

LOVE IN ACTION



AN INTRODUCTION



“We tend to create a distance between ourselves and the poor, without realising that in this way we are distancing ourselves from the Lord Jesus, who does not reject them, but calls them to himself and comforts them.”

Pope Francis, Second World Day of the Poor, 2018



“A poor church, and for the poor” is one of the often repeated phrases of Pope Francis. As the Church, we are called to respect the dignity of all people, to reach out to our sisters and brothers living in poverty, to care for the creation entrusted to us, and to take action to bring about a more just, peaceful world.

The message of Pope Francis is not new. The roots of the guiding principles can be found in the Old Testament, in the teaching of Jesus, and developed by Church leaders throughout the centuries.

The challenge for our parish community is to accept “this renewed call” to open our eyes to the reality of the world, reflect on the inspiration of Catholic social teaching (CST), and then to put it into action.



Pope Francis, Joy of the Gospel, 2013

I fear that these words too may give rise to commentary or discussion with no real practical effect. That being said, I trust in the openness and readiness of all Christians, and I ask you to seek, as a community, creative ways of accepting this renewed call.

REFLECTION

“The Church cannot neglect the service of charity any more than she can neglect the Sacraments and the Word”

Pope Benedict XVI, God is Love, 22



Our love must not just be words or mere talk, but something active and genuine.

1 John 3:18



The Latin word Caritas speaks of love, of charity, of justice. We are called to be a Caritas people, people who live love in action: seeing the reality of the world, seeing what needs to be done so that all people, whoever they are, wherever they may be, can live their lives to the full, to be the person they are called to be. Too often things hold us back: poverty, discrimination, lack of access.

On the back of this sheet is an idea for holding in prayer some of the people affected by situations of injustice in our world and local community.

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The process from Cardinal Cardijn, founder of the Young Christian Workers (YCW), is a handy tool: SEE JUDGE ACT. We will use it over the coming weeks and months to help us think through what we, individually and communally, will do to be a Caritas people who show love in action.



SEE

First, one reviews the concrete situation

JUDGE

Secondly, one forms a judgment on it in the light of these [CST] principles

ACT

Thirdly, one decides what, in the circumstances, can and should be done to implement these principles

What is really happening in our local, national, and global communities.

Reflect, analyse what is happening through a lens of faith, using CST principles as a guide.

As a result act.

SEE

JUDGE

ACT

OUR CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) is a set of guidance from Popes, bishops and theologians, who reflecting on Scripture, tradition, and the reality of the world, offer a set of principles to help us think about how we should interact with others, the choices we make, and how we treat creation.

St John Paul II, in his letter "On social concerns", says that CST provides:

- Principles for guidance
- Criteria for judgement
- Directives for action

Pope Saint John XXIII, in his letter Mother and Teacher (1961, #236), says that "see, judge, act" is a way to put the principles of CST into action.

Get a copy of a local and national newspaper. Start to flick through it with a felt tip pen in your hand. Circle all the stories which upset or anger you. Highlight the stories about injustice in our local and global community.

ACTION

Does the number of stories you have highlighted surprise you?

Can you group them into any themes?

Is there anything you think you can do about the injustices you see?

You could place the stories before a candle, and hold them in prayer before God. Ask God to be with those affected. Ask God for wisdom to know what you can do to put love into action.

PARISH PLAN

Think about gathering a few times to look together at how we can respond to the needs of our local community in the light of what we're learning in Love in Action.

Resources and ideas are available to help identify the needs of the community and plan how to respond.

GET INVOLVED!

Speak to the parish team about how you could help support children, young people, or the whole parish find out more about the Love in Action programme.

Volunteer to support your parish youth group find out about Love in Action with a 90-minute session.