

# LOVE IN ACTION



## CALL TO COMMUNITY AND PARTICIPATION



“ Please, do not be bystanders in life. Get involved! Jesus was not a bystander. He got involved. Don't stand aloof, but immerse yourselves in the reality of life, as Jesus did.”

Pope Francis, *Christ Is Alive*



“No man is an island” as John Donne’s poem begins. As human beings, we are called to live in community, with others, growing together and flourishing as a result.

We can’t just sit back and bemoan what’s happening, whether in our own parish and community, society, or the world. We are called to get involved and to be active members of society, our local and global community, to get our hands dirty, to help build a better world. We’re all called to put love, *caritas*, into action.



## SEE

Observing the reality of the world, remembering that first guideline of the dignity of all people, we’re called to support one another. 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. This means building and defending the importance of community. In *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis warns us: “Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of community!”

- In what ways is community threatened?
- Where is community strong? Where could it be stronger?
- Where do we see the need for greater participation?
- Who in our community may need support to participate – to get involved – so they can play their part, too?

## JUDGE

“ 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.

Matthew 25:40

Use the following questions, posed by Pope Francis during the Vigil of Prayer for Peace in September 2013, as a form of reflection for your ‘Judge’.

“ God’s world is a world where everyone feels responsible for the other, for the good of the other...

In reflection, fasting and prayer, each of us deep down should ask ourselves:  
Is this really the world that I desire?  
Is this really the world that we all carry in our hearts?  
Is the world that we want really a world of harmony and peace,  
in ourselves,  
in our relations with others,  
in families,  
in cities,  
in and between nations?



The principle of community and participation comes from the idea that we’re not created to be in isolation, but as relational beings. We’re born to interact with others, learning about ourselves and others through this relationship. Participation is about not remaining on the sidelines, but getting involved – supporting one another, helping build a better world for all.

- What do we think about the call of the Church to build community and to foster participation?
- Are we willing to get involved and to play our part in society?

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

- How do we view politics? Is it important to take part?

## ACT

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?

- What are my gifts and talents which could be used to the advantage of the wider community?
- Could you make time for others this week?
- Is there something you’re always thinking you could help improve? Is now the time to try?
- Can you help foster others to participate in their communities?

“ To desire the common good and strive towards it is a requirement of justice and charity.”

Pope Benedict, *Charity in Truth*, 7

What in our local community do we want to change for the better?

SEE

What needs to be done? What is our faith calling us to do?

JUDGE

What are you going to do, alone or with others, to bring about this positive change?

ACT