrade.crs.org

Virginia Catholic Conference
www.vacatholic.org

USCCB
www.usccb.org | www.sharejourney.org

Office of Social Ministries
www.richmonddiocese.org/office/office-of-social-ministries

DECEMBER

“But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.”

Luke 10: 33-34

Called to Serve: Charity

Corresponding Catholic Social Teaching Principle:
Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

Charity is love which seeks the good of all. It is our love of God, but also the love of our neighbor.

In the story of the good Samaritan, Jesus challenges us to look at everyone in need as our neighbor. He further gives us a lesson of how we ought to react when we encounter someone in need.

Charitable works are our “response to immediate needs and specific situations: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for and healing the sick, visiting those in prison, etc. (*Deus Caritas Est*, no. 31).

We step in Charity when we work to assist others meet their immediate or short-term needs. These include, providing food, clothing, shelter or financial assistance.

Every community has countless opportunities for us to engage in charitable works and respond to the Gospel call to put our love into action. Let us be like the Good Samaritan who did not turn a blind eye to his neighbor’s needs.

Implementation Suggestions

Throughout this month, we encourage you to highlight your social ministries, especially charitable giving. Consider asking people involved in these ministries to give a one to two minute testimonial talk and invite people to volunteer or join these ministries. Then research local charity organizations in your community, like Catholic Charities and invite a speaker to come and speak about their programs, including how people can volunteer their time with them. Finally, we encourage you to educate your community on Catholic social teaching including the idea of the “Two Feet of Love in Action.” Look for brochures and helpful resources at www.usccb.org – just search for “Two Feet of Love in Action.”

Suggested Prayers of the Faithful

For the Church, that we may be a witness to Christ’s love by practicing charity and promoting justice and peace throughout the world, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

For those in our community who are homeless, hungry or in prison, that they may be reminded of God’s love for them, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

For our parish, that we may be generous with our time, treasure and talent especially when it comes to responding to the needs of the poor, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

For those who are lonely and forgotten during this Christmas season, that they may be comforted by the loving embrace of the Savior, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

Bulletin Announcement

During this month, we are reminded in the words of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI that “Christian charity is first of all the simple response to immediate needs and specific situations: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for and healing the sick, visiting those in prison,” (*Deus Caritas Est*, no 31). We are called to answer to the needs of our neighbors by encountering them and accompanying them on their journey. This is done by showing Christian charity or love. The U.S. Bishops in their “Two Feet of Love in Action” offer two complementary ways to walk this path of love: (1) through social justice, which looks at the root causes of poverty, and (2) through charitable works, which meets the basic needs of individuals. This is especially true during this Christmas season. This month, we will concentrate on charitable works. We encourage you to consider volunteering in ministries that respond to the various needs of our neighbors and community. Here in our parish, here is a list of opportunities you can volunteer in....(*list opportunities here*)

JANUARY

"If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead."

James 2: 15-17

Poverty Awareness Month

Corresponding Catholic Social Teaching Principle:
Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

The U.S. Census Bureau reported the official poverty rate in 2015 in the United States was 13.5%. That equals roughly 43.1 million people in America living in Poverty.

In Virginia, 11.3% of people currently live below the poverty level.

43.3% of those living in poverty in Virginia are employed, holding either full-time or part-time jobs.

In the Diocese of Richmond, the highest jurisdictions with poverty rates above the national average are in the western and southern regions, as well as cities, which have high concentrations of poverty.

Implementation Suggestions

During this month, the Office of Social Ministries provides materials for parishes to educate their communities on poverty across the United States, in Virginia, and in their local region. Additionally, we encourage parishes to print a list of all ministries that serve the poor in your local parish in your bulletin and invite parishioners to volunteer in these ministries. Examples of such ministries might include soup kitchens, food pantries, clothing closets, or other ministries that provide for the material or spiritual needs of the poor. Please also use this opportunity to build the faith and

mission spirit within your parishes.

Suggested Prayers of the Faithful

For all people who are homeless, that they may find shelter and nourishment tonight, and secure safe housing for themselves and their families, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

For all people who are unemployed, that they may find consolation and support in their time of need, and stable and dignified work, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

For all children living in poverty, that they may never again have to go to bed hungry, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

For all women and men living in poverty, that their daily struggle to secure the basic necessities for themselves and their families will be met by a community that says: 'there is no room for a poverty that denies anyone what is needed for a dignified life,' we pray to the Lord. ... R/

Bulletin Announcement

More than 43 million Americans live in poverty. Our faith demands of us a loving response to poverty, hunger, homelessness, unemployment, and other community issues that affect the poor. According to Pope Benedict XVI, a fundamental principle of the life of our Church is that "within the community of believers, there can never be room for a poverty that denies anyone what is needed for a dignified life." We must reach out and alleviate the suffering that we encounter directly in the face of poverty, homelessness, hunger, unemployment and all the other injustices that we see in our community. We must also work to shape laws and institutions that allow all people to flourish and to achieve their potential. This can all be accomplished by engaging in direct services and advocacy efforts of Catholics in the Commonwealth and beyond. During this month, please be generous to those who are in need and ask the Lord to show you how you can love your neighbor, especially the poor, in a more authentic way.

FEBRUARY

"Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.'"

Matthew 25:34-35

Food Security

Corresponding Catholic Social Teaching Principle:
Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

Over 795 million people in the world do not have enough food.

Most of the people in the world who go hungry live in developing nations.

12.9% of the population in these developing nations are undernourished.

40 years ago, Catholics in the United States wanted to respond to famine in Africa and asked, "Can we feed the hungry through Lenten prayers, fasting and almsgiving?" The answer is yes.

40 years later, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) Rice Bowl is a great way to help our brothers and sisters in need each Lent.

Implementation Suggestions

During Lent, provide a CRS Rice Bowl and Lenten calendar to every family in your parish. Additionally, consider using some of Catholic Relief Services' supplemental resources such as the Prayer Service, Stations of the Cross, Lesson Plans, and Homily Notes. You can find these and other resources in both English and Spanish at www.crsricebowl.org. CRS Rice Bowl can help your parish encounter the poor around the world through its program which promotes the three Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Be sure to order your CRS Rice Bowls by December in order to receive them on time.

To learn more about CRS Rice Bowl and to order materials, visit www.crsricebowl.org.

Suggested Prayers of the Faithful

For all people around the world who are struggling to provide enough food for their families, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

For all farmers around the world, and especially those who depend on their farms to provide for their families, that they may have abundant harvests to feed their families, their communities and the world, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

For all people in the human family, that during this Lenten season they may be open to the needs of their neighbor and give generously of their time, talent and treasure, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

For all the people who will be impacted by our CRS Rice Bowl program this Lenten season, that they may have sufficient food for today, and find better solutions for the betterment of their communities for the future, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

Bulletin Announcement

During the season of Lent, we are called to prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Catholic Relief Services' Rice Bowl can help you bring these spiritual practices to life, while responding to the needs of those who are hungry in our own community and around the world. CRS Rice Bowl is Catholic Relief Services' Lenten "faith-in-action" program for families and faith communities. CRS offers resources for use in parish and school communities with complementary materials for families to foster their faith life in the home. By responding to the simple, yet powerful Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving through the CRS Rice Bowl program, the faithful in our diocese are making a positive difference in the lives of our brothers and sisters who are most in need. Please pick up your rice bowl and return it after Lent. This truly is a faithful response to Jesus' teaching that "whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me." Consider using the Lenten practices suggested by CRS Rice Bowl and stand with our brothers and sisters around the world who go without food. To learn more, visit www.crsricebowl.org.

MARCH

"Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you."

Matthew 5:42

Power of Almsgiving

Corresponding Catholic Social Teaching Principle:
Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

Almsgiving is primarily known as a Lenten practice that encourages us to donate money or goods to the poor as well as perform other forms of charity.

Almsgiving is a frequent theme of the Gospels and an integral part of Christian charity. We see the power of almsgiving in the story of the Good Samaritan, and the serious consequences of neglecting this practice in the story of Lazarus and the Rich Man.

Almsgiving is one of the pillars of Lenten practices, which according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church "is a witness of fraternal charity" and "a work of justice pleasing to God." (CCC, 2462)

During Lent, there are many opportunities for almsgiving through various donations to Church ministries through collections taken at Mass.

Implementation Suggestions

During this second month of Lent, we encourage parishes to provide education on the three notable faith practices of Lent with a special attention to almsgiving. You can do this by continuing to use materials from Catholic Relief Services. You can also highlight the practice of almsgiving by preparing people for the different special appeals/collections that take place during Lent. In particular, the Catholic Relief Services Collection will be taken up on March 11, 2018. Finally, consider holding a Lenten day retreat for your parish and explore the Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. The Office of Social Ministries sends additional resources through the monthly newsletter. Finally, please contact our office to brainstorm ideas or for further assistance on how to highlight almsgiving for your parish.

Suggested Prayers of the Faithful

For the Church, that we may be a witness to Christ's love by practicing charity and promoting justice and peace throughout the world, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

For the poor, the homeless, and those who are unemployed, that they may continue to trust in God's providence and mercy, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

For all Christians, may our care and concern for those in need be a sign of God's love, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

For a renewed sense of responsibility to our brothers and sisters who are in need everywhere in the world, and a greater understanding of the power of almsgiving, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

Bulletin Announcement

As we continue our Lenten journey, we are called to reflect on the needs of our brothers and sisters who go without many necessities in life. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) says, "we give alms with a spirit of generosity to our brothers and sisters in need, honoring Jesus' call to serve our neighbors." The power of almsgiving is evident in the countless lives impacted through the generosity of our parishioners. There are many opportunities to participate in the power of almsgiving during Lent through special collections and programs. These include initiatives such as the CRS Rice Bowl collection occurring throughout Lent and the CRS Collection which takes place on March 11, 2018. Check the bulletin during Lent for various ministries and initiatives through which you can offer your time, talent and treasure to individuals in need.

APRIL

“The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.”
Psalm 24:1

Care for God’s Creation

Corresponding Catholic Social Teaching Principle:
Care for God’s Creation

The Church’s way of addressing climate change is primarily focused on the “lifestyles, industries and consumption habits of industrialized nations.”

Industrialized nations are the primary drivers of climate change. As an example, the “average American’s energy use leaves a carbon footprint that is 2,000 times larger and deeper than a person living in poverty in Africa.”

80% of the world’s emissions come from 20% of the world’s population.

The environmental challenge we face has a moral dimension which involves respect and care for God’s creatures and for the environment we entrust to future generations.

Implementation Suggestions

During the “Care for God’s Creation” week, the Office of Social Ministries encourages parishes to educate their parish communities about how we are called to live our faith in relationship with all of God’s creation. Parishes can include the suggested bulletin announcement to highlight Earth Day and our call to care for God’s creation. Additionally, parishes should encourage parishioners to recycle and should lead by implementing recycling opportunities in their own waste system. Additional information can be found by visiting www.catholicclimatecovenant.org.

Suggested Prayers of the Faithful

That, as we take the time to enjoy the beauty of the earth, we will join all creatures in praising God through prayer and through actions that reduce our impact on our environment, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

That, as we receive the body and blood of the Lord in the gifts of the earth and work of human hands, we will give thanks for the fruitfulness of God’s creation, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

That we will protect poor communities and vulnerable children, born and unborn, from environmental hazards through our own choices, business decisions, and public policies, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

That we may be always grateful for the gifts of creation, living more simply, sharing more justly with all in need, and preserving the fruitfulness of creation for future generations, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

That we will fulfill God’s call to be stewards of creation in a way that respects and protects the integrity of God’s creation and provides for the common good of all, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

Bulletin Announcement

April 22, 2018 | Earth Day

During the World Environment Day in 2013, Pope Francis noted that “we are losing the attitude of wonder, contemplation, listening to creation. The implications of living in a horizontal manner [is that] we have moved away from God, we no longer read His signs.” As many communities and groups celebrate Earth Day this week, may we reflect deeply on our moral and religious responsibility to care for the environment. As we enjoy all the signs of this spring of the renewal of life, let us join all creation in praising God. Then let us live out our gratitude for the gifts of the earth by engaging in actions, habits, and public policies that preserve the fruitfulness of the earth, to better protect both human beings and the whole community of life that God created and loves.

MAY

“When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.”

Leviticus 19: 33-34

Migration Awareness

Corresponding Catholic Social Teaching Principle:
Solidarity

“The Israelites’ experience of living as homeless aliens was so painful and frightening that God ordered his people for all time to have special care for the alien.” (USCCB)

The social teaching of the Church reminds us that we ought to treat those who flee their countries for various reasons with mercy and dignity. Three basic principles of Catholic social teaching on immigration are summed up by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops below:

1st Principle: People have the right to migrate in order to sustain their lives and the lives of their families. “Every person has an equal right to receive from the earth what is necessary for life—food, clothing, shelter. In Luke’s Gospel, the rich man was condemned for living well while the poor man starved at his doorstep (Lk 16:19–31).”

2nd Principle: A country has the right to regulate its borders and to control immigration. “Those who work to enforce our nation’s immigration laws often do so out of a sense of loyalty to the common good and compassion for poor people seeking a better life. The overriding principle of all Catholic social teaching is that individuals must make economic, political, and social decisions not out of shortsighted self-interest, but with regard for the common good.”

3rd Principle: A country must regulate its borders with justice and mercy. “A country’s regulation of borders and control of immigration must be governed by concern for all people and by mercy and justice.”

Implementation Suggestions

The Office of Social Ministries encourages parishes to promote education and opportunities for their parishioners in reference to migrant and immigrant education. Our office provides suggested prayers, talking points, and other USCCB materials to assist parishes with a successful educational campaign. The goal is to help the faithful see Christ in those who are migrants or immigrants and might be seen as “strangers among us”. Additionally, encourage parishioners to sign up for action alerts and stay current on immigration issues from USCCB’s immigration arm, Justice for Immigrants. For more resources, visit www.justiceforimmigrants.org

Suggested Prayers of the Faithful

For all those who have fled their countries after persecution, that they may find refuge and acceptance in our society, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

For all those who have left their homes to seek better livelihoods, for them and their families, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

For those immigrants who are waiting to be reunited to their family members after having been separated, that they may find comfort in God as they wait, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

For all those who do not have legal status and are restricted in their movement and ability to find work to sustain themselves and their families, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

Bulletin Announcement

The Catholic approach to migration is rooted in the Gospel and the tradition of Catholic Social teaching. A migrant is a person who leaves his or her native land and travels to another country in search of something that is lacking in his or her own country. Some of the causes that drive people to migrate include: persecution, war, lack of jobs or resources capable of sustaining one’s family, famine, natural disaster, or family separation (to name a few). As a response, the Catholic Church has decided to advocate for immigrants to see that they are treated justly and with the dignity they deserve. The Church continues to remind us how we ought to treat those who out of desperation or while seeking the betterment of their families find themselves in our nation. During this month, we bring attention to the issues of migration and immigration, and seek to inform and educate people on the plight of the immigrants. We are also providing constructive steps that one can take to address the rights and needs of migrants in the United States. To learn more please explore the resources from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops at www.justiceforimmigrants.org.

JUNE

"Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him."

Matthew 2:13

Refugee Awareness Month

Corresponding Catholic Social Teaching Principle:
Solidarity

Refugees are individuals who have fled their countries of origin and who meet the United Nations' criteria of having a 'well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.'"

Each year the President of the United States authorizes the admission of a certain number of refugees into the country. In recent years, the U.S. has accepted between 50,000 to 75,000 refugees per year.

Refugees often have suffered great loss such as loss of their homes, livelihoods, possessions, and oftentimes families, and they need assistance starting over in a new country. Their initial needs are many: food, clothing, shelter, employment, English language training, and orientation to a new community and culture.

Jesus' early years were spent as a refugee with Mary and Joseph in Egypt, following the campaign of persecution from King Herod. Refugees, therefore, are close to our Lord's heart.

Implementation Suggestions

During this month, we suggest that parishes educate their communities about the plight of refugees. Just as Mary, Joseph, and the infant Jesus once fled Israel to live in Egypt as refugees, many families today flee their place of birth to come to our communities in search of a new life. This year we encourage all parishes to find solidarity with refugees and the challenges they face. Contact either Commonwealth Catholic Charities or Catholic Charities of Eastern Virginia to learn more about opportunities for your parish to assist a refugee family.

For more information and resources, visit the following sites:
www.usccb.org/about/migration-and-refugee-services
www.sharejourney.org

Suggested Prayers of the Faithful

For all those immigrants and refugees who are currently separated from members of their family, we pray to the Lord... R/

For all expectant mothers who are living on the road, in a refugee camp or a detention center, we pray to the Lord... R/

For an end to all violence forcing people to leave their homes, we pray to the Lord... R/

For all those who are entrusted with the care of immigrants and refugees, including law enforcement officers, aid workers, and lawmakers, we pray to the Lord... R/

For all those who must leave their home because of extreme weather events, we pray to the Lord... R/

For all victims of human trafficking, we pray to the Lord... R/

Bulletin Announcement

Saint Joseph and the Blessed Mother Mary had to escape to Egypt with their newborn son, Jesus, because the paranoid and jealous King Herod wanted to kill the infant. Our Lord himself lived as a refugee because his own land was not safe. Pope Francis reminds us that, "Likewise, we cannot but be moved by the many refugees seeking minimally dignified living conditions, who not only fail to find hospitality, but often, tragically, perish in moving from place to place." Pope Francis, Caritas Internationalis, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic Charities USA, and Catholic Relief Services have launched a worldwide, two-year campaign called "Share the Journey" which calls on Catholics to "encounter migrants and refugees in an effort to break down barriers of fear and suspicion and build bridges of understanding and hospitality." The Diocesan Office of Social Ministries invites all parishes to support refugees in their area. Resources and information on this initiative can be found at www.sharejourney.org.

JULY

“Thus says the Lord: Act with justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor anyone who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the alien, the orphan, and the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place.”

Jeremiah 22:3

Justice through Advocacy

Corresponding Catholic Social Teaching Principle:
Call to Family, Community, and Participation

Social Justice concerns the social, political, and economic aspects and above all the structural dimension of problems and their respective solutions. (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 201)

Social Justice is the second foot of the “Two Feet of Love in Action” spelled out by U.S. Bishops, and it is a form of charity which considers the root causes of problems.

Throughout Scripture and Church Tradition, we are mandated to seek the good and well-being of all, especially the poor and the vulnerable. This call is not a passive one, but one that should actively seek to support and strengthen social institutions making sure they are just and care for the common good.

One of the ways that Catholics in the Diocese of Richmond exercise this role of seeking justice through advocacy is by bringing important issues and advocating for public policy that is in line with Catholic values. This is primarily done through the Virginia Catholic Conference (VCC), which is the public policy agency representing Virginia’s Catholic bishops and their two dioceses.

Some of the issues that the VCC advocates for include: upholding the dignity of all human life, religious freedom, family life, and social justice.

As Catholic Christians, we are called to engage in the public square where, after forming our consciences, we should exercise our civil duties as citizens, bringing about the Kingdom of God.

Implementation Suggestions

The Office of Social Ministries encourages advocacy education within the parish. You can invite someone from the Virginia Catholic Conference (VCC) to give talks at your parish, or highlight the issues they advocate for on your bulletin or website. Additionally, you can sponsor sign up drives to receive action alerts from the VCC at www.vacatholic.org and learn more about other local, national, and international advocacy organizations like www.confrontglobalpoverty.org.

Suggested Prayers of the Faithful

For those who see their needs ignored and their rights to life and the things necessary to sustain a dignified life trampled, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

For all people, that we may be willing to advocate for the weakest and most vulnerable members of our society, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

For our political leaders, that they may be open to hearing God’s voice, and be willing to make decisions that cater for the well-being of all in society, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

For a spirit of justice and mercy to permeate every part of our society, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

Bulletin Announcement

During this month, we will focus on working for justice through advocacy. Throughout Scripture, the Lord reminds His people to never forget those who are vulnerable like the widow, the orphan, and the alien. In this same spirit, the Church continues to stand for those who are oppressed or voiceless. Catholic social teaching reminds us that “social justice concerns the social, political, and economic aspects and, above all, the structural dimension of problems and their respective solutions.” We are called to answer to the needs of our neighbors by advocating for them and seeking to change the structures of society. This month, we will concentrate on this path of charity. Three ways you can participate in advocacy include: praying, educating yourself on the issues, and taking action. You can find more information on how to influence legislation through the Virginia Catholic Conference (VCC) which is the public policy agency representing Virginia’s Catholic bishops and their two dioceses. Join the VCC action alert network at www.vacatholic.org.

AUGUST

“How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity. [...] For there the Lord ordained his blessing, life forevermore.”

Psalm 133: 1,3

Global Solidarity & Haiti Awareness

Corresponding Catholic Social Teaching Principle:
Solidarity

Global Partnership (i.e. Twinning) has played an important role in the Diocese of Richmond for years. Since the mid-1980s, parishes have accompanied the people of the Diocese of Hinche in Haiti through its twinning ministry.

About 50 parishes in the Diocese of Richmond currently have a twinning relationship with a parish, school, or clinic in the Diocese of Hinche in the central plateau of Haiti.

Haiti became the first post-colonial black-led nation in the world, declaring its independence in 1804. Currently the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti has experienced political instability for most of its history.

It is inhabited by approximately 11 million people. 54% of the population is Catholic and 15% are other various protestant mainline churches.

Haiti is located 700 miles southeast of Miami, just 100 minutes air travel time, occupying the western third of the island of Hispaniola, which it shares with the Dominican Republic. Haiti is only 60 miles from Cuba.

A massive 7.0 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti in January 2010 with an epicenter about 25 km (15 mi) west of the capital, Port-au-Prince. Estimates are that over 300,000 people were killed and some 1.5 million left homeless.

Implementation Suggestions

If yours is a twinning parish, then educate the parish on the various aspects of that relationship. Consider the following: incorporate prayer for Haiti in Sunday liturgies, have a member of your twinning ministry give a reflection about a recent trip to Haiti, make a pulpit announcement on a Sunday about celebrations and activities to be held during the month, display the Haitian Hunger Cloth (if you have one) prominently in the worship space or the commons area. Place a display table in the commons for the whole month featuring Haitian art and photographs from recent trips to Haiti. Consider writing articles about Haiti and your twin parish for your parish or campus newsletter. Publicize events you will be sponsoring this month and have members of the Haiti Committee available after Mass to answer questions. Hold a dinner featuring Haitian foods and a speaker to talk about the culture or other aspects of Haiti. If you twin with another country other than Haiti, you can do the same activities for your twin country and parish.

Suggested Prayers of the Faithful

That the people of Haiti (and especially the people of our Twin parish in _____) might experience freedom from hunger and the lack of educational opportunities, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

That the people from the Diocese of Richmond, the Diocese of Hinche, and other locations throughout Haiti might know greater solidarity with one another through mutual understanding and prayer, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

That our government will learn to work with the democratically elected Haitian government and its people, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

That in our ministry to Haiti, we may continue to thirst for justice, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

Bulletin Announcement

Global Partnership has played an important role in the Diocese of Richmond for years. Since the mid-1980s, multiple parishes have embarked on a global solidarity partnership with Haiti through its twinning ministry. Our diocesan twinning program enables individuals and parish communities to encounter Christ with impoverished people in Haiti. The Office of Social Ministries continues to find ways to educate and build capacity within all our global partnerships. Please join the Diocese in celebrating Haiti Awareness Month. If you have a twinning relationship either in Haiti or elsewhere, you can use this time to highlight this relationship in your parish community.

SEPTEMBER

“The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and keep it.”

Genesis 2:15

Dignity of Work

Corresponding Catholic Social Teaching Principle:
Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

As of July 2017, 3.8% of Virginians were unemployed. These numbers are reflective of only people who are actively looking for jobs. Those who are unemployed and have stopped looking for work are no longer counted among that number.

Catholic social teaching indicates that man derives his dignity from his Creator in Whose image he is created. With his participation in the work of his Creator, man finds dignity in that work.

The basic rights of workers must be respected. These rights include the right to productive work, right to decent and fair wages, the right to organize or to join unions and the right to private property and economic initiative.

Our commitment as Catholics should be twofold: first, helping those who are unemployed to secure jobs, and secondly to ensure that the rights of workers continue to be respected.

Implementation Suggestions

During this month, we encourage the parish leadership to educate their parishioners on the dignity of work. You can form a job training ministry, where parishioners who are experts can train and mentor people who are looking for jobs on skills such as how to write a resume, apply for fitting jobs, and how to interview well. Additionally, parishes can print resources including local job training agencies and make them available. Parishioners should also be educated and encouraged to support organizations either local or national that advocate for the right of workers. They can support them by joining their advocacy networks or financially. To stay current on the USCCB's advocacy position on work, please visit www.usccb.org and search for “labor–employment.”

Suggested Prayers of the Faithful

For all those who are unemployed, that they may continue to trust in God's providence and mercy, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

For those who though employed are still unable to support themselves due to low wages, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

For those who have fled their cities or countries to look for better livelihoods for their families, that they not grow weary and lose heart, but instead know God's gracious and abundant mercy and love, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

For Christians everywhere, that we may continue to advocate for policies that respect the dignity of work and the rights of workers, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

Bulletin Announcement

The Church teaches us that man derives his dignity from his Creator in whose image he is created. Pope Francis puts it this way: “Work is fundamental to the dignity of the person. Work, to use an image, ‘anoints’ with dignity, fills us with dignity, makes us similar to God who has worked and still works, who always acts.” When we work, it is “a form of continuing participation in God's creation.” In our own communities, we may know someone who is unemployed, underemployed or despite being employed lacks the living wages to sustain his life. As followers of Christ, we are called to ensure that we put our talents to use, ensuring that the basic right of workers is respected; namely, the right to work, to decent and fair wages, to organization, to private property and to economic initiative. As we celebrate this Labor Day and throughout the month, please take a moment to pray for all those who continue to seek gainful employment, and seek ways in which you can advocate for fair wages and an economy that “serves the people, and not the other way round.”

OCTOBER

"Remember those in prison, as though you were in prison with them."

Hebrew 13:3

Respect Life Month/Prison Ministry

Corresponding Catholic Social Teaching Principle:
Dignity of the Human Person

During the month of October, parishes across the Diocese celebrate and highlight the Catholic worldview that all life is sacred and that every person has dignity that comes from God. The Diocesan Center for Marriage, Family, and Life (CMFL) posts several resources on their website at www.cdrcmfl.org. Concurrently, during this month, the Office of Social Ministries will highlight prison ministry awareness.

About 2.3 million people are incarcerated in the United States today.

Combined with those on parole, adult correctional systems supervised an estimated 6,851,000 persons in 2014. That means 1 in 36 adults, or 2.8% of the population, was under some form of correctional control.

The United States holds 25% of the world's prisoners (roughly 5% of the global population).

African Americans make up 12% of the U.S. population, yet represent more than 49% of those incarcerated in state and federal prisons. Nationally, 1 in 10 African American males is either in prison, on probation, or on parole.

Hispanic Americans comprise 9% of the U.S. population, and 19% of the population is in state and federal prisons.

The Commonwealth of Virginia's rate of incarceration is 900 per 100,000. As of July 2016, Virginia had a prison population of 58,600 and an additional 56,700 on probation or parole for a total correctional population of 115,300. Virginia's recidivism rate is currently at 22.8%.

Implementation Suggestions

We invite parishes to participate in Diocesan Prison Ministry Sunday on October 7th. During this weekend, we encourage parishes to recruit volunteers and educate the parish community on Christ's call to visit those in prison (Matthew 25). For those with an existing prison ministry, have someone involved in the ministry share their experiences with parishioners and invite them to join in the work. Areas of need in prisons and jails include: liturgical presiding, Eucharistic ministry, sacramental preparation, small group facilitation, bible study, letter writing, legislative advocacy, victim support, prayer ministry, transitional support (clothing, housing needs, job development) and coaching/mentoring in the re-entry process.

Suggested Prayers of the Faithful

For those who are incarcerated, that they may find peace and redemption in Christ, let us pray to the Lord. ... R/

For those who are incarcerated, that they may find patience and hope in their sufferings, comfort for their loved ones, and may they continue to trust in Jesus, let us pray to the Lord. ... R/

For those who work in the Criminal Justice System, that they may see the face of Christ in those who are incarcerated and persevere in their work, let us pray to the Lord. ... R/

For all who faithfully minister to the incarcerated, for those who comfort the families of the incarcerated, and for all who console victims, may they continue in their ministry with courage and compassion, let us pray to the Lord. ... R/

For justice and peace to all harmed by injustice and violence, let us pray to the Lord. ... R/

For the law makers, that they may find the balance between justice and mercy in their decisions, let us pray to the Lord. ... R/

Bulletin Announcement

Prison Ministry Sunday (October 7, 2018)

The Office of Social Ministries invites you to respond to the Gospel call: "Love one another as I have loved you." There are over 150 jails and prisons within the footprint of the Diocese of Richmond. Volunteers in these facilities serve as companions to offenders, victims, and affected communities. Incarcerated youth, women, and men will come back into our communities upon their release, and their preparation for release begins while they are still incarcerated. Prison Ministry volunteers can help them to learn how to live as peaceful and productive members of society again, and provide an invaluable, loving and committed presence in increasingly multicultural and interfaith settings. Together, we discover the greater depths of God and are lovingly transformed in the process. We invite you to join us in this life-giving ministry. You can begin by praying for those who are incarcerated, their families, and victims of crime.

NOVEMBER

“Listen! The wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.”

James 5:4

Ethical Trade (Advent)

Corresponding Catholic Social Teaching Principle:
Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers

“Every economic action must set about providing each inhabitant of the planet with the minimum wherewithal to live in dignity and freedom, with the possibility of supporting a family, educating children, praising God and developing one’s own human potential.”

–Pope Francis

Over and over again, during more than 100 years of theological reflection and writing on modern economic issues, the Catholic Church has confirmed that the “constitutive purpose” of the economy is to serve the common good.

The market cannot legitimate itself. The economy is legitimate in our Catholic tradition only to the extent that it meets the material needs of every member of our human family and the moral demands of justice and solidarity.

Catholic Relief Services, through its Ethical Trade program, seeks to celebrate the dignity of work by encouraging the community to improve the lives of the world’s most vulnerable by “consuming differently.”

This community of fair trade buyers have joined efforts with Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to educate, advocate and promote conscientious purchasing.

During the Christmas season, you are encouraged to be a conscientious buyer and stand in solidarity with men and women around the world whose lives are threatened by unfair market exploitations.

Implementation Suggestions

During the Advent season, we encourage parish leadership to promote Ethical Trade and to provide opportunities for the parish community to participate in conscientious buying. Parishes can do this by utilizing educational materials from Catholic Relief Services.

Visit www.ethicaltrade.crs.org to learn more and to access helpful resources.

Visit www.serrv.org to purchase Fair Trade items.

Suggested Prayers of the Faithful

For those who labor to sustain their lives, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

For all people, that we may obtain the grace to recognize the dignity of work as God designed it, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

That during this Christmas season, we may be more mindful of the gifts that we buy, and remember the people who produce them, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

That faith communities may be inspired to work for social and economic justice, we pray to the Lord. ... R/

Bulletin Announcement

Catholic Relief Services (CRS) offers an Ethical Trade program to celebrate “the dignity of work” by engaging in fair trade. Ethical trade promotes the principle of solidarity that seeks the well-being of all people. “Fair trade means we recognize and respect the hard work that farmers and artisans do. By purchasing their coffee, chocolate and crafts, we stand in solidarity with them by supporting their economic livelihoods” (CRS). This Advent season, we invite you to engage in ethical trade by purchasing ‘fairly traded goods.’ This is a great way to “deepen our connection to God, His people and His creation.” To learn more about ethical trade and where you can purchase gifts that promotes the dignity of workers around the world, please visit www.ethicaltrade.crs.org.