CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING IN LITURGY AND PUBLIC PRAYER

Introduction
Eucharistic Liturgy and Catechesis

“‘The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the font from which all her power flows.’ It is therefore the privileged place for catechizing the People of God. ‘Catechesis is intrinsically linked with the whole of liturgical and sacramental activity, for it is in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist, that Christ Jesus works in fullness for the transformation of [men].’” (CCC 1074) (quotes, SC 10 & JPII, CT 23)

There are many methods of catechesis and evangelization in our Church. It is essential that all means be used to educate the faithful in the Church’s social teaching tradition. In a 1999 document entitled, “Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions,” the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) states that, “far too many Catholics do not adequately understand that the social teaching of the Church is an essential part of Catholic faith. This poses a serious challenge of all Catholics, since it weakens our capacity to be a Church that is true to the demands of the Gospel. We need to do more to share the social mission and message of our Church.” Therefore, there is, “a pressing need to educate all Catholics on the social demands of the Gospel and Catholic tradition more clearly.”

The bishops go on to state, “Our Catholic social teaching is proclaimed whenever we gather for worship. The homily presents an excellent opportunity for sharing Catholic social teaching. The word of God announces God’s reign of justice and peace. Our preaching of the just word continued the preaching of Jesus and the prophets.”

Within the context of the Church’s prayer, there are multiple opportunities for catechesis on Catholic Social Teaching. It is hoped that this section of the Parish Tool-Kit might serve as guide in planning liturgies that enrich the faithful’s understanding and practice of the Church’s social teaching.

Organization & Use

The majority of this section is organized by Liturgical season. Each liturgical subsection is arranged in the same way: general notes and homily tips, suggested music (from Gather Comprehensive, Breaking Bread, Music Issue, Flor y Canto, and Lead Me, Guide Me), sample intercessions, connections with feasts of the season, and prayer service ideas.

The next subsection contains information concerning inclusion of parishioners with disabilities and serving the needs of a diverse population (culturally, socio-economically etc.).
The last subsection contains lists of print and internet resources for pastors, music ministers, liturgical coordinators and anyone involved in planning the prayer life of the parish.

Advent

General social justice connections/homily helpers

Advent has a twofold character: as a time to prepare for the solemnity of Christmas when the Son of God’s first coming to us is remembered; as a season when that remembrance directs the mind and heart to await Christ’s Second Coming at the end of time. For these two reasons, the season of Advent is thus a period for devout and joyful expectation.

General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar, #39

Advent, the season of expectation and preparation, offers excellent opportunities for reflection on the Church’s social teaching. As we prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus into our world, we call to mind the cry of the prophet Isaiah, “A voice cries out: In the desert prepare the way of the LORD! Make straight in the wasteland a highway for our God! Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill shall be made low; the rugged land shall be made a plain, the rough country, a broad valley. (Is. 40:3-4)” How do we prepare for the coming of Christ in our world? What wrongs need to be corrected – both within and without.

The readings for Advent also point to the ideal of Jesus’ reign – the Kingdom of God. Also in Isaiah, we read,

Not by appearance shall he judge, nor by hearsay shall he decide, but he shall judge the poor with justice, and decide aright for the land’s afflicted. He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. Justice shall be the band around his waist, and faithfulness a belt upon his hips. Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them. The cow and the bear shall be neighbors, together their young shall rest; the lion shall eat hay like the ox. The baby shall play by the cobra’s den, and the child lay his hand on the adder’s lair. (Is. 3b-8)

This is the peace Christ came to bring to the earth – justice for the poor and reconciliation of enemies. What can we do through outreach and advocacy to ensure justice for the poor and reconciliation among people?

Suggested music

- *Alegria de Esperar (The Joy of Waiting)*, Luis Elizalde, Melodías (Madrid)
- *Canticle of the Turning*, Rory Cooney, GIA Publications
- *Christ, Be Our Light*, Bernadette Farrell, OCP Publications
- *Come to Set Us Free*, Bernadette Farrell, OCP Publications
- *The Day of the Lord*, The Iona Community, GIA Publications
• Do Not Fear to Hope, Rory Cooney, OCP Publications
• Each Winter as the Year Grows Older, Marty Haugen, GIA Publications
• Fresh as the Morning, Tony Alonso, Hope Publishing
• God of Day and God of Darkness, Marty Haugen, GIA Publications
• Good News, Howard S. Olson, Augsburg Publishing Home
• ¿Le Conocéis? (Do You Know Him?), José A. Olivar and San Pablo Comunicación, SSP, OCP Publications
• Las Posadas (Searching for Lodging), Tradicional (Mexico)
• Momento Nuevo (A New Beginning), Pablo Sosa, OCP Publications
• Preparen el Camino (Prepare the Way), Carlas Rosas, OCP Publications
• Psalm 72: Every Nation on Earth, Michael Joncas, GIA Publications
• Psalm 146: Happy the Poor in Spirit, Thomas J. Porter, GIA Publications
• There is a Longing, Anne Quigley, OCP Publications
• Tiempo de Esperanza (Time of Hope), Emilio Vicente Matéu and Ediciones Musical PAX-PPC, OCP Publications
• Toda la Tierra (All of the Earth), Rogelio Selada and Arquidiócesis de Miami, OCP Publications
• Un Pueblo Camina (The People Walk), Juan A. Espinosa, OCP Publications
• Ven, Señor, No Tardes Más (Come, Lord, Do Not Delay), Cesáreo Gabarain, OCP Publications
• Voices that Challenge, David Haas, GIA Publications
• You are Mine, David Haas, GIA Publications
• Your Mercy Like Rain, Rory Cooney, GIA Publications

Sample intercessions
Written by Abigail Braun, Graduate Assistant for Liturgy
University of Dayton, Third Sunday of Advent Year A

Presider: Strengthened by the Gospel, let us pray with hearts that long for God’s reign…

The reader says:
Our response will be “Come, Lord Jesus!” [raise hand, all repeat: “Come, Lord Jesus!”]
• To the Church; to fill us with joyful song as we prepare the way of the Lord. [pause – 2 long seconds] Let us pray in hope… Come Lord Jesus.
• To global leaders; to inspire efforts that will secure justice for the oppressed, food for the hungry, and freedom for all people. [pause] Let us pray in hope… Come Lord Jesus.
• To the poor, the immigrant, the imprisoned; to bring healing, strength and good news to those who are considered least in our world. [pause] Let us pray in hope… Come Lord Jesus.
• To those who suffer from the ice and cold, and to all who are traveling. Let us pray in hope… Come Lord Jesus.
• To strengthen the hearts of those who suffer for their faith. [pause] Let us pray in hope… Come Lord Jesus.
To those who have died; to bring all the deceased into a life of everlasting joy. [pause] Let us pray in hope… Come Lord Jesus.

To each of us gathered for this Eucharistic celebration; to fulfill our longings for wholeness, vitality and dignity. [pause] Let us pray in hope… Come Lord Jesus.

**Presider:** God of glory and compassion, at your touch the wilderness blossoms and broken lives are made whole. Awaken our hearts to your presence that we may announce in word and deed the good news of your kingdom. We ask this through him, whose coming is certain, whose day draws near: Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

**Feasts/theme connections**

- **December 2 – Anniversary of the murder of “the Church women” in El Salvador**
  On this day in 1980 Sr. Dorothy Kazel, OSU, Jean Donovan, Sr. Maura Clarke, and Sr. Ita Ford were kidnapped, raped and murdered by the Salvadorian National Guard for speaking on behalf of the poor and persecuted of the country.

- **December 3 – Memorial of St. Francis Xavier**
  Possible connection – resisting unbridled consumerism, especially as we approach Christmas; remaining focused on the needs of those around us instead of our own wants

- **December 8 – Feast of the Immaculate Conception**

- **December 12 – Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Unborn and Patroness of Mexico**
  This feast celebrates the only manifestation of Mary as a pregnant mother, and therefore can be a celebration for acknowledging the sanctity of human life. In Mary’s Magnificat, which is an option for the Gospel of the day, we read about God turning the world around, bringing justice for those bowed down and raising up the lowly. Here we find, placed on the lips of Mary, our call as Christians. The story of Blssd. Juan Diego and Our Lady of Guadalupe show God’s concern for the outcast and marginalized. The story of Saint Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin (1474-1548) is told on the Marianland.com website. [http://www.marianland.com/guadalupe003.html](http://www.marianland.com/guadalupe003.html)

**Prayer service ideas**

- **Advent Reconciliation Service**
  Pax Christi USA has an examination of conscience based on the Beatitudes on their website at: [http://www.paxchristiusa.org/news_events_more.asp?id=266](http://www.paxchristiusa.org/news_events_more.asp?id=266)

- **Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebration**
  A traditional celebration of this very important Mexican feast day includes a skit showing Juan Diego, a native Mexican Indian, describing to his people how the Virgin Mary appeared to him at the Tepeyac Mountain. Las Apariciones Guadalupanas is a lively, traditional Mexican song in honor of the Virgin that is traditionally used on this day.

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Liturgical and Public Prayer -4
Some parishes have special processions of children (St. Charles Borromeo, Cincinnati). Others have a candle light vigil at midnight (Holy Family, Dayton).

- **Las Posadas**
  Las Posadas (“lodging” or “shelter”) is a traditional Mexican Advent celebration which retells the story of Joseph’s and Mary’s journey on Christmas Eve. In this retelling of the story, there is a procession led by Mary and Joseph to three pre-arranged homes asking for lodging in song. Traditionally, Las Posadas is a 10 celebration that begins on December 16th.
  For more information on celebrating Las Posadas in your parish, see:
  - [http://www.posadas-project.com/about/index.html](http://www.posadas-project.com/about/index.html)
  - [http://www.standy.org/lasposada.html](http://www.standy.org/lasposada.html)
  - [http://www.catholicweb.com/media_index.cfm?fuseaction=view_article&partnerid=13&article_id=137](http://www.catholicweb.com/media_index.cfm?fuseaction=view_article&partnerid=13&article_id=137)

**Christmas**

**General social justice connections/homily helpers**

*Next to the yearly celebrations of the paschal mystery, the Church considers nothing more important than the memorial of Christ’s birth and early manifestations. This is the purpose of the season of Christmas.*

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The Christmas season is rich with themes connected to the Church’s social teaching. In this season we celebrate the Incarnation, Jesus becoming poor for the sake of all. In celebrating the Incarnation of Christ, we also celebrate the sacredness of human life. God, in choosing to become human, highlights the very gift that is each life that comes into the world – from conception to natural death. Thus, we can examine how each of us are called to a greater respect for the unborn, the outcasts and marginalized, the elderly, and the immigrant population. How might we come to see each person as another way that God is made flesh in our world?

Also, as this season also celebrates the great gift of families, it is an important time to pray for families – those experiencing difficulties, those torn apart by war or political strife, those separated because of lack of work and those struggling in countries not their own. The Feast of the Holy Family is especially well-suited for these reflections.

**Suggested music**

- *The Age of Expectation*, Bobby Fisher, GIA Publications
- *Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn*, Marty Haugen, GIA Publications
- *The Aye Carol*, John Bell, GIA Publications
- *Carol at the Manger*, Marty Haugen, GIA Publications
- *Child of Mercy*, David Haas, GIA Publications
- *Cloth for the Cradle*, The Iona Community, GIA Publications

Liturgy and Public Prayer -5
- *De la Justicia Brota la Paz (Peace Springs from Justice)*, Juan J. Sosa, OCP Publications
- *God’s Surprises*, John Bell, GIA Publications
- *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*, Public Domain
- *He Came Down*, Cameroon traditional, GIA Publications
- *Hoy en la Tierra (Today on Earth)*, Joaquín Madurga and San Pablo Comunicación, OCP Publications
- *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly*, Rosalind Rusbridge
- *Lord Today*, Darryl Ducote, Damean Music
- *Nativity Carol*, Francis Patrick O’Brien, GIA Publications
- *Sing a Different Song*, The Iona Community, GIA Publications
- *Te Pedimos la Paz (Grant Us Your Peace)*, Juan A. Espinosa, OCP Publications
- *The Tiny Child to Bethlehem Came*, Marty Haugen, GIA Publications

**Sample intercessions**

*Presider*: As we celebrate the incarnation of the Word, let us pray with joy and hope …

The reader says:
Our response will be “God among us, hear our prayer.” [raise hand, all repeat: “God among us, hear our prayer.”]

- For the Church; may we be strengthened in our mission to make Christ present in our world. [pause – 2 long seconds] Let us pray in hope… God among us, hear our prayer.
- For global leaders; may they work to bring about true peace, justice, and an end to poverty and oppression. [pause] Let us pray in hope… God among us, hear our prayer.
- For those who because of poverty, marginalization, addiction and fear are not able to welcome the presence of Christ; may we be moved to help bring an end to their sufferings. [pause] Let us pray in hope… God among us, hear our prayer.
- For those who are persecuted for their faith and for those who persecute them; may the persecuted be strengthened and the persecutors find mercy and forgiveness. [pause] Let us pray in hope… God among us, hear our prayer.
- For those who have died; may they know everlasting peace. [pause] Let us pray in hope… God among us, hear our prayer.
- For our community gathered here; may we know the true and deep joyful peace of Christ here with us. [pause] Let us pray in hope… God among us, hear our prayer.

*Presider*: Loving God, you have gifted us with a manifestation of your love through the birth of Jesus. May we, who profess our belief in Jesus, continue to bring Jesus to our broken world. We ask this through him, whose coming we celebrate, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**Feasts/theme connections**
- December 25 – Christmas
• December 26 – Feast of St. Stephen, First Martyr
  It would be appropriate on this feast to comment on the many who are oppressed because of their faith, murdered because of prejudice, and those who are not allowed to practice their faith openly.

• Kwanzaa
  While not a liturgical celebration, Kwanzaa is a cultural celebration that taps deeply into what it means to be fully human and united with others in our humanity. Kwanzaa is a Pan-African celebration of family, community and culture. It lasts from December 26 – January 1.
  For information about this important African American tradition see: [http://www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org/index.shtml](http://www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org/index.shtml)

• December 28 – Feast of the Holy Innocents
  This occasion calls to mind the millions of innocent children killed before their birth. It is a good day to pray for those who believe that abortion is an answer, for the children not allowed to be born, and that our society may learn to support those who find themselves in a crisis pregnancy.

• January 1 – World Day of Peace and Feast of Mary, Mother of God
  This is wonderful day to celebrate the sacred nature of parenthood and Mary’s role as Jesus’ first teacher of his humanity as an example for Christian parenting. In addition, the Holy Father has commemorated this day as the “World Day of Peace” with an annual message for peace and justice. The Archdiocese traditionally celebrates a World Day of Peace mass on this day, and parishes are also encouraged to celebrate this day. For more information, contact the Worship or Catholic Social Action Offices of the Archdiocese.

• January 4 – Memorial of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton
  St. Elizabeth’s care and concern for the education of poor and orphaned children serve as an example to all of us of the compassion we should have for the poor and for children in particular. She stands as an example of compassion that is moved to action.

• January 6 – Epiphany (El Día de Reyes)
  In some Latin American countries, like Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, Epiphany holds a significant place in liturgical practice. This is traditionally the day for the exchange of gifts and celebrating the revelation of God through Christ.

**Prayer service ideas**

• Kwanzaa
  Each day of Kwanzaa celebrates a different value: unity (umoja), self-determination (kujichagulia), collective work and responsibility (ujima), cooperative economics (ujamaa), purpose (nia), creativity (kuumba), and faith (imani). It would be appropriate to have a prayer service with a short explanation each evening of Kwanzaa. More information about Kwanzaa can be found on the following websites: [http://www.tike.com/celeb-kw.htm](http://www.tike.com/celeb-kw.htm)  [http://www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org/index.shtml](http://www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org/index.shtml)  [http://www.history.com/minisites/kwanzaa/](http://www.history.com/minisites/kwanzaa/)

• El Día de Reyes
There are various traditional ways this feast is celebrated throughout Latin America. In parts of Mexico, for example, the celebration begins the night before with the addition of the Magi to the nativity scene, children gathering to send wishes attached to helium-filled balloons, and a festive meal. This could be part of a larger, liturgical celebration with a few variations. For more information see:

http://www.inside-mexico.com/ReyesMagos.htm

Ordinary Time
General social justice connections/homily helpers

Apart from those seasons having their own distinctive character, thirty-three or thirty-four weeks remain in the yearly cycle that do not celebrate a specific aspect of the mystery of Christ. Rather, especially on the Sundays, they are devoted to the mystery of Christ in all its aspects. This period is known as Ordinary Time.

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During Ordinary Time our Scripture readings explore aspects of Jesus’ teaching and life. It is during Ordinary Time that we discover the healing ministry of Jesus, his parables and the company which he keeps. Specific instances depend on the Cycle Year, however some general themes stand out regardless of the year:

- Jesus’ ways and teachings were not popular, but challenged the conventional wisdom of the time.
- Jesus is concerned for the poor and vulnerable.
- To follow Jesus is to take the narrow, difficult path.
- The commandments of the Old Testament are contained in love of God and love of neighbor.
- Jesus challenges the religious leaders of his time to live what they preach.
- The outcasts, the public sinners, and women were friends of Jesus who were invited to preach what they had come to understand.
- Jesus did not seek popularity, material wealth or even a place to live. His followers are encouraged to follow that example.
- Followers of Jesus are called to be beatitude people.

Each of these themes, and the many others that appear through Ordinary Time, link beautifully with the Social Teaching of the Church. It is through these readings that we are encouraged to think about the “other,” and consider them as neighbor.

These themes are of particular importance during an election year. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (USCCB) document Faithful Citizenship is an excellent resource. While it is true that the Church can not endorse particular candidates, it is essential that the faithful reflect on how their faith should inform their decisions.

Suggested music
• A Quién Iremos (To Whom Shall We Go?), Mary Frances Reza, OCP Publications
• All Are Welcome, Marty Haugen, GIA Publications
• Alleluia! Raise the Gospel, Bernadette Farrell, OCP Publications
• Anthem, Tom Conry, New Dawn Music
• Be Light for Our Eyes, David Haas, GIA Publications
• Bread for the World, Bernadette Farrell, OCP Publications
• Bread of Life, Bobby Fisher, OCP Publications
• Come, Lord Jesus, Steve Angrisano and Tom Tomaszek, OCP Publications
• Come to the Feast, Marty Haugen, GIA Publications
• Come to the Water, John Foley, SJ, New Dawn Music
• Community of Christ, Bernadette Farrell, OCP Publications
• Cristo Te Necesita (Christ Needs You), Cesáreo Gabaráin, OCP Publications
• Find Us Ready, Tom Booth, OCP Publications
• For the Healing of the Nations, John M. Neale
• Gather Your People, Bob Hurd, OCP Publications
• God Has Chosen Me, Bernadette Farrell, OCP Publications
• God of the Hungry, Scott Soper, OCP Publications
• God’s Table, The Iona Community, GIA Publications
• The God Who Sends Us Forth, John Foley, SJ, GIA Publications
• Good News, Howard S. Olson
• The Harvest of Justice, David Haas, GIA Publications
• Here I Am, Lord, Dan Schutte, New Dawn Music
• He Had a Dream, Ruth Manier, Ruth Manier (About The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.)
• In Christ There is No East or West, Afro-American; Adapted by Harry T. Burleigh, American Tract Society
• In the Day of the Lord, M.D. Ridge, OCP Publications
• I Say, “Yes,” My Lord, Donna Pena, GIA Publications
• I Will Choose Christ, Tom Booth, OCP Publications
• I’ve Decided to Make Jesus My Choice, Harris Johnson, OCP Publications
• Keep the Dream Alive, Robert Manuel, OCP Publications
• Lead Me, Lord, John D. Becker, OCP Publications
• Let Justice Roll Like a River, Marty Haugen, GIA Publications
• Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service, Albert Bayly, Oxford University Press
• Lord, You Give the Great Commission, Aboot’s Leigh, Hope Publishing
• No Greater Love, Michael Joncas, GIA Publications
• Nourished at This Holy Table, Bob Hurd, OCP Publications
• Now Join We to Praise the Creator, Fred Kaan, Hope Publishing
• One Bread, One Body, John Foley, SJ, OCP Publications
• On Holy Ground, Donna Pena, GIA Publications
• Power of Peace, Jesse Manibusan, OCP Publications
• Prayer of St. Francis, Sebastian Temple, OCP Publications
• Psalm 15: They Who Do Justice, David Haas, GIA Publications
• Psalm 34: The Cry of the Poor, John Foley, SJ, New Dawn Music
• Psalm 68: You Have Made a Home for the Poor, Rory Cooney, GIA Publications
• Psalm 136: Love Is Never Ending, Marty Haugen, GIA Publications
• Quiero Ser, Señor, Instrumento de Tu Paz (I Want To Be an Instrument of Your Peace), Traditional (Mexico)
• Send Down the Fire, Marty Haugen, GIA Publications
• Send Us, Scott Soper, OCP Publications
• Servant Song, Bobby Fisher, GIA Publications
• Sing Out, Earth and Skies, Marty Haugen, GIA Publications
• The Summons, John H. Bell, Iona Community
• Table of Plenty, Dan Schutte, OCP Publications
• That There May Be Bread, Weston Priory
• There Is a Longing, Anne Quigley, OCP Publications
• There Is a Well, Tom Conry, OCP Publications
• Ven al Banquete/Come to the Feast, Bob Hurd, OCP Publications
• Ven con Nosotros (Come With Us), Alfredo A. Morales, The Liturgical Press
• Voice of Christ, Timothy R. Smith, OCP Publications
• Voices that Challenge, David Haas, GIA Publications
• We Are Called, David Haas, GIA Publications
• We Are Called to Serve, Julie and Tom Smith, Resources Publications
• We Are the Light of the World, Jean A. Greif, Vernacular Hymns Publishing
• We Shall Overcome, Zilphia Horton, Frank Hamilton, Guy Carawan, and Pete Seeger, Ludlow Music
• What Is Our Service to Be, Scot Crandal, OCP Publications
• Whatsoever You Do, Willard F. Jabusch, OCP Publications
• With One Voice, Ricky Manalo, OCP Publications
• You Have Anointed Me, Mike Balhoff, Damean Music

Sample intercessions

Presider: Confident in God’s love, let us pray with hearts open to God’s generosity…

The reader says:
Our response will be “Loving God, hear us.” [raise hand, all repeat: “Loving God, hear us.”]

• For our Church; may we always be a sign and bearer of God’s loving concern for all people. [pause – 2 long seconds] In faith, let us pray … Loving God, hear us.
• For the leaders of nations and governments; motivated by the Spirit, may they work to bring about an end to all forms of violence and oppression. [pause] In faith, let us pray … Loving God, hear us.
• For the unborn, the poor, the immigrant, and the imprisoned; may they come to know their dignity as children of God. [pause] In faith, let us pray … Loving God, hear us.
• For the earth and our environment; that we may learn to cherish this gift from God and act as wise stewards. [pause] In faith, let us pray… Loving God, hear us.
- For those who have died; may they rest in the loving arms of God. [pause] In faith, let us pray … Loving God, hear us.
- For each of us gathered here; may we work together to bring about God’s Reign of justice and peace. [pause] In faith, let us pray … Loving God, hear us.

Presider: God of justice and goodness, in you we find our identity and mission. Renew in us a recognition of the call we have received as your sons and daughters that we might cooperate with you in your work of restoring our world. We ask this through him, whose coming is certain, whose day draws near: Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Feasts/theme connections
- Mid-January (date depends on year) - Remembrance of Martin Luther King, Jr. While not a liturgical feast, it is a perfect time to reflect on the issues of oppression, racism and discrimination that are still so prevalent in our society. It is also a good time to help people become more aware of other violations of human rights that occur.
- January 22 – Anniversary of the Roe vs. Wade supreme court decision
  This date (or January 23 if the 22nd is a Sunday) has been set aside for the U.S. as a day of penance for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion, and a day of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life. (cf. www.usccb.org)
- February – Black History Month
- February 8 – Feast of Sts. Jerome Emiliani and Josephine Bakhita
  St. Jerome Emiliani, who worked tirelessly for the benefit of poor and homeless orphans, stands as an example to us all of our obligation to care for the defenseless and marginalized in our society.
  St. Josephine Bakhita was a Sudanese slave who was freed in Italy. As a free woman she entered the Daughters of Charity. Her story is one of courage and unshakable faith, especially for young women and those who suffer oppression and violence.
- February 12 – Anniversary of the Murder of Sr. Dorothy Stang, SNDdeN
  In 2005 Sr. Dorothy Stang, SNDdeN was murdered because of her defense of the people and environment of the Brazilian Amazon. In the face of death threats and violence, she remained steadfast and a strong advocate for those without a voice and the rich environmental resources of the area.

For feasts/theme connections for March-May, please see the Lent and Easter sections.
- July 4 – Independence Day
  The USCCB asks that we celebrate this day for peace and justice or for our nation’s public needs. This is an appropriate day to pray for the Spirit’s guidance over our nation’s leaders that their decisions be wise, just and contribute to the establishment of peace in our world.
- July 14 - Feast of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha
Blssd. Kateri is the patroness of ecology and the environment. She is also our first Native American blessed.

- **August 14 – Memorial of Saint Maximilian Kolbe**
  St. Maximilian’s story is well known and loved. It can remind us that political prisoners, victims of persecution and politically motivated murders are not things of the past, but are very present to us in our day. It would be appropriate to pray for victims and perpetrators of these crimes.

- **September is National Hispanic Heritage Month**

- **September 1 – Labor Day**
  This is a day to pray for the blessing of human work, to remember those whose work goes largely unrewarded or unrecognized, and for those who are searching for work.

- **September 9 – Memorial of St. Peter Claver**
  St. Peter, patron saint of African-Americans, was a Spanish priest who ministered with and to African slaves in Columbia.

- **September 11 – Anniversary of the attack on the World Trade Center**
  On an anniversary such as this, it is appropriate to pray for peace, forgiveness, and an end to senseless violence.

- **September 27 – Memorial of St. Vincent de Paul**
  An important feast day for charitable organizations throughout the world, this is a good day to recognize the work of parish St. Vincent de Paul Societies and highlight the needs of the community.

- **The First Sunday of October – Respect Life Sunday**
  On this day we pray for an end to the many ways human life is disregarded in our society, including the 50 million lost to abortion. We recognize the sanctity of life from conception until natural death. The website of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati provides excellent liturgy helpers for the Respect Life theme.

- **October 4 – Memorial of St. Francis of Assisi**
  Possible connections – This is an appropriate day for remembering the needs of those who live in material poverty, care for the environment and detachment from material possessions.

- **The month of November – Election month**

- **November 1 – Día de Las Muertos (The Day of the Dead)**
  On November 1st the people of Mexico and those of Mexican decent celebrate the lives of their deceased relatives and friends. The day is wrapped in rich symbolism and tradition. Traditionally, families establish an altar in their homes to remind them of their departed loved ones and to pray for them. There is also a tradition of visiting graves and eating traditional foods.
  To learn more about celebrating Día de Las Muertos see: [http://www.inside-mexico.com/featuredead.htm](http://www.inside-mexico.com/featuredead.htm)

- **November 3 – Memorial of St. Martin de Porres**
  St. Martin, also known as St. Martin of Charity, is the patron saint of Christian forgiveness. Born into poverty as the child of freed black woman and a Spanish grandee in Lima, Peru he became a barber-surgeon. He entered the Dominican order and served the community in caring for the sick, bandaging wounds, and
fund raising. He cared for all people regardless of race or freed status. He is a powerful witness of non-cooperation with racism.

- November 13 – Memorial of St. Francis Xavier Cabrini
  The first American citizen to be canonized Mother Cabrini is the patroness of immigrants and emigrants. She came to the U.S. from Italy at the urging of Pope Leo XIII. She arrived in New York to work with the Italian immigrants in the area. She founded 67 institutions to serve the needs of the poor, orphaned, uneducated and immigrants.

**Prayer service ideas**

- Prayer for Peace and an End to Oppression – in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
  There are many resources on the internet to aid in creating a prayer service around the issues for which Dr. King stood (non-violent protest of injustice, an end to racism and all forms of oppression, peace). These websites include, but are not limited to:
  - [http://www.godweb.org/kingprayers.htm](http://www.godweb.org/kingprayers.htm)
  - [http://www.osfphila.org/sp/pryr_svcs/prayer_mlkjr.html](http://www.osfphila.org/sp/pryr_svcs/prayer_mlkjr.html)
  - [http://www.clc-usa.org/clc_PryrServ.htm](http://www.clc-usa.org/clc_PryrServ.htm)

- Each year, in conjunction with the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* (January 22), a National Prayer Vigil for Life is held at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. Thousands from all over the country take part in the opening liturgy and all-night prayer vigil. Dioceses and parishes might conduct similar prayer vigils so that those unable to travel might participate in this prayer.

- **Días de Las Muertos (The Day of the Dead) Prayer Service and Remembrance**
  See above

**Lent**

**General social justice connections/homily helpers**

*Lent is a preparation for the celebration of Easter. For the Lenten liturgy disposes both catechumens and the faithful to celebrate the paschal mystery: catechumens, through the several stages of Christian initiation; the faithful, through reminders of their own baptism and through penitential practices.*

General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar, #27–28

The penitential nature of the Lenten season predisposes it to reflection on our tendency to neglect our relationships with God and with others. The call of Lent is to return to right relationships – with God, others, and self. Lent is a time for making things right within ourselves as well as doing what we can to make things right in the world around us.

Therefore, the season is a fitting time to consider our failures to uphold Catholic Social Teaching, personally and as community.

A common responsorial Psalm for Lent, Psalm 51, states,
Have mercy on me, God, in your goodness; in your abundant compassion blot out my offense. Wash away all my guilt; from my sin cleanse me. For I know my offense; my sin is always before me. Against you alone have I sinned; I have done such evil in your sight that you are just in your sentence, blameless when you condemn. True, I was born guilty, a sinner, even as my mother conceived me. Still, you insist on sincerity of heart; in my inmost being teach me wisdom. Cleanse me with hyssop, that I may be pure; wash me, make me whiter than snow. Let me hear sounds of joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Turn away your face from my sins; blot out all my guilt. A clean heart create for me, God; renew in me a steadfast spirit. Do not drive me from your presence, nor take from me your holy spirit. Restore my joy in your salvation; sustain in me a willing spirit. I will teach the wicked your ways, that sinners may return to you. Rescue me from death, God, my saving God, that my tongue may praise your healing power. Lord, open my lips; my mouth will proclaim your praise. (Ps. 51: 3-17)

This prayer, while typically used for personal prayer, could also serve as a call for a community to examine offenses against the poor, the outcast, the unborn, and the marginalized; to seek forgiveness and ask for strength to turn in a new direction.

**Suggested music**
- *Al Atardecer de la Vida (In the Evening of Life)*, Cesáreo Gabaráin, OCP Publications
- *Ashes*, Tom Conry, New Dawn Music
- *Danos un Corazón (Give Us a Heart)*, Juan A. Espinosa, OCP Publications
- *Desterrados (The Exiled)*, Juan A. Espinosa, OCP Publications
- *Go Down, Moses*, Afro-American Spiritual, Oxford University Press
- *Grita, Profeta (Cry Out, Prophet)*, Vicente Matéu and Ediciones Musical PAX-PPC, OCP Publications
- *Healer of Our Every Ill*, Marty Haugen, GIA Publications
- *Hosea*, Gregory Norbert, The Benedictine Foundation of the State of Vermont
- *Inspired by Love and Anger*, The Iona Community, GIA Publications
- *The Master Came to Bring Good News*, Ralph Finn, GIA Publications
- *Profetiza (Prophecy)*, Rosa Martha Zárate Macías, GIA Publications
- *Return to God*, Marty Haugen, GIA Publications
- *Transfigure Us, O Lord*, Bob Hurd, OCP Publications
- *Tree of Life*, Marty Haugen, GIA Publications
- *Un Mandamiento Nuevo (A New Commandment)*, Traditional (Spain)
- *What Does the Lord Require*, Albert F. Bayly, Hope Publishing

**Sample intercessions**
The following is adapted from: [http://www.archdioceseofanchorage.org/intercessions/archive/lent/index.html](http://www.archdioceseofanchorage.org/intercessions/archive/lent/index.html)
Presider: Let us ask God to accompany us on our journey to conversion, and to draw all the human family to the waters of life and the paschal feast…

The reader says:
Our response will be “Lord, in your mercy, hear us.” [raise hand, all repeat: “Lord, in your mercy, hear us.”]

- Jesus emptied himself. For our church to grow in care for others; for an increase in servant leadership and ministry, we pray. [pause] Let us pray in hope… Lord, in your mercy, hear us.
- Jesus humbled himself. For our community to extend welcome and hospitality to all who come our way, we pray. [pause] Let us pray in hope… Lord, in your mercy, hear us.
- Jesus Christ is Lord. For all our elect and candidates who will profess our faith and share our table at the Great Vigil of Easter, we pray. [pause] Let us pray in hope… Lord, in your mercy, hear us.
- Jesus’ name is above every name. For the sick in mind, body, and spirit; for those who care for them, we pray. [pause] Let us pray in hope… Lord, in your mercy, hear us.
- Jesus was obedient to the point of death. For those who have died in Christ, for all who mourn, we pray. [pause] Let us pray in hope… Lord, in your mercy, hear us.

Presider: God of mercy, hear the prayers of your people who have listened to your Son and seen glimpses of his glory. Comfort those whom the world has forgotten and protect all those whom the world has rejected. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Feasts/theme connections
- March 3 – Memorial of Saint Katharine Drexel
  An American saint from Philadelphia, St. Katharine founded the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament to serve the needs of black and Native Americans. What is extraordinary about St. Katharine is that she sought to address the causes of poverty and lack of education she encountered in those she served. A reminder to us that long term solutions must be found for the needs we address typically with charity.
- March 24 – Anniversary of the Martyrdom of Archbishop Oscar Romero
  A connection is most likely made through one of Arch. Romero’s quotes: The church would betray its own love for God and its fidelity to the gospel if it stopped being . . . a defender of the rights of the poor . . . a humanizer of every legitimate struggle to achieve a more just society . . . that prepares the way for the true reign of God in history.
- April 22 – Earth Day
  Although not a liturgical feast, the celebration of Earth Day is a great time to bring to people’s consciousness how our decisions each day impact the world in which we live.

Prayer service ideas
• For a Morning Prayer in remembrance of Archbishop Romero, see http://www.justpeace.org/romeromorningprayer.htm
• See pages 21-30 of this section for Social Justice Stations of the Cross for use with high school students.
• Jane Hoffman of St. Antoninus Parish offers a profound prayer event that brings together Catholics of all ages, a prayer walk called The Way of Love. Please see pages 31 of this section for a description of the event and some of the results that prayerful Catholic witness have achieved.

Triduum/Easter
General social justice connections/homily helpers

Christ redeemed humankind and gave perfect glory to God principally through his paschal mystery: dying he destroyed our death and rising he restored our life. Therefore the Easter triduum of the passion and resurrection of the Lord is the culmination of the entire liturgical year. Thus the solemnity of Easter has the same kind of preeminence in the liturgical year that Sunday has in the week. The Easter triduum of the passion and resurrection of the Lord begins with the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, reaches its high point in the Easter Vigil, and closes with Evening Prayer on Easter Sunday, the Sunday of the Lord's resurrection. The fifty days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost are celebrated in joyful exultation as one feast day, or better as one “great Sunday.” These above all others are the days for the singing of the Alleluia.

General Norms for the Liturgical Year and Calendar, #18, 21-22

Easter is the great 50 days of joy in our liturgical year. It is a time to rejoice in the great love of God and the triumph of life over death – death reigns no more, life has the final word.

In her book, Season of Ash and Fire: Prayers and Liturgies for Lent and Easter, Blair Gilmer Meeks reminds her readers that the 50 days of the Easter season are reminiscent of the jubilee written about in Leviticus 25, “This fiftieth year you shall make sacred by proclaiming liberty in the land for all its inhabitants” (Lev. 25:10). This jubilee year every 50 years is a time to forgive debts, free slaves, and spread the peace and justice of God. In light of this view, Easter is a season to celebrate God’s goodness, love and infinite justice.

Towards the end of the Easter season we pray for the gift of the Spirit. It is the Spirit that moves us beyond ourselves and into action. A connection here to the Spirit of God establishing a just world and moving us to act on the world’s behalf would be fitting.

Suggested music
• All Things New, Rory Cooney, GIA Publications
Sample intercessions
The following is adapted from:
http://www.archdioceseofanchorage.org/intercessions/archive/easter_season/index.html

Presider: May God grant us a spirit of prayer so that we can put into words the compassion of our hearts. God hears the cries of the people; God wipes away the tears of the mournful; God stretches out a mighty arm and leads us to true freedom; The Lord will hear the prayers we now make.

The reader says:
Our response will be “Risen Lord, hear us.” [raise hand, all repeat: “Risen, Lord hear us.”]

- The glorified Christ is present in the church. For God’s people, young and old, for the newly baptized and those coming to faith. [pause – 2 long seconds] With joy, let us pray … Risen Lord, hear us.
- The glorified Christ is active in the world. For the despised and the depressed, for the heartbroken and the harassed. [pause] With joy, let us pray … Risen Lord, hear us.
- The glorified Christ accompanies the suffering. For those whose bodies fail or whose minds flicker, for all the sick, and for those who care for them. [pause] With joy, let us pray… Risen Lord, hear us.
- The glorified Christ shepherds the dead. For the dead who are unmourned, for those who are forgotten, for all who have died keeping the peace; for all the dead, and for those who mourn them. With joy, let us pray… Risen Lord, hear us.

Presider: Loving God, touch tenderly the wounds of our world. Comfort those whom the world has forgotten and protect all those whom the world has rejected. We ask this through the glorified Christ our Lord. Amen.

Feasts/theme connections
- April 4 – Memorial of St. Benedict the Moor
  Born to slave parents taken from Africa to Sicily, St. Benedict once freed at 18 joined the Franciscan hermits. He later reluctantly became novice master and
superior of the friars. He is the patron saint of African missions and African-American missionaries.

- April 16 – Memorial of St. Benedict Joseph Labre
  The patron saint of the homeless, St. Benedict lived most of his life as a beggar in the streets of Rome. He showed extraordinary devotion to the Blessed Sacrament as well as Blessed Mother.

- May 10 – Memorial of Blessed Damien Joseph de Veuster of Moloka’i
  Blessed Damien is also called the “Leper Priest,” and “the Hero of Moloka’i.” Once ordained he cared for lepers of all ages, but particularly for children. In his work he contracted leprosy himself, however he did not end his ministry. He continued to care compassionately for the people of Moloka’i.

Prayer service ideas

- Novena to the Holy Spirit
  Traditionally in the Catholic Church, the days from the Ascension to Pentecost were special times of prayer for the coming of the gifts of the Spirit. Some parishes pray a novena together before or after each daily Eucharist. It is possible that a parish could have a short prayer service each day praying for one of the gifts of the Spirit for our world and for our Church. For more information please see:

Inclusive Liturgy
Including those with physical disabilities

Please see Creating an Access Plan Utilizing the Principles of Universal Design from Opening Doors (published by the National Catholic Partnership on Disability) in the “Finance, Facilities Management and Human Resources” section of this Tool Kit.

Cultural considerations

Please see page 32 of this section for an excerpt from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops document, Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity (USCCB, Washington D.C., 2000)

Resources
Websites

- [http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/socialaction](http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/socialaction) Archdiocese of Cincinnati Catholic Social Action Office
- [http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/worship](http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/worship) Archdiocese of Cincinnati Office of Worship
Liturgy and prayer resources from Justice for Immigrants includes song suggestions and sample intercessions

Prayer resources and commentaries on the lectionary published by the Archbishop Oscar Romero Catholic Worker House, Oklahoma City

Website maintained by the Center for Concern. There is a “Liturgy and Prayer” tab as well as a “Saints” tab

Prayer and Liturgy resources from the Church Resources and Loyola Institute

Office for Social Justice – Archdiocese of St. Paul & Minneapolis

List of liturgical music with social justice themes from the Office for Social Justice – Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis

Liturgical Office of England and Wales

Summary of feast days and memorials for Catholic Saints

Day of Penance Liturgy on the anniversary of the Roe vs. Wade decision legalizing abortion in the United States

Website of the Catholic Conservation Center in Wading River, NY. The website has many resources for connecting our faith to care and concern for our environment.

USCCB’s Environmental Justice Program: Caring for God’s Creation website lists resources for Archdiocesan as well as parish organizations.

The National Religious Partnership on the Environment

The Bishop’s statement on the importance of highlighting life issues through liturgy and public prayer

Suggested books

- Handbook of the Christian Year, Hoyt L. Hickman, Don E. Saliers, Laurence Hull Stookey, and James F. White
- Liturgy and Social Justice, Ed., Mark Searle
- Preaching the Just Word, Walter Burghardt, S.J.
- Preparing Parish Liturgies: A Guide to Resources, Rita Thiron
- “Can Church Engage Culture?” J. Bryan Hehir, Church Spring 2004
- “Multilingual Liturgies that Work” Church Fall 2005
- “Contentions over liturgical music.” Ministry and Liturgy October 2005
- “Door ways to inclusive community.” Ministry and Liturgy October 2005
• “No more multiculturalism” *Ministry and Liturgy*, June – July 2002
• “Resources for pastoral musicians.” *Ministry and Liturgy* June – July 2004
• *Faithful Stewards of God’s Creation: a Catholic Resource for Environmental Justice and Climate Change*, Committees on Domestic and International Policy, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
• *Becoming a Community of Salt and Light: Formation for Parish Social Ministry*, Peggy Prevoznik Heins
• *Our Prayers Rise Like Incense: Liturgies for Peace*, Cindy Pile, Editor
• *Shape a Circle Ever Wider: Liturgical Inculturation in the United States*, March Francis
• *Justice and Mercy 2007-2008: Celebrating the Lectionary*, Liturgical Training Publications
• *The Forgotten Instruction: The Roman Liturgy, Inculturation, and Legitimate Adaptations*, Kenneth J. Martin
• *Preaching and Culture in Latino Congregations*, compiled by Kenneth G. Davis and Jorge L. Presmanes
• *Signing the Scriptures: A Starting Point for Interpreting the Sunday Readings for the Deaf*, Joan Blake
Stations of the Cross:

According to the Signs of the Times

For use with high school students and other young adults

Station 1 - Jesus is Condemned to Death

Reader 1
The first station – Jesus is condemned to death. We adore you, savior Jesus, and we praise you.

Response
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader 2
A young man awaits his execution... he's a changed man now... not the same as when he committed his crime... he's made his peace with God and wishes to make things right with those he hurt... but the law doesn't care... all his appeals have gone unheard... time has run out...

Reader 1
The death penalty diminishes all of us... Its use ought to be abandoned not only for what it does to those who are executed, but for what it does to us as a society... We cannot teach respect for life by taking life...

Reader 2
Lord, help me to remember that judgment is yours... Compassion and mercy are my responsibility.

Station 2 – Jesus is Made to Carry His Cross

Reader 1
The second station – Jesus is made to carry his cross. We adore you, savior Jesus, and we praise you.

Response
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader 2
A young married couple sits at their table... how are they going to pay the bills this month? Both work hard in their minimum wage jobs... the checks barely cover rent each month... Their income is too low to take out a loan and yet too high for welfare... Their families can not help and most charity organizations focus on those without work... they feel trapped...
**Reader 1**
All around me there are people who are struggling to eke out a living... But I seldom realize this... I make unjust assumptions that these people are simply not working hard enough to make ends meet... However, maybe if I were in their shoes I might think differently...or would I?

**Reader 2**
Lord, help me to recognize the crosses which others bear and to accept the crosses of my life with the same kind of love with which you accepted your far heavier cross.

**Station 3 – Jesus Falls for the First Time**

**Reader 1**
The third station – Jesus falls for the first time. We adore you, savior Jesus, and we praise you.

**Response**
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

**Reader 2**
A young ex-con has moved into the new home that he has bought with honest hard-earned money... Yet his neighbors do not want him in their neighborhood and are trying to run him out...

**Reader 1**
The world is filled with people who have fallen and are trying desperately to get up... Once outside the walls of prison they are walled in by prejudice against "ex-cons"... How seldom I realize how precious my freedom is... I have a home; I am receiving a good education. I have a lifetime ahead of me... There are many paths open to me and I am more or less free to choose the one I want... All this I take for granted while many my age are confined to prison for crimes that I too might have committed... Could it be that my failures are greater than theirs in the eyes of God?

**Reader 2**
Lord, I am often deaf to the cries of those who have fallen. I even look down on them at times and forget about my own failures. Grant that I may be more willing to use my freedom to help those who have none.
Station 4 – Jesus Meets His Mother

Reader 1
The fourth station – Jesus meets his mother. We adore you, savior Jesus, and we praise you.

Response
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader 2
A mother flees with her children... Trying to escape her abusive husband under the cover of night... She knows of someone in a distant city who can help her... She has left all behind... all she has now are her children and the hope of a better future for them... Yet as of now, the children are hungry and her heart breaks as she realizes that the little bit of food they had for the journey is now gone... She is stopped by guards... The city she is desperate to reach is not in her country...

Reader 1
Jesus met his mother on his way to die on the cross to bring justice and liberation to widows and orphans, the vulnerable and impoverished... Global economic injustice is destroying families and creating widows and orphans... Families are forced to move from their homes and communities to find work and survive... The social cost of globalization is disproportionately borne by women and children...

Reader 2
Lord, may I help build up relationships, not destroy them. Grant that I may look upon the sufferings of others with deepest love and compassion as your mother did.

Station 5 – Simon Helps Jesus Carry His Cross

Reader 1
The fifth station – Simon helps Jesus carry his cross. We adore you, savior Jesus, and we praise you.

Response
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader 2
A student is helping sort used clothing at the local Salvation Army... He's watching the clock every five or ten minutes... He has only half an hour left before he can leave... He is frustrated because he feels he could be doing something better with his time... He can't understand why the ones who need the clothes don't just sort through it themselves... Shouldn't they just be glad they have clothes?... But no, he has to be here and fulfill his school's service program requirement...
Reader 1
We cannot blame Simon for his reluctance to help Jesus... When we see the faces of poverty, war and despair flood our TV screens, we too look the other way... Who wants to worry about other people’s problems?... We have enough of our own...

Reader 2
Lord, like Simon I turn away from suffering. I too am caught up in my own little world to care about those around me and their needs. Please help me to be generous enough to share the cross of others who need me.

Station 6 - Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

Reader 1
The sixth station – Veronica wipes the face of Jesus. We adore you, savior Jesus, and we praise you.

Response
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader 2
The day is hot... The smell of disease permeates the room... An old man lies dying of leprosy... He is one of the many "untouchables" in this place... A young missionary nurse gently cleanses and dresses his open sores... As she ministers to him she prays softly and she tenderly strokes his face. She realizes with great sadness that this may be the last and only time in his life that this poor man will have experienced a healing touch...

Reader 1
Veronica still lives today... There are many who take time out of their busy lives to minister to the poor and sick, the outcasts, the oppressed... In some instances the situations are repulsive and even at times dangerous... Yet these persons are moved by the opportunity to see and touch the face of Jesus in the most neglected persons of our society...

Reader 2
Lord, help me to overcome my fear of reaching out to those around me who are neglected and unloved. May I use every opportunity in my life to extend a kind word or compassionate gesture and thus alleviate someone else’s suffering.

Station 7 – Jesus Falls the Second time

Reader 1
The seventh station – Jesus falls the second time. We adore you, savior Jesus, and we praise you.
Response
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader 2
It’s 100 degrees out in the tomato field today. A group of migrant farmers work hard in the heat… their pay is $3.50 per day… One worker contemplates leaving this work and trying again in his own country… he shakes his head… it is useless… there is no work there… and for now he must get back to work… if he falls behind today his family may not have supper tonight…

Reader 1
Oppression and greed force many to their knees in our society… Perhaps the most disadvantaged segment of our population for example, is the farmer who frequently is grossly underpaid and lives in a shack… Yet his efforts to improve his conditions have been resisted for decades and still are rebuffed today… I find it easy to overlook the burden which forces strangers to the ground… I am well-fed, well-housed and well-educated… But are not these strangers my brothers and sisters?

Reader 2
Lord, so often I choose to be blind to the needs of others - especially when they are strangers. Please, remove my blindness and increase my love.

Station 8 – Jesus Comforts the Women of Jerusalem

Reader 1
The eighth station – Jesus comforts the women of Jerusalem. We adore you, savior Jesus, and we praise you.

Response
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader 2
A group of high school students arrive at a local parish food pantry to help stock the shelves with baby food, canned vegetables, dried milk and other non-perishables… they will open their doors each weekend to serve the needs of the poor in their city… One student wonders why week after week the flow of needy people never stops…But she will continue to serve as long as she can… It saddens her because she wishes she could do more… she knows, however, that no matter how much food they have or how many donations they get it will not be enough to address the needs of the city…

Reader 1
If we reflect on the millions who are facing death by starvation around the world, we may feel saddened and even brought to tears... But **tears** do not produce
bread... To help the starving I must do my part... This means studying the problem and searching for long-range solutions... It also means I should try to be in solidarity with those who are starving by cutting down on food and not being so wasteful...

Reader 2
Lord, help me to be grateful for the opportunity to be fed daily. So often I do not appreciate the food that is provided for me by my family. Don't let the immensity of the world's hunger overwhelm me or paralyze me, but cause me to act. As Mother Teresa reminded us, "We can do no great things. Only small things with great love”

Station 9 - Jesus Falls for the Third Time

Reader 1
The ninth station – Jesus falls for the third time. We adore you, savior Jesus, and we praise you.

Response
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader 2
I got up this morning....said my prayers and thanked God for a new day...I got dressed and headed off to school...Later on as we were listening to the teacher give instructions for an assignment, we heard some loud noises...there was screaming and yelling out in the hallway...gunshots were resonating from the walls...the next thing I knew, someone was pointing a gun straight at me...He asked me, "Are you a Christian?"...I answered... "Yes."............then, he pulled the trigger...

Reader 1
Throughout the centuries, from as far back as early Christianity and even still today, countless people have given their lives for their faith... Neither torture nor death has swayed them from standing firm in their witness to Christ... In their oneness with Jesus, they opted to "fall" with him and sacrifice their lives for a more noble and redemptive cause...a divine purpose...what a stark contradiction to the expectations of the world!...Would I be ready to be convicted for my faith?...

Reader 2
Lord, I am shamefully aware of how often I "sell out"...It's so much easier to just go with the flow instead of against it. My greatest fear is the fear of rejection from my peers whenever I attempt to stand up for my faith. Please, give me the courage and selfless love that allowed you to get up and continue along the path laid out by God's wisdom for our redemption so that his world may fall away while I stand firm in your grace for the salvation of all.
Station 10 - Jesus is Stripped of His Garments

Reader 1
The tenth station – Jesus is stripped of his garments. We adore you, savior Jesus, and we praise you.

Response
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader 2
A young Mexican woman sits at her sewing machine in a clothing factory... She nervously removes the fabric and quickly begins ripping the threads in order to correct her mistake... She has to meet her quota for the day or she will not be paid... she feels nauseous but does not want to complain or be seen by the supervisor...she really needs this job... She looks around fearfully and prays that no one will discover her secret; that like Mary the life growing within her signals trials and uncertain times ahead...

Reader 1
In Mexico thousands of women work in the export factories along the border with the United States. They work twelve or more hours a day, often in unsafe conditions. Some work in factories where women are forced to take pregnancy tests. If they are found to be pregnant they are fired. ...Yes, just as Jesus was stripped of the little that was his, so too women are stripped of their dignity through physical and emotional abuse. This makes me keenly aware of all that I have - my home, my clothes, money to keep me supplied with extras. Is it possible for me to "strip" myself of some of my worldly goods and share them with others not so fortunate?

Reader 2
Lord, I am very selfish. I cling to everything I own. I think nothing of the fact that I have so many conveniences at my disposal while there are so many in the world who struggle to simply survive with the little they have. Help me to place less importance on material things and to share what has been given to me.

Station 11 - Jesus is Nailed to the Cross

Reader 1
The eleventh station – Jesus is nailed to the cross. We adore you, savior Jesus, and we praise you.

Response
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.
Reader 2
A political prisoner sits tied to a chair... The room is dark, but that is because he is blindfolded... He is exhausted and despondent from all the interrogation and beatings... He realizes that he is expendable and no matter what he says, he will most likely not walk out of there alive...

Reader 1
The soldiers who nailed Jesus to the cross have their counterparts today... There are countries where torture and brutality are part of the governing process... Seldom does our government, or its citizens, protest strongly... Torture has various forms... I know a few of my own... I can make another person wince by the mocking word or the derogatory comment... I know how to torture people emotionally in order to manipulate and get what I want... It frightens me to think that I am no different than the soldiers who tortured Jesus...

Reader 2
Lord, torture is an ugly word. Help me to combat its use throughout the world if I can. Above all, help me to root it out of my own life so that I no longer nail people to crosses by my words or actions.

Station 12 - Jesus Dies on the Cross

Reader 1
The twelfth station – Jesus is condemned to death. We adore you, savior Jesus, and we praise you.

Response
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader 2
A group of young Guatemalan men are walking through the desert in Arizona... They are going to try to find work in order to earn money that they can send to their families back home.... they ran out of water a day ago and wonder how they can continue traveling in the extreme heat...One of them is already suffering from dehydration and falls to the ground... the others attempt to carry him... In the far distance they see something... They had heard that an American organization places water stations throughout the Arizona desert... Is that a water station?... Will their friend make it?...Will they?...

Reader 1
Death by violence. ... We see it everyday...on our TV screens, in newspapers... But institutional violence is just as bad... It is caused by the fact that a privileged few of us control most of the earth's resources and can cheerfully watch the poor scramble for the crumbs we leave behind... Yet many die before they get them...
Reader 2
Lord, I confess that I have become numbed by the violence that surrounds me. It has so permeated our society that it seems to have become the norm. It eats at the fabric of our humanity and I deceive myself into thinking that I have no moral responsibility. But my time will come when I will meet you face to face. At that time may I look into your countenance knowing that I have lived my life well serving you as an agent of peace, justice and non-violence.

Station 13 - Jesus is Taken Down from the Cross

Reader 1
The thirteenth station – Jesus is taken down from the cross. We adore you, savior Jesus, and we praise you.

Response
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader 2
A mother is kneeling and weeping uncontrollably... She has just received the body of her son slain in another senseless war... They said he was killed in 'friendly crossfire'... Unfortunately, she is not allowed to open the coffin because his face was seriously disfigured from the shell attack... As she clings to the coffin she cannot understand why it had to be her son... He was so young and still had a whole life ahead of him to live.

Reader 1
It makes no difference where the war is fought or the color of the skin of the participants - the grief is the same... Incredibly, the wars continue and the grief mounts... Another mother today will receive the broken body of her son... I feel helpless in the face of grief like this... What can I possibly say or do that would help?... I don't know that there is anything I can do except perhaps stand by those who grieve and show them that I care...

Reader 2
Lord, with infinite goodness your mother took your body into her arms after your death. Grant me the same kind of gentleness so that I may comfort those who are grieving.

Station 14 - Jesus is Placed in the Tomb

Reader 1
The fourteenth station – Jesus is placed in the tomb. We adore you, savior Jesus, and we praise you.
Response
Because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Reader 2
A group of Sudanese refugee children look over a mass grave as volunteers shovel dirt to cover the dead bodies of the villagers who were massacred that morning by a rebel group... Their gaze seems distant and numb... Many of those victims were family members... Although they are children of about 7 or 8 years old, this tragic event has aged them significantly... They have been robbed of their innocence and childhood.

Reader 1
The suffering of Calvary still continues... We can see it in the faces of the hungry and destitute of the world, in the victims of war and disaster... But what is our response?... Because we are young we have the hope that tomorrow will be better... To make it so we need skills, training and the best utilization of our own God-given talents... But we must never forget that we also have to bury our own selfishness, our own insensitivity... Only then can we help those who are looking to us to create a better world...

Reader 2
Lord, when you were buried it seemed like the end of everything you promised and stood for. But it wasn't, it was only the beginning. Help me to bury my self-centeredness and selfishness as the beginning of a stronger love for you and for all my brothers and sisters of the world.

Marianist LIFE South - Maria Smith & Sr. Nicole D. Trahan, nFMI
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Lenten Public Prayer for Unborn Life

Jane Hoffman of St. Antoninus Parish offers a profound prayer event that brings together Catholics of all ages, a prayer walk called The Way of Love. She describes the event and some of the results that prayerful Catholic witness have achieved:

The Way of Love: For the sixth year, this pro-life Lenten pilgrimage of prayer, The Way of Love, will be taking place within our Archdiocese on the final three Sundays of Lent, concluding on Palm Sunday. With the cooperation of many pastors, thousands have come together to join in performing public penance for abortion.

Every Catholic high school from Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky has participated; thousands of students and families continue to show their colors and their dedication to God’s precious gift of LIFE, praying for the healing of the wounds of abortion, for mercy and for the conversion of all hearts. This rosary prayer walk begins in Burnett Woods and proceeds around the block encompassing the abortion site, The Women’s Med Center. "Seeing prayer and faith in action has been incredibly exciting! Such astonishing good has happened: a closed Cincinnati abortion site; a federal ban on partial birth abortion implemented; the Supreme Court upheld this federal ban; with great success, a Catholic pro life pregnancy center opened across the street from this abortion site"  www.TheWayofLove.org  Speakers available for parish Masses and groups. 513-922-7231
As Catholics we are called to take concrete measures to overcome the misunderstanding, ignorance, competition and fear that stand in the way of genuinely welcoming the stranger in our midst and enjoying the communion that is our destiny as Children of God. We commit ourselves accordingly, to working to strengthen understanding among the many cultures that share in our Catholic faith, to promoting intercultural communication among our people, and to seeing that those in ministry to our communities gain the language and cultural skills necessary to minister to the immigrants in our midst….

Efforts to learn and worship together may come to nothing at all – or even reinforce prejudices – unless they are carried out with a spirit of openness and charity. Not everything in one culture will meet with the approval of another. There may be disagreements about child-rearing practices, the place of women in the liturgy, styles of preaching, or suitable expressions of piety. Such differences are inevitable even within one culture. But in cross-cultural encounters, disagreements must be informed by understanding the roots of people’s attitudes and practices and with respect for their right to find their own way within the one Gospel. Understanding will come with a growing knowledge of the history, values, and experiences of others. Respect must be born of charity and faith in the ultimate unity in Christ of all humanity.

Intercultural communication – sustained efforts, carried out by people of diverse cultures, to appreciate their differences, work out conflicts, and build on commonalities – will thus be an important component of coming to know and respect the diverse cultures that make up today’s Church. The dominant culture in the United States stresses individualistic cultures, individuals may feel hesitant to express their own opinions openly, even in a friendly setting, without reinforcement from the group. Among immigrants of the same group, too, divisions along lines of social class or educational background can erect barriers to understanding, with some members adapting to the procedures and practices of parish life more readily than others. Often, culturally sensitive intermediaries are needed to facilitate exchanges, mediate conflicts, and promote genuine participation by all.

Integration will be facilitated when all parties maintain an open spirit. Integration cannot be forced, and those who host newcomers must be especially aware of the vulnerabilities of immigrants and the impulse many immigrants feel to withdraw from interaction. Pastors and lay leaders who are aware of these dynamics of adaptation and communication among cultures will lead the way in facilitating the full, equal incorporation of all members of the community into the life of the Church….

More information can be found at: www.usccb.org/mrs/unity.shtml