

>>> **Catholic Social Teaching for Youth Ministry** <<<  
**CST: Solidarity**

**Catechesis for the Catholic Diocese of Raleigh**

Faced with the grave social problems which, with different characteristics, are present throughout America, Catholics know that they can find in the Church's social doctrine an answer which serves as a starting point in the search for practical solutions. Spreading this doctrine in an authentic pastoral priority. In this regard, special care must be taken to train lay persons capable of working, on the basis of the faith in Christ to transform earthly realities. *Ecclesia in America*, Pope John Paul II, 1999

**Scripture**

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. ...And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. Gen. 1:27, 31

Moses said to them, "It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat. This is what the Lord has commanded: 'Gather as much of it as each of you needs, an omer to a person according to the number of persons.'" ...those who gathered much had nothing over, and those who gathered little had no shortage; they gathered as much as each of them needed.

Exodus 16:15-21

"You shall not molest or oppress an alien, for you were once aliens yourselves in the land of Egypt. You shall not wrong any widow or orphan. If ever you wrong them and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry.

Exodus 22:20-23:9

The Sermon on the Mount Matt. 5-7

Who is my mother, and who are my brothers? ..whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister and mother. Matt. 12-48, 50

Judgement of the Nations (Parable of the sheep and goats) 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of you?' Matt. 25:31-46

Parable of the Good Samaritan Lk. 10:25

Our Father who art in heaven... Lk. 11:2

This is what I command you: love one another as I have loved you. Jn. 15:12

It pleased God to make absolute fullness reside in him, and by means of him to reconcile everything in his person, both on earth and in the heavens, making peace through the blood of his cross. Colossians 1:15-21

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us, and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Ephesians 5:1

**Papal Encyclicals & Bishops' Statements**

Catholic social teaching proclaims that we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they live. We are one human family, whatever our national, racial ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. Learning to practice the virtue of solidarity means learning that "loving our neighbor" has global dimensions in an interdependent world. This virtue is described by John Paul II as "a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all."

*Sharing Catholic Social Teaching*, USCCB

Solidarity is action on behalf of the one human family calling us to help overcome the divisions in our world. Solidarity binds the rich to the poor. It makes the free zealous for the cause of the oppressed. It drives the comfortable and secure to take risks for the victims of tyranny and war. It calls those who are strong to care for those who are weak and vulnerable across the spectrum of human life. It opens homes and hearts to those in flight from terror and to migrants whose daily toil supports affluent lifestyles. Peacemaking, as Pope John Paul II has told us, is the work of solidarity.

*Called to Global Solidarity*, USCCB

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. United in Christ they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the Kingdom of their Father and they have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for every person. That is why this community realizes that it is truly linked with humankind and its history by the deepest of bonds. *Gaudium et Spes*, 1965

It falls to us, who receive the gifts of God in order to make them fruitful, to "sow" and "reap". If we do not, even what we have will be taken away from us (Parable of the talents: Mt. 25:14-30). A deeper study of these harsh words will make us commit ourselves more resolutely to the duty, which is urgent for everyone today, to work together for the full development of others: "development of the whole human being and of all people."

*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, Pope John Paul II, 1987

**Learn More**

Office of Peace & Justice, Catholic Diocese of Raleigh  
[www.dioceseofraleigh.org](http://www.dioceseofraleigh.org)  
919-821-9751 [jurski@raldioc.org](mailto:jurski@raldioc.org)

U.S. Catholic Bishops' Conference – Called to Global Solidarity  
[www.nccbuscc.org/sdwp/international/globalsolidarity.htm](http://www.nccbuscc.org/sdwp/international/globalsolidarity.htm)

Life and Dignity of Person >>> Rights and Responsibilities of the Human Person >>> Call to Family, Community, Participation >>>

Solidarity >>> Care of Creation >>> Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers >>> Option for the Poor and Vulnerable >>>

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*Catechesis for the Catholic Diocese of Raleigh*

Life and Dignity of Person >>> Rights and Responsibilities of the Human Person >>> Call to Family, Community, Participation >>>

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**Objectives:** To learn the themes of Catholic social teaching, its gift, its roots in the life of Christ and the Gospel, papal encyclicals and bishops' statements, its challenge to today's Catholics and its essential role in Catholic faith and identity.  
 To journey more deeply in our life of faith; to respond in our world today as salt and light, and to rejoice in the Good News.  
 To experience solidarity in Christ, locally and globally.

**Overview**

Read the Catholic Teaching on the reverse page.  
 ~Reflect on this teaching :  
 In your own life, your community, country and world.  
 In connection with the other themes of CST listed on the border.  
 In Jesus' life as the Son of Man.  
 In terms of the reign of God.  
 ~Expand your familiarity with Church teachings by reading *Called to Solidarity*, a 1997 US Catholic Bishops' that can be printed from [www.nccbuscc.org/sdwp/international/globalSolidarity.htm](http://www.nccbuscc.org/sdwp/international/globalSolidarity.htm)

**Preparation**

Does your group have some actors? The story **Mt Olive Pick Boycott Ends** is great for short play or video formats.  
 Make copies of the opposite page and distribute them to the group for reading at home. Have them consider the above reflections.  
**Supplies for the Session:**  
 Extra copies of the handout sent home.  
 Copies of **Mt Olive Pick Boycott Ends**  
 Newsprint  
 Markers

**Curriculum – 2 sessions**

Open with Prayer  
 Distribute copies of the take home to those who did not bring them. Break into small groups to read the teachings together if this was not done as a take home.  
**Questions:**  
 What surprised you by this reflection on the Church teaching of Solidarity?  
 How do you feel about this teaching?  
 What are some parables Jesus used that express solidarity?  
 How are charity and solidarity linked?  
**Using Newsprint List:**  
 Elements of Solidarity (i.e., being with, speaking for, love, forgiveness, giving voice to the voiceless, advocacy, friendship, sharing, listening...)  
 Ways we practice solidarity – as home, in the parish, in the nation & world.

**Session 2**

Read or act out **Mt Olive Pick Boycott Ends**  
 Open discussion on the story in light of CST on solidarity – why, who, what?  
 How does this story connect with our newsprint lists from the first session?  
 As persons baptized in Christ Jesus, we too experience solidarity – all are included with no exceptions. The love of God for his creation and our being created in his likeness and image makes us one human family near and far, rich or poor, sick or healthy, in church and out of church. Every person is essential to making the human family complete. As Jesus' follower we can spread this good news of solidarity to all the world. How can we practice Solidarity?" List answers: (this can be as a group or individual or as a parish, and ways can include simple daily habits to participating in issues, organizations like Catholic Relief or getting involved with some social ministry – maybe our farm worker ministry in the diocese.)  
**Prayer:** Heavenly Father we thank you for all your creation and the wonders of all people and life around us. Help us to love all as brothers and sisters, as you love us and as Jesus has called us to be his brothers and sisters. Help us to know this joy in solidarity day by day. We ask that we may ... (then go around the circle for each person to pray for one action of solidarity that they would like to practice). In Jesus' name we pray. End with the Our Father.

...everyone must consider every neighbor without exception as another self, taking into account first of all their life and the means necessary to living it with dignity, so as not to imitate the rich man who had no concern for the poor man Lazarus (Luke 16:18-31). ...Furthermore, whatever is opposed to life itself, ...whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, ...as well as disgraceful working conditions, where men are treated as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society, but they do more to those who practice them than those who suffer from the injury. *Gaudium et Spes*

## **Mt Olive Pick Boycott Ends**

A five year boycott of Mt. Olive Pickles, Mt. Olive, North Carolina has ended. On Thursday, September 16, 2004, the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) of the AFL-CIO reached a precedent setting agreement with the North Carolina Growers Association and the Mount Olive Pickle Company. This historic occasion offers a moment to reflect on this as an experience of solidarity for the common good, bringing positive change for everyone, locally and nationally.

So many people, groups, networks were involved in bringing justice to NC farm workers through union organizing. Their stories make up the story surrounding pickles, working together for economic justice and enabling all to have a voice at the table.

Over 3,000 farm workers signed up for membership in FLOC and organized a voice for just wage and living conditions. "Migrant farm workers are among the lowest paid workers in the country and the vast majority of the NC farm workers receive no fringe benefits. Farm labor is currently exempt from overtime provisions and minimum wage laws. Most are not covered by workers' compensation, and few if any have health insurance. Farm workers suffer from the highest rate of toxic chemical injuries of any group in the U.S. Studies show that migrant farm laborers in North Carolina often work 10 to 12 hour days in extreme heat and live in crowded conditions. There are only 7 Dept. of Agriculture inspectors in NC, none are bilingual. 44% of migrant camps tested in 1992 had contaminated water supplies. One washtub for 30 workers satisfies laundry requirements. Portable toilets and hand washing facilities are rare. Many are threatened with job loss for becoming involved in organizing. Ramiro Sarabia, FLOC staff member, states: "Mt. Olive Pickle Company sets the price before the growing season. They supply the seeds, they dictate the pesticide. They sometimes inspect the fields. Why not take on the labor issue with the farmers?"

The U.S. Catholic Bishops' 1986 statement, *Economic Justice for All* declares: "Partnerships between labor and management are possible only when both groups possess real freedom and power to influence decisions. This means that unions ought to continue to play an important role in moving toward greater economic participation within firms and industries.

Bishop Joseph Gossman attended the June, 1998 Rally for Farm Worker Support at the State Capitol in Raleigh, and joined with Bishop Curlin, Diocese of Charlotte, in calling for a boycott of Mt. Olive Pickles. In his speech at the rally, Bishop Gossman stated: "We gather today to stand with and to support the farm workers of NC who play a vital role in the economic life of our state. Most importantly, we stand with our fellow brothers and sisters who do not share the same fullness of life that so many of us experience. We stand here because the Human Person is the criteria against which all aspects of economic life must be measured. Profit is important – but not to the exploitation of the person. Farm workers need to be Partners around the table with growers and corporations so that the common good of all is reached. Work contributes to the well being of the larger community and we must acknowledge all the players in that work."

Council for Religious, the representative body of the Sisters of the Diocese of Raleigh, joined the boycott effort with their support. In January, 2000, they wrote: "we join in support of the farm workers of North Carolina in their struggle to better their lives. In doing so we believe that we follow the mandate of the Gospel in calling us to care for the poor and vulnerable and the extension of this teaching in our Church's defense of workers and their right to form associations and unions."

Catholic Campaign for Human Development provided a grant for farm workers in their struggle for creating a better life for themselves. "The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. It is in this context that CCHD supports the right of workers in NC to organize to better themselves. It is the system that must change to make the playing field level for all persons connected to cucumber/pickle production."

Many citizens participated in the boycott. Many signed the resolution to boycott which stated: “Whereas, the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, AFL-CIO (FLOC), is organizing the migrant farm workers who harvest the crop for Mt Olive Pickle Co., and over 2,000 of these workers have signed union cards, and whereas, the only way these workers can improve their lives and achieve the dignity they deserve is to win union representation and negotiate a fair contract, and whereas, FLOC organizing is supported by over 60 organizations, and whereas, MT Olive CEO, William Bryan, as a leader in this industry has the ability to recognize FLOC and bargain a contract to improve the lives of the workers who harvest his crops, but to date, he has steadfastly refused to do so, and whereas the only recourse left these workers is to appeal to the American peoples’ spirit of fairness and justice and urge them to boycott...”

One participant in the boycott, a mother living in Raleigh, stated: “I must stand with the people who help put food on my table. I must do all I can as a Catholic to ensure that all my exchanges in the market place are just for everyone – from the farm worker to the distributor to the grocery clerk. I teach my children through my actions. I am happy to picket in front of Kroger’s for FLOC, asking them to take Mt. Olive Pickles off their shelves. I feel in a small way my voice adds to many so that what is finally heard is a solid voice for justice for all. My hope is that all our exchanges become happy for everyone involved, and we can come to table with Christ who excludes no one.

Students rallied and marched in support of the boycott. Students were successful in boycotting Mt. Olive Pickles on college campuses around the state. “We won’t spend a nickel on a Mt. Olive pickle!” was heard in several marches conducted around the state. Marches in cities and on college campuses took place throughout the country. One student, Zack, stated: “Working for justice to me seems a natural outgrowth of my faith. I do what I think is right, and from the whole experience I find joy.”

Faith based organizations, especially The NC Farm Workers Ministry and The NC Council of Churches were instrumental in organizing people and events in support of the farm workers. “If the company were willing to sit down and speak with FLOC representatives of the workers, there would be no boycott. The boycott is merely a nonviolent tool to bring Mt Olive to the table for discussion of working conditions that nobody denies are horrendous but Mt. Olive says it has no responsibility for. We all have responsibility for these conditions.”

Everyone involved in the boycott, from the farm workers, to the students, to North Carolina families and people in the hundreds of organizations around the country, to the farmers and Mt. Olive Pickle employees, to the Church and Bishop Gossman – all grew in faith, hope and peace in this grand experience of solidarity. People got to know one another, find commonalties in their lives and work, and find joy in deeply realizing that we are one human family.



Holy Scripture, with which the experience of the ages is in agreement, teaches the human family that human progress, though it is a great blessing, brings with it a great temptation. When the scale of values is disturbed and evil becomes mixed with good, individuals and groups consider only their own interests, not those of others.

The result is that the world is not yet a home of true brotherhood / sisterhood, while the increased power of humankind already threatens to destroy the human race itself.

The human person, redeemed by Christ and made a new creation in the Holy Spirit, can and must love the very things created by God. For he/she receives them from God, and sees and reveres them as coming from the hand of God.

The Word of God, through whom all things were made, himself became man and lived in the world of men and women. He reveals to us that God is love, and at the same time teaches us that the fundamental law of human perfection and therefore of the transformation of the world, is the new commandment of love.

Gaudium et Spes, Second Vatican Council