



Salt and Light: **A Transformative Journey into Catholic Social Teaching** **Presented by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Catholic Social Action Office**

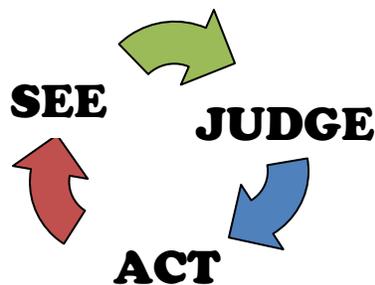
Purpose: “Salt and Light” provides a group of parishioners a basic groundwork to the Church’s rich tradition of Catholic Social Teaching. It will encourage participants to read the Gospels through the unique eyes of the poor and vulnerable and to consider acting in new, creative ways to stand in solidarity with “the least among us”. Although the program is brief, it is designed to lead participants towards a desire to engage concretely in God’s divine plan for the Kingdom, where all life, dignity and creation will be respected. Using the U.S. Catholic bishops’ framework presented in *Communities of Salt and Light: Reflections on the Social Mission of the Parish*, the program aims to jumpstart new social ministry efforts in parishes that currently have none. Or, it can assist already active social justice committees in recruiting new members in their parishes to answer this Gospel call.

Length: Five, 2.5-hour sessions

Number of Participants: 10 minimum/25 maximum, committed to all sessions

Cost per Person: \$25

Content: “Salt and Light” offers parishioners introductions into the Scriptural and Magisterial foundations of Catholic Social Teaching. It also invites them into two “immersions,” experiences that include hearing from the very people at the heart of the Church’s social concerns. These sessions follow St. John XXIII’s model of “see, judge, act,” which includes exposure to a lived reality of a social concern, analysis of the situation, application of Catholic principles, and consideration of actions in response (*Mater et Magistra*, no.236). Issues explored can include respect life, migration, economic justice, criminal justice/reentry, and care for God’s creation. “Salt and Light” also shares programs of the Church designed for such responses and guides participants in an exploration of how the parish might live out Catholic Social Teaching principles even more fully.



Reading the Signs of the Times

Each of the 5 sessions will include prayer, and there will be some reading in between sessions. Sessions that include an immersion experience may take place away from the regular host site. The topics of each session are:

Session 1: The Social Dimension of Evangelization: Love, Dignity and Mercy

This session explores the implications of the reality that “God is Love,” introduces participants to Pope Francis and Pope Benedict XVI’s powerful summations of Catholic Social Teaching, uncovers the biblical roots of pro-life and social justice work, and highlights the relationships between charity and justice, love and mercy.

Session 2: A Culture of Encounter and the Church's Teachings and Responses to Real-Life Issues (Part 1)

Participants will practice the “see, judge, act” model and a preferential option for the poor by hearing from those impacted by a particular social concern. They will learn about the social structures impacting the issue at hand as well as the Catholic Social Teaching principles that apply to it. And, they will consider how the Church can concretely respond.

Session 3: Catholic Social Teaching through the Years: Reading the Signs of the Times

Participants will discover the evolution of modern Catholic Social Teaching from Pope Leo XIII to Pope Francis as well as its local application through the bishops. They will also become familiar with the Catholic Campaign for Human Development and Catholic Relief Services as concrete practices of the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity.

Session 4: A Culture of Encounter and the Church's Teachings and Responses to Real-Life Issues (Part 2)

This session will follow the same format as Session 2 with an immersion into another social concern.

Session 5: Building a Community of Salt and Light

Using what we have learned, how can we concretely engage in social ministry in our parish? How can we fulfill Pope Francis' vision for our parishes to become “completely mission-oriented” (*Joy of the Gospel*, no. 28)? What is a concrete action step that participants can take together? How do we begin developing a social justice committee in the parish? Salt and Light directs participants to begin formulating concrete responses to these critical questions.

Why Is Catholic Social Teaching So Important for Parishes?

“Salt and Light” responds to the Church's hope that our parishes will become ever brighter beacons of light, so that God's plan of “right relationships” for a broken world can be better realized. Scripture and our Church have articulated for us a vision of peace and justice, and it is up to us, the faithful, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to realize it. The U.S. bishops in their 1993 document, *Communities of Salt and Light* share:

*At a time of rampant individualism, we stand for family and community. At a time of intense consumerism, we insist it is not what we have, but how we treat one another that counts. In an age that does not value permanence or hard work in relationships, we believe marriage is forever and children are a blessing, not a burden. At a time of growing isolation, we remind our nation of its responsibility to the broader world, to pursue peace, to welcome immigrants, to protect the lives of hurting children and refugees. At a time when the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer, we insist the moral test of our society is how we treat and care for the weakest among us. In these challenging days, we believe that the Catholic community needs to be more than ever a source of clear moral vision and effective action...**The pursuit of justice and peace is an essential part of what makes a parish Catholic.***

Furthermore, the bishops challenge us, “If Catholic education and formation fail to communicate our social tradition, they are not fully Catholic” (*Sharing Catholic Social Teaching*, 1998). “Salt and Light” is an opportunity for a parish to explore how to meet this challenge!

For more information, contact the Catholic Social Action Office.

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