

# **VOICES THAT CHALLENGE**

Presented by the Social Justice Ministry of  
St. John the Baptist Parish and St. Andrew's Parish

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## ***We Believe***

**Human Life is Sacred.**

**We are called to family,  
community and participation**

**Every person has a fundamental  
right to life and to those things  
necessary for human dignity.**

**The needs of the poor and  
vulnerable come first.**

**Work has dignity and the  
economy must serve people,  
not the other way around.**

**We are one human family  
whatever our national, racial,  
ethnic, economic and ideological  
differences.**

**Care for the earth and the  
environment is an expression  
of our love for God's creation.**

***These seven themes  
are at the heart of  
our Catholic Social  
Teaching*** [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)

***"But to each is given the  
Manifestation of the Spirit  
for the Common Good."***

**1 Corinthians 12:7**

## ***WHAT IS SOCIAL JUSTICE?***

What is Social Justice all about? Is it people who write letters, make phone calls, attend forums, contact their legislators or take other actions to change unjust conditions. Let us think about Social Justice as being part of a group that cares about people, the world, creation by living a faith that does justice.

What would Jesus Do? As a community of Catholic Christians we come to church, listen to the Word of God, celebrate Him in the Eucharist in thanksgiving for His love for us. He gave us all of this! What do we do to be Jesus to those around us, those who live in poverty, those who are not treated as equals due to race, religion, lifestyle of various cultural differences?

How can we reflect the love of God to others, as we are called to be by our Baptism? Are we tolerant of the diversity of those among us? Do we leave church and fully accept our responsibility as Catholic Christians. Do we pay attention to what is happening around us? Do we ignore those who are hurting because we don't know them?

Do we care enough to write a letter and take action on a situation that may hurt or help others?

Do we vote for those who are trying to help our society or do we say someone else can vote?

Do we pay attention to what our Federal, State, County and local legislators are doing while in office? Do they stand for the same values as Catholic Social Teaching tells us? OR, do we just vote a party line and hope for the best - if we vote at all?

What we are **NOT** called to do is sit at home and say someone else can work on those Corporal/Spiritual Works of Mercy? **What is God asking of me?** Why did he give us the Works of Mercy? Maybe I should study them and find out. **(See reference below)** Maybe I should follow what Pope Francis is trying to tell us when he talks about helping the poor. He is showing us what needs to be done by doing service himself. He shows us the love that Jesus had for all when He was here on earth. Why should we not do the same?

Maybe you want to know more about how to help but don't know where to look. The combined Social Justice Ministry of St. John the Baptist, Hillsdale and St. Andrew, Westwood has information about the issues that need advocates to change the root causes of injustice to our brothers and sisters. We need your help! Call or email your parish representative listed below:

Edna Lord - St. John the Baptist, [ewlord@msn.com](mailto:ewlord@msn.com); 201 666-9642

Marge Pronovost - St. Andrew, [margepronovost@optonline.net](mailto:margepronovost@optonline.net); 201 956-0181

THE WORKS OF MERCY: HEART OF CATHOLIC IDENTITY, by James F. Keenan, S.J., <http://www.americancatholic.org/Newsletters/CU/preview.aspx?id=237>

"The neighbor to be loved is found **'in society,'** such that to love him concretely, **assist him in his needs** or in his indigence may mean something different than it means on the mere level of relationships between **individuals**. To love him **on the social level** means, depending on the situations, to make use of social mediations to improve his life or to **remove social factors** that cause his indigence. It is undoubtedly an act of love, the **work of mercy** by which one responds here and now to a real and impelling need of one's neighbor, but it is an equally indispensable act of love to strive to **organize and structure society** so that one's neighbor will not find himself in poverty."

- *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 208



