*Our Lady Discussion on Justice*

*Theme 1:* ***Life and Dignity of the Human Person***

*March, 2021*

As you have noticed, our monthly conversation about social justice describes 3 ways to engage with each topic: **Education, Prayer and Action**. Our topics each month are related to one of the 7 Themes of Catholic Social Teaching on Justice. We hope to spur thought, and spark your interest in learning or doing more.

**What Does Life and Dignity of the Human Person Mean Exactly?**

The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of each human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching.

Catholic teaching also calls on us to work to avoid war and conflict (between nations, in our communities, or even in our homes), and find effective ways to prevent and resolve conflicts by peaceful means.

 :We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is simply whether it threatens or enhances the [life and dignity](https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/index.cfm) of the human person” (US Catholic Bishops).Inaction can often be viewed as being a threat.

***Scripture* related to this theme**

*Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good;**love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor* (Romans 12:9-10)

**What does Our Lady do?**

Our Lady acts on this theme through our many charitable projects that support Safer Futures, a local shelter, resource and legal advocacy center, and crisis line for women and children who are victims of domestic violence.

**Our Projects**:

* Fill the Shopping Cart – ongoing collection of food an paper products that are delivered weekly to Safer Futures.
* Christmas Giving Tree, providing gifts to needy children.
* Linen Shower-Annual fall collection of sheets, pillows and towels. Residents get to keep them when they find a place to stay on their own.
* Basket Donation –Hope in a Handbag-Safer Future biggest fundraiser each fall. Our committee organizes basket donations for auction, and promotes ticket sales and donation of gently used handbags for the sale.

. **What Can I do?**

It’s easier than you think. Many hands working in small ways is how change happens.

 **Learn:** Knowing what domestic violence is and who it touches opens our hearts and eyes to things we may not have seen before.

* Domestic Violence is not a socio-economic issue, it occurs at every income level, education level, and in every race, religion and region of the country.
* Homes where domestic violence occurs look very normal from the outside
* Children see the violence in most reported cases, and are at significantly higher risk of trauma affects, and continuing the cycle of violence.
* 89% of college students report that they are not confident in their ability to recognize the warning signs of dating violence.
* Shame and fear are common reasons victims don’t reach out for help.

**Pray**: Praying for justice is not only a solo experience—pray at your family table, post your thoughts and prayers on social media, or join a vigil or prayer chain for justice.

*Gentle Jesus, shepherd of peace, join to your own suffering the pain of all who have been hurt
in body, mind, and spirit by those who betrayed the trust placed in them*. *Holy Spirit, comforter of hearts, heal your people’s wounds and transform brokenness into wholeness. Grant us the courage and wisdom, humility and grace, to act with justice. Breathe wisdom into our prayers and labors.
Grant that all harmed by abuse may find peace in justice.
We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

Amen.

 **Act:** It’s easier than you think.

* Donate an old cell phone to a shelter. They are reprogrammed and used for one-touch calls for help.
* Read about Aisha’s Law to protect victims of domestic violence, and weigh in with your state representative. It is due up for a vote this spring. <https://www.cleveland19.com/2020/12/30/aishas-law-fails-get-vote-ohio-senate-floor/>
* Have a conversation. Know the warning signs of potential abuse-National Domestic Violence hotline <https://www.thehotline.org/identify-abuse/warning-signs-of-abuse/>
* Host “KNOW Abuse”, a teen to teen drama group and discussion about teen dating violence in your community group, church, or school. Visit <https://www.jfsa-cleveland.org/know-abuse-teen-dating-violence-prevention/#:~:text=KNOW%20ABUSE%E2%84%A2>
* Keep Safer Future’s hotline number to share with someone who may need it: 330-673-2500

**Thought from Father**:

The Catholic Church is committed to protecting the rights and dignity of every human person.  The work that is needed to do this is more than any one person or parish can do, which is why we collaborate with and donate to other organizations and the universal Catholic Church.  But, sometimes, we let our perspective on the dignity of life be narrow or defined by others—especially by politics and culture.  So, just as important as the work we do and support is our continued deepening of our hearts into the heart of the Gospel and of Jesus Christ.

For more information on this theme visit: <https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/life-and-dignity-of-the-human-person>