

Principal's Letter January 15, 2010

Dear Family,

The devastation wrought by the earthquake in Haiti is something that is difficult to fathom. The early estimates are that over 100,000 people are dead. The front page of the Seattle Times showed a sea of bodies lying in the open air, as there are no facilities to handle the incredible number of people who were victims of this earthquake.

Some religious fundamentalists are declaring that the Haitians have brought this on themselves, that this natural disaster is retribution for a decadent existence. That type of illogic is almost as hard to fathom as this disaster. The Catholic Teaching on Economic Life gives us a framework of responsibility for those who struggle economically.

"The building of a better world requires Christians to speak with a united voice in working to inculcate respect for the rights and needs of everyone, especially the poor, the lowly and the defenseless." (Pope Benedict XVI)

Following are the ten key principles of the Catholic Framework, and associated questions we might ask ourselves:

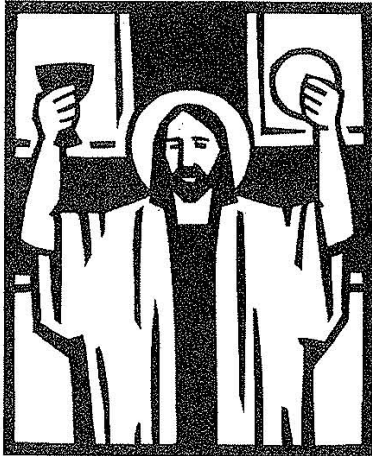
- The economy exists for the person, not the person for the economy. (Which perspective better respects our God-given dignity as human persons?)
- All economic life should be shaped by moral principles. Economic choices and institution must be judged by how they protect or undermine the life and dignity of the human person, support the family and serve the common good. (What can we do to promote the common good during these difficult times?)
- A fundamental moral measure of any economy is how the poor and vulnerable are faring. (Which of God's children are hardest hit when economic times are rough?)
- All people have a right to life and to secure the basic necessities of life. (How can we help to provide for the needs of those whose basic rights are being compromised?)
- All people have the right to economic initiative, to productive work, to just wages and benefits, and to decent working conditions. (Why is work a human right?)
- All people, to the extent they are able, have a corresponding duty to work and to provide for the needs of their families and an obligation to contribute to the broader society. (How do economic pressures undermine families?)
- In economic life, free markets have both clear advantages and limits; government has essential responsibilities and limitations; voluntary groups have irreplaceable roles, but cannot substitute for the proper working of the market and the just policies of the state.
- Society has a moral obligation, including governmental action where necessary, to assure opportunity, meet basic human needs, and pursue justice in economic life. (How can we make sure our leaders' response benefits everyone?)
- Workers, owners, managers, stockholders and consumers are moral agents in economic life. (What are the moral responsibilities in ensuring the health and well-being of the economy?)
- The global economy has moral dimensions and human consequences. Decision on investment, trade, aid and development should protect human life and promote human rights.

The question that the church calls us to ask is how we might help the under-served, not only in the short-term, but in an ongoing effort for social justice.

Have a Great Weekend,

Sheila

Continuation of Sheila's Bulletin



Bread of life

An estimated 1.02 billion people in the world go hungry (2009). Each year, 3 million children under the age of five die because they are undernourished. Far more children live with undernutrition than die from it. For infants and young children, the effects of chronic malnutrition in the early years of life are largely irreversible. In the U.S. (2007), 12.4 million children lived in households where people had to skip meals or eat less to make ends meet. That means, before the recession, one in ten households in the U.S. were living with hunger or were at risk of hunger.

(Sources: FAO: USDA. USDA figures for 2008 are due out in November.)

Merciful God,
hear the cries of your people.
Hungry for bread
and starved of justice;
craving sustenance,
they dream of fullness and days of plenty.

Jesus, bread of life,
fill all who hunger with the taste
of freedom from oppression
and the succulent aroma of hope.
Help us as we strive for justice and
try to balance the scales so long tipped in our favour.

God of hope,
nourish and inspire us.
Feed us and work through us,
so that all people can delight
in the richness of your banquet
and share in the bounty you intended for all.

Amen.

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