

Social Justice & Pro-life Culture

“To be authentically Catholic is to be pro-life.

To be pro-life is to love and protect the unborn, the poor, the marginalized, the sick and suffering, and the elderly and dying.

We need to be united as Catholics, as a people of and for life.”

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

Building society and protecting dignity

- In the Catholic vision, social justice is not about personal identity, or group power, or getting more material goods. **True social justice is about building a society where people can be good, a society where people can love one another and take care of one another, where they can find God and know that they are made for heaven.** And true social justice can never be obtained without simple **human kindness, compassion, and forgiveness.**
- **As Catholics, we are called to keep the truth alive about the human person: the truth that every person in our society has a soul that is destined for eternity and a meaning and purpose that transcends this world.** As Catholics, we also believe that **the most basic purpose of government and policy is to protect the sanctity and dignity of the person,** from the moment they are conceived until the moment they draw their dying breath.

The Catholic Difference on Social Justice, Archbishop José Horacio Gómez

We need **not** choose between defending life and working to create conditions that support that life.

The Church has always had a deep commitment to the dignity of every human person and respect for life from conception to natural death.

“We can’t be ‘either-or’ Catholics. One of the great strengths of Catholicism is that we are both-and...The Church is profoundly concerned about justice and human rights for all people. We are profoundly committed to the right to life, which is the most basic and fundamental right and the condition for all other personal rights. We are also profoundly committed to the right to health care, the right to food and shelter, the right to work, etc.

Think of St. Mother Teresa — was there anyone in recent Church history more committed to the care of the poor and the social teachings of the Church? At the same time, in almost every talk she gave, she would talk about the evil of abortion.”

Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades

“Decisions that go against life, sometimes arise from difficult or even tragic situations of profound suffering, loneliness, a total lack of economic prospects, depression and anxiety about the future. Should we not question the very economic models often adopted by States which...cause and aggravate situations of injustice and violence in which the life of whole peoples is degraded and trampled upon?”



St. John Paul II

Both - And

On the issue of murder, **the Bible** does not say, “Thou shalt not murder, and you must consistently feed, house, clothe, provide free healthcare, attack climate justice, tear down the systems of racial division and inequity while engaging in the fight of anti-racism. Then and only then can you indeed be for life.” It **simply says, “thou shalt not murder.”**

Saying you support life in the womb and speak for the unborn who can not defend themselves doesn't mean you don't care about the poor, oppressed or impoverished who do have some ability to advocate for themselves. **We can simultaneously believe those in and outside the womb all have dignity worth protecting.**



Shaming Pro Lifers & demanding “Social Justice”

There is a movement to abandon the laser focus that caused us to get to the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. This effort seeks to shame pro-life devotees by virtue signaling a new standard with ideological ambiguity, and no clear direction or goal. Sometimes referred to as **whole-life**, it's the idea that you can't be genuinely “pro-life” unless you advocate for the whole-life benefits that care for those in need. Those promoting the whole-life position often attach a collection of social causes and “Government-Funded” solutions to assist in caring for a child until they reach full mature adulthood. This position holds that anyone claiming to be pro-life must fully agree with the ideas of social justice, including climate justice, or risk being connected to a lesser form of what it means to be pro-life. This ethic assumes that pro-lifers don't value all human beings as image-bearers of God in the way we should and that if we held the correct view we would prioritize everything from immigration to poverty as equally important as saving the life of an unborn child.

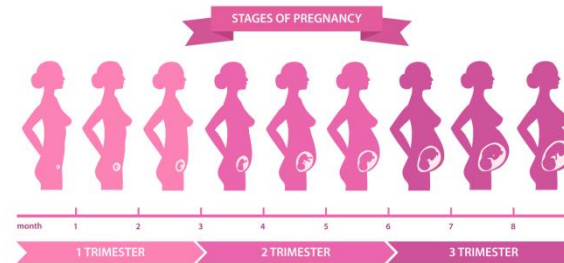
Is Pro-Life a Means to Social Justice?

AbortionPro-LifeSocial Justice

<https://g3min.org/is-pro-life-a-means-to-social-justice/>

VIRGIL WALKER

The Issue of Viability



For the Christian, the issue of human dignity begins at conception. *For the Courts*, the issue of human dignity only applies when the fetus has viability—a medically determined, variable point in the development of an unborn child.

- Christians believe that God created mankind in his image (Gen 1:27), and human beings have innate value, dignity, and worth. The result of holding to this standard is that **all life created by God is subject to him**. Therefore, **we will not interfere** by terminating life for the sake of convenience. Keeping this belief ensures that no human being is murdered in the womb, and all life is valued.

Being Pro-justice means being Pro-life

“Americans still treat abortion and pro-life issues as separate from our collective fight for justice. The truth is that being pro-justice means being pro-life; every pro-life American is fighting for justice, and every pro-justice American *needs* to be pro-life. As long as we are ignoring the pain and suffering of the victims of abortion, we aren’t hearing that call.

What links different justice issues together is a shared **commitment to equal dignity for all human life**, from the womb to the tomb. Justice is about protecting those who deserve protection, and punishing those who deserve punishment. Justice seeks to remedy the destructive impact of abusive treatment in the lives of individuals and in the societies they live in. I find the call to justice almost perfectly summed up in the words of Proverbs 31:8: “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves.”

[BENJAMIN WATSON](https://www.nationalreview.com/2021/01/pro-justice-means-pro-life/)

[HTTPS://WWW.NATIONALREVIEW.COM/2021/01/PRO-JUSTICE-MEANS-PRO-LIFE/](https://www.nationalreview.com/2021/01/pro-justice-means-pro-life/)

What is Roe Vs. Wade?

In January 1973, the Supreme Court of the United States gave our nation Roe v. Wade and its companion decision Doe v. Bolton, and in so doing effectively removed every legal protection from human beings prior to birth. ***The legacy of Roe is virtually incalculable.*** In its wake it has left death and sorrow and turmoil.

Millions of lives have been destroyed before birth and even during the very process of being born. Countless ***women have been traumatized*** so deeply by abortion that they spend years struggling to find peace, healing, and reconciliation. ***Men grieve*** because they could not "choose" to protect a child they helped bring into existence, and society has increasingly coarsened by toleration and acceptance of acts that purposely destroy human life.

USCCB

<https://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/abortion/roe-v-wade>



Since the infamous Roe v. Wade decision by the United States Supreme Court in 1973, more than **63.5 million** innocent lives have been lost to legalized abortion. That represents more than 80% of the total number of children registered to attend school in America today. To put that in perspective, 63.5 million is about the size of the populations of California and Texas combined into one. We lost nearly 20% of our current population to legalized abortion.

<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/jan/20/students-embracing-pro-life-the-social-justice-mov/>

Educate yourselves

To learn more watch the real story behind the acceptance & legalization of abortion: <https://youtu.be/HUkEpm8kPyQ>

People are *reinventing language* to distort disordered behaviors and actions, using terms like “choice”, “women’s health care” “reproductive health”, “right to accessible and non-stigmatizing” “abortion care”, “essential healthcare”, and “bodily autonomy”.

Abortion, contraception, fertility care, gender-affirming care, and reproductive healthcare are considered, by secular society, to be essential healthcare and available on demand.

Respect life.



**STOP
HUMAN
TRAFFICKING**



All life is sacred.



Contraception, when generally accepted in a society, helps to bring about a radical change in social perceptions of sexual intercourse, human life, the human person, and morality.

Contraception cheapens the sacred marital act and helps normalize abortion and other anti-life practices into the culture that accepts it. In no sense can birth control be considered as a remedy for abortion. St. Pope John Paul II noted that “despite their differences of nature and moral gravity, contraception and abortion are often closely connected, as fruits of the same tree” (*Evangelium vitae*, n. 13).

Contraception is a “game-changer” in the sense that it changes the way we think about some very fundamental realities such as attitudes to sex, to life, to science, to the human person, to dignity, and to morality, with a significant impact on a society in terms of promoting a culture of death: together they are devastating.

<https://stpaulcenter.com/debunking-the-myths-against-big-families/>

Contraception Changes the Meaning of Sex

- The most fundamental reason why contraception fosters abortion is that **contraception changes the meaning of sex**, and not just in this or that act of sexual intercourse, but **in the consciousness of whole cultures**.
- **Contraception** uncouples (in the mind of the individual who accepts it as normal behavior) the relationship of sexual intercourse to babies and to life-long commitment: it **trivializes sex**. Trivial sex, leads inevitably to unwanted pregnancies, which absolutely leads to abortion.
- When sex becomes recreational, **individuals engage in sexual intercourse with persons whom they certainly would not want to collaborate with in the long term** and demanding task of child-rearing.
- *Yes, even in marriage, sex with contraception lessens the bond.*

Why We Don't Use Contraception in Our Marriage

Ascension Presents

<https://youtu.be/Qq1xvPdvkCI>

Because the Catholic Church defines social justice as actions that recognize the fundamental dignity and worth of every person from conception until natural death, **when we engage in the spiritual and corporal works of mercy** we defend the rights of the unborn, the disabled and the elderly: **we are working for social justice.**



When we **defend God's plan for marriage**, we are working for social justice. When we **advocate for the dignity of work, good jobs, and just wages**, we are working for social justice. These actions promote the common good and are in and of themselves social justice.



As Pope Francis said in *Evangelii Gaudium*, "None of us can think we are exempt from concerns for the poor and for social justice."

Catholic Social Justice

The **corporal works of mercy** address the physical needs of the poor.

- Feed the hungry
- Offer drink to the thirsty
- Clothe the naked
- Give shelter to the homeless
- Visit the sick and imprisoned
- Care for the poor
- Bury the dead

The **spiritual works of mercy** guide us to "help our neighbor in their spiritual needs."

- To instruct the ignorant
- To counsel the doubtful
- To admonish sinners
- To bear wrongs patiently
- To forgive offences willingly
- To comfort the afflicted
- To pray for the living and the dead

Catechism of the Catholic Church

paragraph 2447

- The *works of mercy* are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities.
- “He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none; and he who has food must do likewise. *(Lk 3:11)*
But give for alms those things which are within; and behold, everything is clean for you. *(Lk 11:41)*
If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and filled,’ without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?” *(Jas 2:15-16; cf. Jn 3:17)*



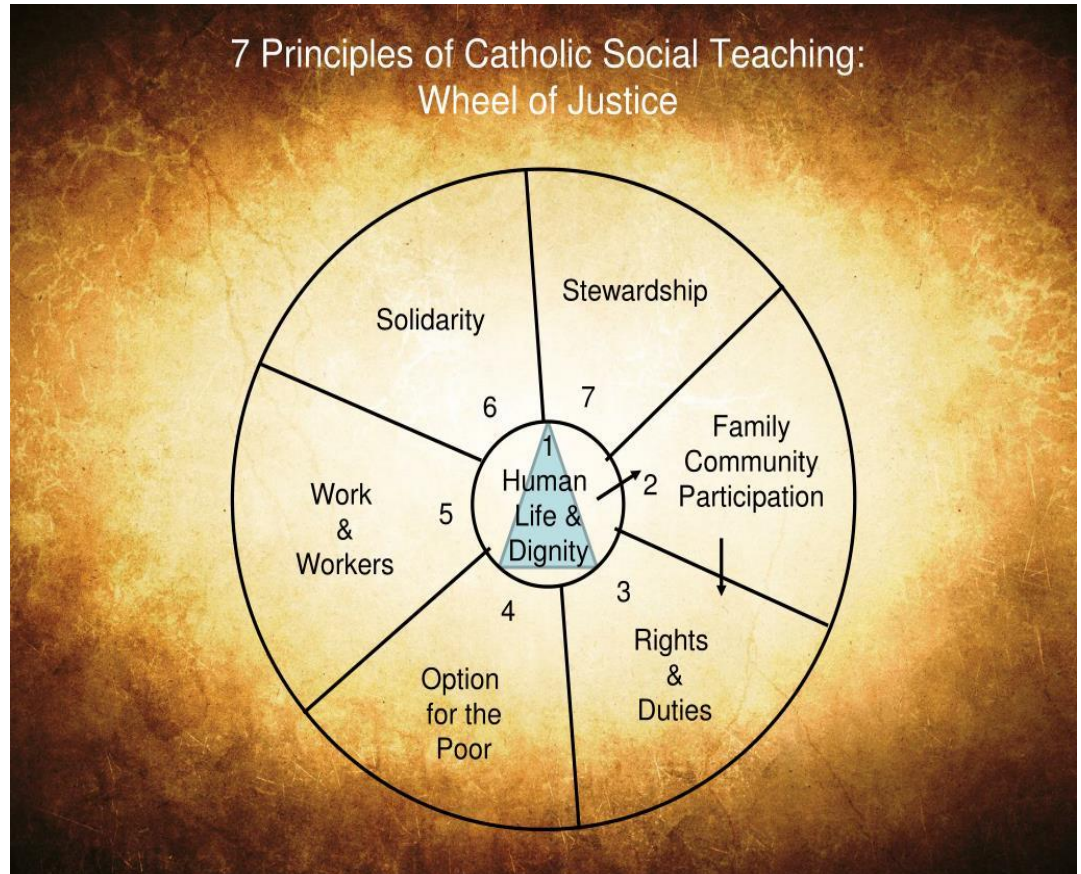
Secular Social Justice Warriors are confused without God

For much of church history, Christians pursued social justice. In fact, **the very phrase “social justice”** was first popularized by Catholic scholars Luigi Taparelli D’Azeglio and Antonio Rosmini in the 1840s, and it **was cemented in Catholic doctrine by Pope Pius IX in the 1930s**. Pius IX described social justice in 1937, “Now it is of the very essence of social justice to demand for each individual all that is necessary for the common good.”... the people who habitually employ the phrase simply do not know themselves what they mean by it and just use it as an assertion that a claim is justified without giving a reason for it. **The proper response to the secularization of social justice is not to unite with nor to abandon the cause, but rather to reclaim the cause by returning it to its original biblical standards.**

<https://reformedmargins.com/social-justice-secularization/>

7 principles of Catholic Social Teaching

- Life and Dignity of the Human Person
- Call to Family, Community, and Participation
- Rights and Responsibilities
- Option for the Poor and Vulnerable
- The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers
- Solidarity
- Care for God's Creation



Life and Dignity of the Human Person

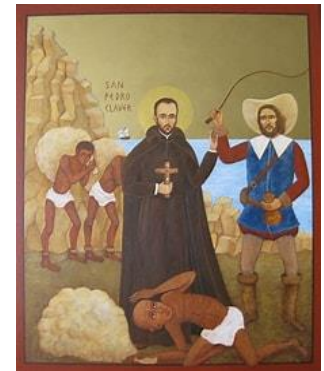
Basically, this teaching reflects our understanding from Scripture that **human beings are created “in the image and likeness of God”** and seeks to preserve the dignity of every human person regardless of their age or circumstances in life. **Catholic social teaching** concerning the dignity of the human person **leads to involvement** in a broad range of issues.

Saints who have worked tirelessly to fight for the life and dignity of the human person include:

- St. Peter Claver**, who was a Spanish Jesuit priest and missionary. He is the patron saint of slaves, due to his heroic work ministering to and affirming the inherent worth and dignity of African slaves in Columbia.
- St. Teresa of Calcutta**, who we all know worked tirelessly affirming the dignity of life in the poorest and most destitute people living in the slums of India.

Some local organizations you can get involved in, which advocate for the life and dignity of the human person are:

- The Pregnancy Resource Center
- Saint Vincent DePaul Society
- Majella House



What are we called to DO?

Work on:

- Preventing abortion and euthanasia
- Ending the death penalty
- Gaining fair treatment for those with disabilities
- Promoting civil rights and equality for those of different races, genders, ages, quality of health, and income level
- Ending the cycle of poverty
- Working to avoid war by preventing conflicts or resolving them by peaceful means
- Preventing cloning and embryonic stem cell research

Rights and Responsibilities

As Catholics, it's essential for us to be aware of the basic rights of each human being. St. Pope John XXIII summed it up well in *Peace on Earth*, when he wrote:

“We must speak of man's rights. Man has the right to live. He has the right to bodily integrity and to the means necessary for the proper development of life, particularly food, clothing, shelter, medical care, rest, and, finally, the necessary social services. In consequence, he has the right to be looked after in the event of ill health; disability stemming from his work; widowhood; old age; enforced unemployment; or whenever through no fault of his own he is deprived of the means of livelihood.”

St. Roque Gonzalez, was a Jesuit priest, who cared so much about others that he gave up a life of privilege in order to do missionary work with the Indians of Paraguay.



St. Thomas More was a father, writer and theologian, whose integrity prevented him from supporting a corrupt government, even though it cost him his life



Get Involved:

- Food banks
- Prison ministry
- Nursing home visits
- Good Samaritan Clinic
- Guardian Ad Litem
- ARC



Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

God has a special concern for the poor and vulnerable. The church calls on all of us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first. **This preferential option for the poor and vulnerable should be reflected in both our daily lives and public policies.** A fundamental measure of our society is how we care for and stand with our poor and vulnerable brothers and sisters.

There are many saints, who devoted their lives to the poor in heroic ways.

Although Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati grew up with wealth and privilege, he chose to devote his life to serving the poor through charity and seeking justice on their behalf by engaging in political activism.



St. Vincent de Paul also devoted his life to the poor and left a tremendous legacy of organizations, which continue to serve the most vulnerable today.

How can you help?

<https://santarosa.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/community-health-planning-and-statistics/community-resources/documents/2022-Service-Directory.pdf>

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

The Church teaches that **the economy must provide opportunities for work and fair wages** for every individual, who is willing and able to work. According to the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB):

“Work is more than a way to make a living; it **is a form of continuing participation in God’s creation**. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected--the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to the organization and joining of unions, to private property, and to economic initiative.”

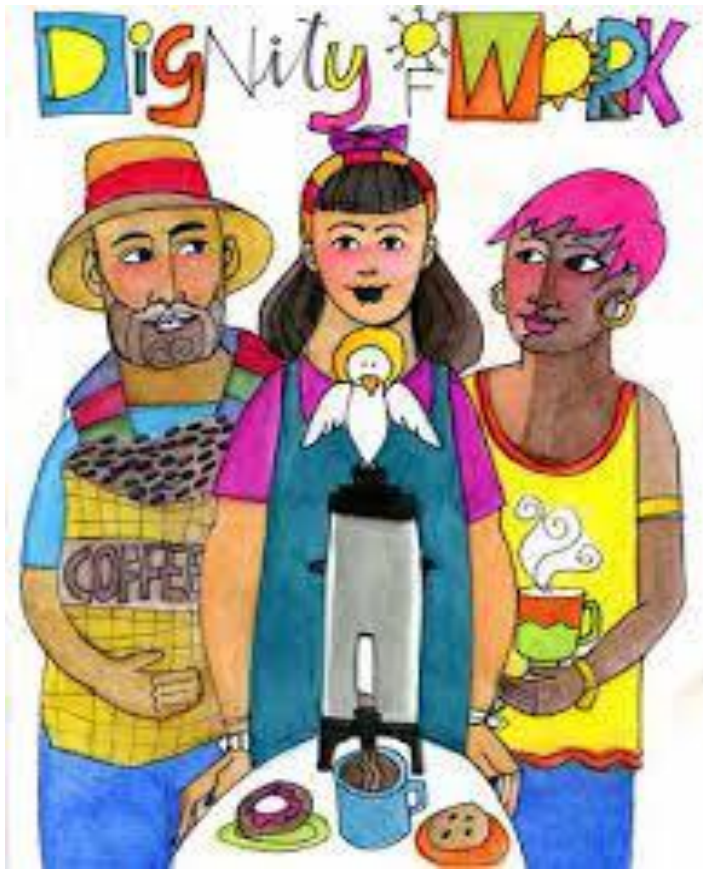
All too often though, in our society, the poor and vulnerable are left without opportunities for adequate employment. As Catholics, **we must fight to create fair opportunities for all**, because our faith tells us:

“the beginning, the subject, and the goal of all social institutions is and must be the human person. All people have the right to work, to a chance to develop their qualities and their personalities in the exercise of their professions, to equitable remuneration which will enable them and their families ‘to lead a worthy life on the material, social, cultural and spiritual level, and to assistance in case of need arising from sickness or age.’”

(St. Pope Paul VI, A Call to Action [Octogesima Adveniens. . .], no. 14)

Local organizations, which help support the dignity of workers:

<https://www.santarosaedo.com/page/workforce-resources/>



Solidarity

We are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. **We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers**, wherever they may be. **Solidarity calls us to love our neighbors locally and across the world in** concrete ways by acknowledging inequalities that exist and seeking justice for all. Although the Gospel calls us to be peacemakers, St. Pope Paul VI best explained what that means, when he said “if you want peace, work for justice,” Our love for all our sisters and brothers demands that we promote peace in a world surrounded by violence and conflict. *USCCB*

St. Pope John Paul II resisted the Nazi agenda to stand in solidarity with the Jews during World War II, and witnessed for Catholic values against communism in Eastern Europe.

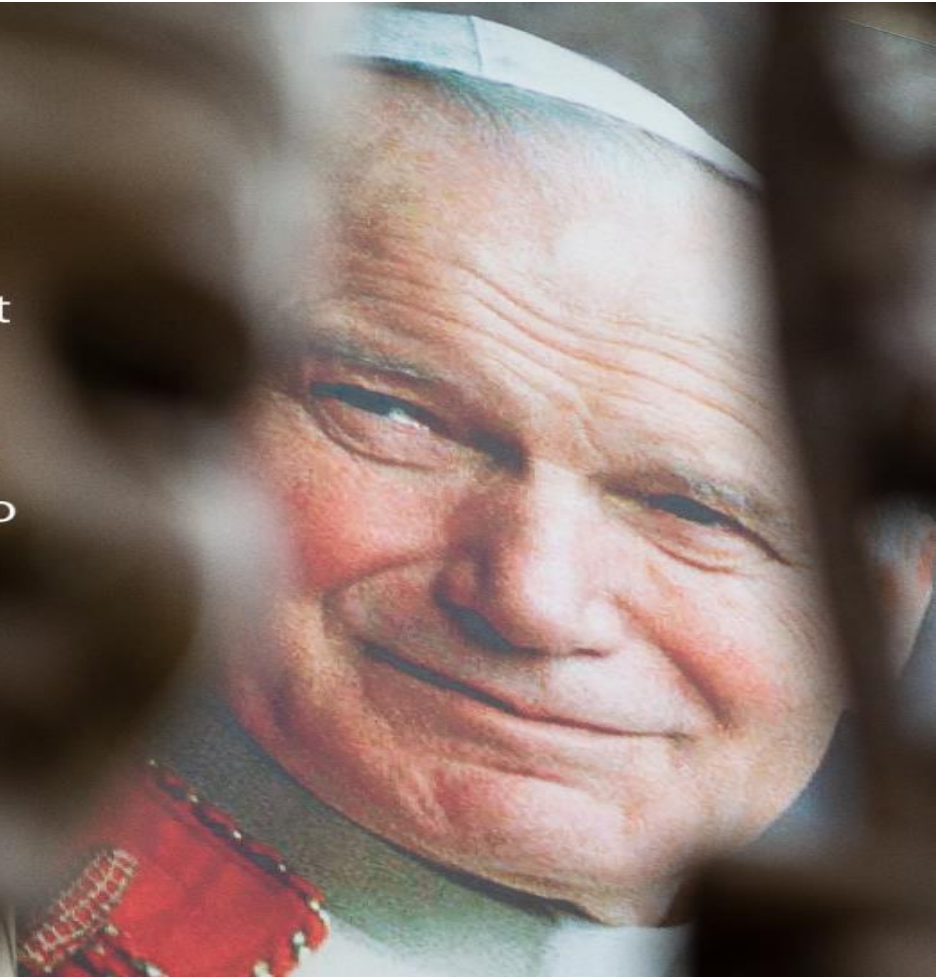


St. Damien of Molokai chose to stand in solidarity with those dying of leprosy by caring for them on the island where they were exiled, even though he knew he would likely contract the disease and die there as well.

Domestic violence shelters near us:

https://www.shelterlistings.org/county/fl-santa_rosa-county.html

St. John Paul II
said that
solidarity is a
moral virtue that
is cultivated
through a "firm
and persevering
determination to
commit oneself
to the common
good; that is to
say, the good of
all and of each
individual."



Care for God's Creation

In Genesis 1:31 we are told “And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.” Humanity was given a mandate to “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion...over every living thing that moves over the earth” (*Gen 1:28*) and “to till [the earth] and to keep it” (*Gen 2:15*). St Francis of Assisi cared deeply for creation as part of his choice to live an authentic Christianity.

God intended the earth with everything contained in it for the use of all human beings and peoples. Thus, under the leadership of justice and in the company of charity, created goods should be in abundance for all in like manner.

[Gaudium et Spes](#), 69



What are you willing to do?

