



Charity and Justice

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Office of Christian Service, Diocese of Kalamazoo

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Forming
Consciences
for Faithful
Citizenship - A
Call to Political
Responsibility
from the
Catholic
Bishops of the
United States
Part Three in a
series of articles

Doing Good and Avoiding Evil

There are some things we must never do, as individuals or as a society, because they are always incompatible with love of God and neighbor. These intrinsically evil acts must always be rejected and never supported. A preeminent example is the intentional taking of human life through abortion. It is always morally wrong to destroy innocent human beings. A legal system that allows the right to life to be violated on the grounds of choice is fundamentally flawed.

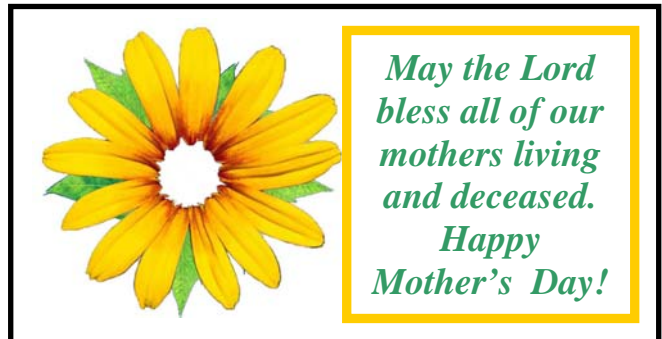
Similarly, direct threats to the dignity of human life such as euthanasia, human cloning, and destructive research on human embryos are also intrinsically evil and must be opposed. Other assaults on human life and dignity, such as genocide, torture, racism, and the targeting of noncombatants in acts of terror or war, can never be justified. Disrespect for any human life diminishes respect for all human life.

As Catholics we are not single-issue voters. A candidate's position on a single issue is not sufficient to guarantee a voter's support. Yet a candidate's position on a single issue that involves an intrinsic evil, such as support for legal abortion or the promotion of racism, may legitimately lead a voter to disqualify a candidate from receiving support.

Opposition to intrinsically evil acts also prompts us to recognize our positive duty to contribute to the common good and act in solidarity with those in need. Both opposing evil and doing good are essential. As Pope John Paul II said, "the fact that only the negative

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commandments oblige always and under all circumstances does not mean that in the moral life prohibitions are more important than the obligation to do good indicated by the positive commandment" (Encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 52). The basic right to life implies and is linked to other human rights to the goods that every person needs to live and thrive – including food, shelter, health care, education and meaningful work. The use of the death penalty, hunger, lack of health care or housing, human trafficking, the human and moral costs of war, and unjust immigration policies are some of the serious moral issues that challenge our consciences and require us to act. Go to www.faithfulcitizenship.org for the complete document, DVD, liturgy, preaching, education, prayer, youth ministry, family guide, etc.



Older Americans Month

One very important way that we can celebrate this in May is knowing about our local agencies and their services for our older Americans. **The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging's (N4A)** primary mission is to build the capacity of its members to help older persons and persons with disabilities live with dignity and choices in their homes and communities for as long as possible. **N4A** operates the **Eldercare Locator**, a toll-free nationwide telephone service (1-800-677-1116) which helps families and caregivers locate services for older adults in their own communities. Visit www.n4a.org for more information on N4A and ways it betters the lives of older Americans by advocacy, action, providing answers on aging, etc.

Catholic Social Teaching Principle 1 – Life and Dignity of the Human Person.



This Year's Theme is Fair Trade + Ecology. Fair Trade is a force for protecting the environment while promoting sustainable development. Fair Trade favors the sustainable use of natural resources and production methods that are not capital and oil intensive, favoring hand production and organic agriculture - to reduce the carbon footprint. Because Fair Trade is committed to paying a living wage and works in long-term partnerships, it enables producer partners to invest in environmentally friendly production. In turn, these initiatives promote environmental awareness locally and internationally.

In the South - Fair Trade supports producers to develop a local market for their products, to build a sustainable economic system and regional development - including strengthening Fair Trade networks and retailing initiatives in the developing world.

In the North - Fair Trade focuses on products that are generally not available in that region. Campaigning for a trading system that prioritizes peoples livelihoods and the environment - working often in close collaboration with local farmer initiatives to promote sustainability in the countries where Fair Trade products are sold.

Justice for the South - the communities of the developing world have amongst the lightest environmental footprints. However, these are the very people whose food security, livelihoods and homes are most threatened by climate change and environmental destruction. Fair Trade is a system that puts people and environment central to trading to promote social and environmental justice.

Fair Trade has helped millions escape from poverty and we, Fair Trade producer groups, buyers and campaigners, don't want environmental injustice to undermine poverty further. Fair Trade communities in both the South and the North therefore call on all consumers to change their lifestyles and shopping habits, and thereby minimize the negative impacts their choices have on the environment in which we all live.

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Why?

- Marginalized communities of the developing world have amongst the lightest environmental footprints.
- However, they are also the very people whose food security, livelihoods and homes are most threatened by climate change and environmental destruction.
- The present economic system with profit at any cost undermines people and the environment

How?

- Through paying a fair price and long term relationships we put people and the environment first.
- Sustainable use of natural resources and biodegradable materials.
- Supports hand-production and production that is not capital and oil intensive.
- Enables producer partners to invest in environmentally friendly production initiatives to minimize environment-impact.
- Promotes environmental awareness and consumer empowerment.

Now we therefore call on all consumers to change their lifestyle and shopping habits. Buy carefully and considerately - choose Fair Trade products. Visit www.wftday.org and www.crs.fairtrade.org for education on fair trade, legislative alerts, etc.

2008 Diocesan Heating Assistance Program



In the winter of 2008 the Diocesan Heating Assistance Program (DHAP) assisted **398 families (1,264 persons)** with heating assistance totaling **\$70,000.39**. May God bless all whom served, i.e. the **8 Heating Assistance Volunteers** at Catholic Family Services and the **53 Heating Assistance Volunteers** in the parishes/missions, and the **41 parishes/missions and persons** who contributed to the 2008 DHAP. In its 26 year history **9,231 families (29,992 persons)** have received heating assistance totaling **\$1,322,700.53**. Catholic Social Teaching Principle 4 – Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

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