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## Ideas

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A lot of non-belief is a form of belief that reason alone is "in charge." Reason that takes the place of love and of God is unreasonable, really. Roman law, at least the law that comes from the Church authority, most closely resembles the authority of Jesus only when it makes negative judgments about hypocrisy – untruth.

What do you want? What do you pray for?

"Proof" from life – God set up all the laws of physics to allow life on earth, for us.

We are busy, but that does not mean that we will be overwhelmed. This is life: finding God in the reality of busy times. We don't need the world to change. We can change our expectations, and find peace in the midst of being busy. We do need some basic reflection to check on our experience, and find out how much we need (not think we need) of quiet time, recreation, reading, work, etc.

We need to allow space for others to be. Life is not about us as individuals, but us as community. We need spirituality for there being other people, with legitimate concerns and legitimate expectations of us. Deal with God, self, and others.

Self esteem: we are wounded. How to stand on our own as reflections of God depends upon our dependence, not a false independence. Depending on fashion, latest electronic device, or even our work, will not bring us the experience of confidence that we need.

Positive interpretations to help deal with problems: vandalism, sarcasm; drugs and alcohol.

Boundaries are tricky in gaining a sense of self. Living as if one is in his or her own space while being in a situation where others are different, requires adjustment. Change is not bad. Enculturation is good, but it requires conscious effort, decision, reason, and reflection.

Discernment and the education of the whole person: Everybody can profit by learning discernment.

Positive lessons: Dealing with confusion, worry, fear.

Election time: Catholic social teaching translated for contemporary use, not the documents and expressions that come "from above." We

need pastoral translation and promotion of the “7 principles” of Catholic Social teaching.

### **Life and Dignity of the Human Person**

The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching. In our society, human life is under direct attack from abortion and euthanasia. The value of human life is being threatened by cloning, embryonic stem cell research, and the use of the death penalty. Catholic teaching also calls on us to work to avoid war. Nations must protect the right to life by finding increasingly effective ways to prevent conflicts and resolve them 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 whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.

### **Call to Family, Community, and Participation**

The person is not only sacred but also social. How we organize our society in economics and politics, in law and policy directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. Marriage and the family are the central social institutions that must be supported and strengthened, not undermined. We believe people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

The Catholic tradition teaches that human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Therefore, every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities--to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.

### **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable**

A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. In a society marred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, our tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgment (Mt 25:31-46) and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.

### **The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers**

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. 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.

### **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. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world. At the core of the virtue of solidarity is the pursuit of justice and peace. Pope Paul VI taught that "if you want peace, work for justice."<sup>1</sup> The Gospel calls us to be peacemakers. Our love for all our sisters and brothers demands that we promote peace in a world surrounded by violence and conflict.

### **Care for God's Creation**

We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.