

LOVE IN ACTION



CALL TO COMMUNITY AND PARTICIPATION



"Pope Francis' encyclical *On Fraternity and Social Friendship* focuses on the need to think of ourselves not only as individuals but as one human family. Society has focused on freedom and equality, while neglecting fraternity. In *Let Us Dream* Pope Francis says that "Fraternity will enable freedom and equality to take its rightful place in the symphony.

We are called to be active members of society, he says the changes in society that we need don't "depend on some unseen mechanism, a future in which humanity is a passive spectator. No: we're protagonists"

“ A better world can be built also as a result of your efforts, your desire to change and your generosity. Do not be afraid to listen to the Spirit who proposes bold choices; do not delay when your conscience asks you to take risks in following the Master.”

Pope Francis, *Letter to young people*, 2017

Each of us is called to look at the reality of the world in which we live. To pay attention to what is happening. To see how our sisters and brothers are being treated, and how we ourselves are treating others. Reflecting on this, we're called to action; to be a positive presence in our communities. This is how we will put love into action, living out *Caritas*.

What are my gifts and talents which could be used to the advantage of the wider community?

Community is, in itself, an important concept we need to nurture. We are social beings, who flourish from our relationship with others. Building community, within our parishes and where we live and work, is also important. How might we contribute to these communities?

Pope Francis has warned that we can hide behind virtual communities. Although social media can help us develop community in some ways, it can also hinder our involvement. We need to be able to meet with others so as to develop more fully as human beings.

The Gospel tells us constantly to run the risk of a face-to-face encounter with others, with their physical presence which challenges us, with their pain and their pleas, with their joy which infects us in our close and continuous interaction. True faith in the incarnate Son of God is inseparable from self-giving, from membership in the community, from service, from reconciliation with others. The Son of God, by becoming flesh, summoned us to the revolution of tenderness.

Sometimes we hear people, Christians and non-Christians alike, say that the Church should stay out of politics. However, as members of the Church we are actually called to participate within politics. Quoting Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical, *God is love*, Pope Francis firmly states that:

If indeed "the just ordering of society and of the state is a central responsibility of politics", the Church "cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice". All Christians, their pastors included, are called to show concern for the building of a better world.

Pope Francis, *Joy of the Gospel*, 183; Pope Benedict XVI, *God is love*, 28

In as much as we're able, it is our call to help build a better world, and be active members of society in order to achieve this.

“ Love, overflowing with small gestures of mutual care, is also civic and political, and it makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world.”

Pope Francis, *On the Care for our Common Home*, 231

We're called to be active members of society and community. Although it is often easy to find ourselves bemoaning the state of the country, our community, what's happening within our parish, we're called not to simply complain, but to get involved, contribute, and make a positive difference; to be *Caritas*: love in action.



Matthew 25:31-46

SCRIPTURE

Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?"

And the King will answer them: "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me".



Acts of the Apostles
2:44-47

SCRIPTURE

All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.



HOMILY NOTES

- All of us exist in relationship to others. Think of the Trinity, where the Father, Son, and Spirit exist in relationship to one another. It's what makes us unique, develops who we are, and helps us become the person we're called to be.
- Within our communities, we're called to truly be present. How often do we sit there and moan about what is or isn't happening. We probably even do it about our parish community. The challenge of CST is to not merely moan about things, but to get involved; to use our God-given talents and participate.
- This principle of participation and community builds on last week's – that all people have an inherent human dignity by being created in God's image and likeness."
- Remember again the Parable of the Sheep and Goats, that whenever we help someone who needs our support, we're also helping Christ. By getting involved, we're contributing to our community, our society, we're helping others, we're helping Christ.
- If we truly believe that we are all sisters and brothers, if we truly believe that Christ is present in all people, how can we not want the best for others, and to help when we can?
- This call in CST to participation was endorsed by Pope Francis when he calls us the protagonists of change
- How can we become protagonists? In our parish community? Our local community? Our global community? How can we all work together to build community, caring for one another, living out the principle of human dignity? How can we be a Caritas people, putting love into action?



PRAYER

- For our Church around the world, our diocese, and our parish; that we will be a welcoming community.
- For leaders of society; that they will encourage active participation of all members of society, listening to and responding to the needs of all, especially those who are living in poverty.
- For people who are struggling to find their role in the world; that they will discern their God-given gifts, and be empowered to share them with their own community.
- For our community; that we will continue to work together, helping to build God's kingdom of love, truth, and justice.

Symbols to add to the focal point

- A list of groups and activities in your parish
- Your local newspaper
- A copy of Let Us Dream by Pope Francis
- A copy of Rublev's icon of the Trinity



HYMNS

- Gather us in – Marty Haugen
- Gather your people, O Lord – Bob Hurd
- This is what Yahweh asks of you – Mary MaGann
- God has chosen me – Bernadette Farrell
- The Summons – John Bell
- Jesus Christ is waiting – John Bell