



OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

Basic:

God wants us to help people who are poor, who don't have enough food, a safe place to live, or a community.

More - 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.

CST 101: Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3gxBjtOzNM&t=34s>

EXAMPLES FROM SCRIPTURE Taken from the USCCB website.

Exodus 22:20-26 - You shall not oppress the poor or vulnerable. God will hear their cry.

Leviticus 19:9-10 - A portion of the harvest is set aside for the poor and the stranger.

Job 34:20-28 - The Lord hears the cry of the poor.

Proverbs 31:8-9 - Speak out in defense of the poor.

Sirach 4:1-10 - Don't delay giving to those in need.

Isaiah 25:4-5 - God is a refuge for the poor.

Isaiah 58:5-7 - True worship is to work for justice and care for the poor and oppressed.

Matthew 25:34-40 - What you do for the least among you, you do for Jesus.

Luke 4:16-21 - Jesus proclaims his mission: to bring good news to the poor and oppressed.

Luke 6:20-23 - Blessed are the poor, theirs is the kingdom of God.

1John 3:17-18 - How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's good and sees one in need and refuses to help?



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PRAYER SERVICE

SET UP

- Place this week's picture in your prayer area
- Light a candle
- Open your Bible to Matthew 25:34-40

GATHER

Gather around your prepared prayer space. Take a minute to quiet the noise around you and turn your focus towards God.

Leader: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Opening Song: Open My Eyes Lord

Open my eyes, Lord. Help me to see your face.
Open my eyes, Lord. Help me to see.

Open my ears, Lord. Help me to hear your voice.
Open my ears, Lord. Help me to hear.

Open my heart, Lord. Help me to love like you.
Open my heart, Lord. Help me to love.

I live within you. Deep in your heart, O Love.
I live within you. Rest now in me.

LISTEN

Now take time to listen to God speaking to you through Scripture.

Reader 1: A reading from the Gospel of Matthew

Then the king will say, 'For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say,

'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'

The Word of the Lord,
ALL: Thanks be to God.

SHARE

Pick a couple questions to talk about for a few minutes. If you get stuck on a question, just move on to a different one.

- Have you ever been hungry, thirsty, or a stranger somewhere? What did it feel like?
- Did someone feed you, give you a drink, or welcome you?
 - How did their actions make you feel?
 - Why do you think they helped you?
- Have you ever helped someone who was hungry, thirsty, or stranger?
 - How did you help them?
 - Why did you help them?
 - How did helping them make you feel?
- Who do you think are the 'least' of Jesus' brothers and sisters in your community and around the world today?
 - How can you help them?

LISTEN

In light of the conversation you just had, read through the reading from Genesis again.

Reader 2: A reading from the Gospel of Matthew

Then the king will say, 'For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'

The Word of the Lord,
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RESPOND

Now that we have listened to God speaking to us, how are we going to respond to His message?

'When did we see you?'

This week place an empty cup and/or plate in your prayer space. Use the empty cup and plate to help you think about Jesus and how He is present in those who are hungry and thirsty. For as Jesus said, "whatever you did for the these least brothers of mine, you did for me!"

SEND

Now that we have spent time in prayer with God, listening to His message and responded, we are sent. Challenged to go out and use what we have learned.

Leader:

God of bounty, your son Jesus embraced poverty and taught that the poor are blessed, for "theirs is the kingdom of God." Help us to step out of our certainties and comforts and keep our eyes fixed on him, so we can both see and serve him in the faces of the poor. Amen.

ALL: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.