

CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT



CCHD: Rooted in
Our Catholic Identity

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WELCOME TO THIS REFERENCE RESOURCE FOR DIOCESAN LEADERS

Being able to effectively articulate the Catholic mission and identity of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development is essential for all diocesan leaders.

This resource can help you explore more deeply why the work of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development is, at its core, an irreplaceable expression of our Catholic faith and mission.

We hope you will enjoy this guide and find it useful for your ministry.

HISTORY OF CCHD

Knowing our history gives important context to the present. Every diocesan leader should have a good understanding of the history of CCHD. CCHD's founding was a true sign of hope, representing a deep commitment by the Church to addressing the issues and problems facing society, just as CCHD continues to respond to important issues today.

The history of CCHD's founding is outlined in *Empowerment and Hope: 25 Years of Turning Lives Around*. Some important events in society and in the Church that were integral to CCHD's founding are paraphrased below.

In Society

The decade of the 1960s was one of idealism and chaos, of hope and despair. The decade began with the 1960 election of John F. Kennedy to the presidency of the United States. His three-year term was marked by the stirring rhetoric of the New Frontier and by projects such as Food for Peace and the Peace Corps. The era of simple idealism ended with Kennedy's assassination in November 1963.

The administration of Kennedy's successor, Lyndon Johnson, was marked by the turmoil of the civil rights movement and the success of historic civil rights legislation, the launching of the War on Poverty, the acceleration of American involvement in the Vietnam War, and the resulting anti-war movement. In 1967 and 1968, major urban areas in the United States—Watts, Detroit, and Newark—were literally on fire as despair turned to rage among poor black Americans. In April 1968, a nation still traumatized by Kennedy's assassination was rocked by the assassination of the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. and in June of the same year the assassination of the late president's brother, Senator Robert Kennedy of New York.

In the Church

During this time, the Church was experiencing the first blush of the fresh spirit of the Second Vatican Council. In addition to a focus on justice, the Council had also created a new sense of what it meant to be a church. Vatican II placed greater emphasis on national bishops' conferences, on "collegiality" and on the hierarchy's sharing of responsibility with the laity. The Council's Pastoral Constitution on *The Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)*, published in 1965, stated that the world's concerns

were the Church's concerns, especially concerns about poverty. Human dignity and peace were to be sought energetically in the public realm.

A number of developments in this period reflected the Church's growing concern with justice:

- During the Easter season of 1967, Pope Paul VI issued his encyclical *The Development of Peoples (Populorum Progressio)* that emphasized the obligation to pursue justice for the world's poor, and announced the establishment of the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace.
- In June 1967, the U.S. bishops established the Office of World Justice and Peace in the United States Catholic Conference (USCC).
- In 1967, a group of priests launched the Catholic Committee on Urban Ministry to explore ways for the Church to do more in poor urban centers across the country.
- In 1968, the bishops of Latin America, meeting in Medellin, Colombia, committed the Church to a "preferential option for the poor."
- In 1969 the World Synod of Bishops touched on justice issues, and preparations were begun for the 1971 Synod which focused on justice, declaring it a "constitutive" element of the Church's work.
- In 1970, the National Conference of Catholic Charities published *The Cadre Report*, which reaffirmed the Conference's traditional activities but also concluded that "advocacy for justice" was part of its mandate.
- The urban riots of the late '60s and the resulting national focus on problems of race and poverty spurred activity within the Catholic Church as well as within other U.S. institutions. Dioceses began opening or expanding offices of urban ministry and race relations. A number of dioceses set up local anti-poverty programs.

Timeline of Key Events

Late 60s: Dioceses set up urban ministry and anti-poverty programs in response to race riots

1967: Catholic Committee on Urban Ministry established

1968: *A Statement on the National Race Crisis: 1968*

1969: Annual Labor Day statement

1969: At Nov. meeting, bishops

In early 1968, the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders named "white racism" as an underlying cause of racial violence in the cities. Shortly afterwards in a speech, Cardinal Deardon acknowledged the accuracy of the commission's assessment, and he called for new programs focusing on housing, education and employment. Three days later, Deardon, speaking as president of the National Conference of Catholic

Bishops (NCCB)/ United States Catholic Conference, announced that the USCC Social Action Department had begun drafting recommendations to address the problems highlighted by the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders.

When the bishops met in April, they considered two related documents on the urban crisis, both drafted by the staff of the USCC Social Action Committee. The first was a broad policy statement; the second as a supporting technical paper. The bishops approved the first document, *A Statement on the National Race Crisis: 1968*, which contained three elements that later became the basis for the Catholic Campaign for Human Development: the need for self-determination for persons in poverty, the need to change attitudes, and the need to change unjust structures. The statement read (emphasis added):

We must recognize the fact that **racist attitudes and subsequent discrimination** exist not only in the hearts of men but in the fabric of their institutions... The Gospel of Christ and the good of the nation must motivate us to **encourage, support, and identify with the efforts of the poor** in their search for **self-determination**. It is chiefly through the attainment of **control over one's personal and social destiny** that destructive feelings of despair, frustration and helplessness can be eliminated. These efforts **require the help—free from all spirit of paternalism or condescension**—not only of organizations and institutions, but of each and every believer.

The second document, the supporting paper, was approved "in substance." It read, in part (emphasis added):

"It is chiefly through the attainment of control over one's personal and social destiny that destructive feelings of despair, frustration and helplessness can be eliminated."

A Statement on the National Race Crisis: 1968

Political, organizational, and economic independence were important elements in the earlier rapid integration of immigrant ethnic groups into the American society. **The Church must now support the black community in its efforts to achieve organizational, political and economic power** so necessary to break down existing patterns of dependence and frustration... **Credit unions and cooperatives**, parish interracial councils, the "twinning" of suburban and inner-city parishes are all commendable steps... **Community organizations**, the **training of responsible community leaders**, and **economic development** are vitally important if the black community is to break the bonds of dependency which have persisted for so many years.

This was followed by several additional important events:

- In the summer of 1968, Bishop Wright announced the formation of a forty-five-member Urban Task Force to be “the principal instrument of Catholic involvement in interreligious and civil programs to effect solutions to the twin crises of race and poverty.”
- The 1969 bishops’ annual Labor Day statement broke new ground, saying that the statement was addressed “to our own Church” because “the Catholic Church is in the position to exercise strong moral leadership and take the first steps by making a generous portion of its limited resources available for the development and the self-determination of the poor and powerless.”
- At their November 1969 meeting, the bishops passed a resolution for the National Catholic Crusade Against Poverty. The resolution called for a new annual collection to collect funds for self-help projects run by persons in poverty, noting: “There is an evident need for funds designated to be used for organized groups of white and minority poor to develop economic strength and political power in their own communities.” The resolution also noted the need to educate the non-poor about poverty in the U.S.
- The following year, in 1970, the Campaign for Human Development was established to help carry out this important mission.

SCRIPTURAL FOUNDATIONS FOR CCHD'S WORK

There is a clear Scriptural call for the faithful to work to create a just society. This Scriptural call to justice inspires CCHD's efforts to support work by low-income persons to address poverty in their communities.

The Old Testament

The Old Testament tells the story of how Yahweh leads the people out of oppression and gives them the gift of the Law to help them live in right relationship with God and the community. Here are a few key Old Testament events that are relevant to CCHD's anti-poverty work:

The Genesis story affirms the great dignity of the human person, made in God's image and likeness, oriented toward relationship, and given a role as God's stewards.

The Exodus from Egypt (Ex. 1:1-15:21) reveals God's faithfulness and love as he intervenes in human history to liberate his people from evil and injustice so that they can worship and live rightly as a faithful community.

The Legislative Codes—the Covenant Code (Ex. 21:1-23:33), the Law of Holiness (Lev. 17:1-26:46), and the Deuteronomic Code (Dt. 4:44-26:19)—exist as guides to right worship and right relationship with God and with others. Care for those who are poorest and most vulnerable is central.

The Covenant Code emphasizes God's closeness to those who are poor, while Deuteronomy emphasizes Israel's duty to use and care for the land—a gift from God—as its stewards (Dt. 6:10-11; 15:1-11). Debts are to be forgiven in the sabbatical (Ex. 23:10-11) and jubilee (Lev. 25:8-17) years, and all three codes call for care for and acceptance of the stranger, who might be a permanent resident, a person in transit, or a paid foreign laborer.

The Law of Holiness goes farthest, treating the stranger as co-responsible for holiness and requiring his integration into the community (Lev. 19:33-34). Temple worship recalls the memory of slavery, deliverance, and the arrival into the Promised Land, and temple

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tithes provide for the widows, orphans and strangers, along with the Levites (Dt. 14:28-29; 26:12-15).

The Prophets see justice as a response to the gift of God’s guidance of the Israelites in history, freeing them from slavery and giving them the gift of the Law. Hosea (4), Isaiah (1; 5; 32; 58), Jeremiah (5; 7; 9; 34), Ezekiel (18:5; 22; 34); Amos (5:7-17; 8); Micah (2), and Malachi (1:6-29) describe the result when leaders fail to follow God’s commandments, including those on social justice. The Prophets make themselves God’s spokesmen for persons in poverty. For example, the prophecy of Amos about the fall of the northern kingdom is tied to his criticism of the misuse and hoarding of wealth by the upper class while the poorest persons suffered (5:7-8:6). The prophet Jeremiah cries out against Judah’s rulers’ unfaithfulness of God—and the injustice that pervades society. The great sin of King Jehoiakim, for example, was his selfish use of power, building a new expensive palace using forced labor, for example, and ignoring the needs of those who are poor (5:26-29, 22:13).

As we reflect on the Old Testament, we might ask ourselves: how do CCHD groups today live Old Testament demands to care for poor persons, widows and orphans; welcome strangers; protect human dignity; be stewards of the land; and call powerful leaders to accountability?

The New Testament

Jesus is the fulfillment of Old Testament hopes, forging a new covenant between God and his people and making possible salvation. The repaired relationship between God and his people expands the moral response that is required of God’s people. Here are several examples from the New Testament:

The Beatitudes (Mt. 5:3-12 and Lk. 6:20-22): Jesus calls “blessed” those who are poor, meek, merciful, clean of heart, peacemakers, and persecuted, and who mourn and who hunger and thirst for righteousness. The Beatitudes affirm the “fundamental dignity” of “the most disadvantaged, whom God defends in a preferential manner.” The “afflicted” are those who “compassionately participate in the necessities and sufferings of others”; the “meek” are they who “do not use violence but respect their neighbors”; the “merciful” are those who “offer active help to the needy,” as in Mt. 25:31-46; and “peacemakers” are those who “do everything in their power to maintain and re-establish love-inspired

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- Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Bible and Morality*, no. 101

fellowship among human beings” (Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Bible and Morality*, nos. 101 and 47).

We might ask ourselves: how are the tireless leaders of CCHD groups who rise from poverty to defend human dignity and be peacemakers in communities living witnesses to the Beatitudes today?

Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5:17-48): Jesus takes the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament further. Instead of retaliation against an opponent, Jesus calls for turning the other cheek, breaking the chain of retribution; giving cloak as well as tunic; walking two miles when pressed into service for one; loving enemies (not only neighbors); and praying for persecutors.

Proclamation of the Kingdom: Jesus’ life and ministry repeatedly reveal God’s kingdom. When Jesus teaches about showing mercy to the needy (Lk. 16:19-31; Mt. 25:31-46) or granting pardon (Mt. 6:11, 14-15; 18:21-35), or shows concern for the weak and simple (Mk. 9:35-37; 10:13-16, Mt. 18:10-14), performs exorcisms, and heals the sick (Mt. 4:23-25, 9:35-36, 11:5; 15:29-31), these actions reveal that God’s saving action is not reserved only for the afterlife (*The Bible and Morality*, nos. 43, 47 and 133). Jesus’ actions reveal God’s kingdom (Lk. 4:18-19) and we are called to imitate them. *Many CCHD groups proclaim the Kingdom when they seek to break the cycle of violence in their communities and when they call attention to the plight of those who are in need, weak or sick.*

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The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats (Mt. 25:31-40) demonstrates the need for human activity in history to benefit those who are poor and marginalized to help establish the Kingdom on earth.

The Parable of the Talents (Mt. 25:14-30 and Lk. 19:12-27) calls for good administration of gifts received—both spiritual and material. The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 326) uses this parable to affirm that the proper use of material goods means today that economic activity should be at the service of the human person, used to show solidarity and be an instrument that fosters a more human society that protects the common good of all—*exactly the goals toward which many CCHD groups work.*

Power for Service: In Mark 10:35-45 and Luke 22:24-27 when James and John seek to be greatest in the kingdom, they are rebuked by Jesus, who redefines their definition of greatness. In contrast to the Old Testament understanding of greatness, Jesus denounces the rulers who want to be addressed as “Benefactors.” Instead, leaders should be the servants of all (also see Mk. 9:35, 10:43, Lk. 22:26). The scriptural vision of political leadership is that leaders must foster the growth of society’s members, achieve the common good, guarantee participation and expression for all, defend and promote human rights, and foster justice in society (*Compendium*, nos. 384-392). *Many CCHD groups work to hold accountable those who are in power, exhorting them to pay attention to the common good and the needs of those who are poor and vulnerable.*

Eucharistic Community: In 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 and 11:17-33, Paul shows that the fulfillment of the commandment of love must occur in community. In contrast to the apparent divisions and social stratification that characterized the community at Corinth, Paul presents a vision of “Eucharistic union” in which believers enter into communion with both God and one another: two unions so much intertwined that conduct which separates some from others in the community seems “incoherent.” The Church is “one body” which partakes of “one bread” (10:16-17), which is Christ’s body, and members of this body are called to conversion, to unity, and to mission (11:17-34) (*The Bible and Morality*, nos. 76-78). *Paul’s Eucharistic vision of persons “in communion” with one another is one that is clearly embraced by those CCHD groups which seek to create a better community, in which all are welcome and cared for.*

The Letter of James: The Pontifical Biblical Commission calls James a “manifesto for social justice” (no. 60) which echoes Amos, Micah and other prophets’ call to defend those in poverty. Christians are exhorted to be doers, not only hearers of the word (1:22) and to avoid showing partiality toward the rich (2:1-9) and defrauding laborers (5:1-6). The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace uses this last passage to support its arguments for payment of a just wage and the right of workers to strike (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, nos. 302-04).

In **Hebrews**, Jesus, the high priest and mediator (2:17), shows the way for people to fulfill demands of the new covenant, which requires a “new code of conduct” focused on faith, hope and charity. Love for God and for brothers and sisters, seeking peace, right conduct, and doing good (10:22-25, 12:14-17, 13:15-16) are all part of the letter’s argument that Christian worship is carried out through just living.

The Book of Revelation emphasizes the role of Christian witness in bringing about God's kingdom. Christ makes Christians into a "kingdom" through Baptism (1:5-6), and they become priests who reign on earth through their work to establish the kingdom (5:10, 20:6) and to become free from the riches of "Babylon," or Rome, the ruling power of the day. This happens within history through prayer, through personal witness—the "righteous deeds of the saints" (19:8), which include actions for justice that prepare the bride (the Church) for her wedding garments to become united with Christ (21:2) (*The Bible and Morality*, nos. 69-71 and 116-117). *Today, the involvement of many parishes, religious communities, Catholic organizations, and individual believers through participation in CCHD groups is a powerful witness to Christ's vision for our communities.*

Given the strong scriptural foundations for work for justice and peace, it is no wonder that many CCHD-funded groups choose biblical names for their organizations, such as AMOS, MICAH, ESTHER, etc. The Old Testament foundations for right and just living in community in response to our relationship with God, and for the preferential option for those in poverty, as well as the New Testament vision of God's promise of the kingdom and our role in ushering it forth, rightly inspire Christians to work toward a society in which the dignity of all can be respected.

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CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING FOUNDATIONS FOR CCHD’S WORK

CCHD-funded groups help the Church to carry out her responsibility to interpret and analyze the issues facing the world and help to create systems and structures that reflect the values of Catholic social teaching (Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, no. 29; *Caritas in Veritate*, nos. 12, 7; *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 221, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 116).

The U.S. Catholic bishops’ document, *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching*, summarizes Catholic social teaching using seven themes: the Life and Dignity of the Human Person; Family, Community and Participation; the Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable; Rights and Responsibilities; the Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers; Solidarity; and Care for Creation. These themes serve as a “starting point” and are complemented by additional and related themes which also appear in the long tradition of papal, conciliar, and episcopal documents. The work of CCHD-funded groups illustrates these themes.

*Efforts to call on leaders and all of society to recognize the intrinsic dignity of all people and to ensure that policies, laws, and systems place the human person at the center reflect CST’s concern for **human dignity**.*

The Life and Dignity of the Human Person

The human person is made in the image and likeness of God and possesses intrinsic dignity—in contrast to attributed or created dignity that society confers on people by virtue of various titles, qualities, or skills they might possess. Intrinsic dignity is based not on power, status, or abilities, but is inherent for every human being. The great dignity that all persons possess means that the good of the person should be at the center—the highest priority—of economic, social, and political life. All decision-making should ask how the human person will be impacted.

CCHD grantees work on a range of issues that seek to protect the dignity of every person, from efforts to root out systemic racism to those that seek recognition of the dignity and rights of disabled persons. One example is the Progress Center for Independent Living near Chicago, IL, which conducts intensive one-to-one peer mentoring of disabled persons, disability rights training, and outreach, community organizing and advocacy about issues that affect disabled persons. Efforts to call on leaders and all of society to recognize the intrinsic dignity of all people and to ensure that policies, laws, and systems place the human person at the center reflect CST’s concern for human dignity.

Authentic Human Development

Catholic social teaching views poverty as an insult to dignity. Poverty impedes the authentic development of the person. Poverty is not only material; it is also social and spiritual. Poverty erodes the ability of families to provide a healthy environment for learning and growth and creates obstacles to the development of the human person in community. Overcoming poverty does not simply mean ensuring that all have access to material wealth; authentic human development includes the whole of the person in every single dimension so that he or she might develop as fully as possible into the image of God in whom he or she was created (Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, nos. 14-21). Authentic development aims for more “human conditions” of life, where all can have what is needed to live in dignity, including not only fulfilling basic necessities, but also gaining knowledge, learning about culture, gaining awareness of others’ dignity, becoming concerned for the common good, and finally, entering into relationship with God (*Populorum Progressio*, no. 21). The ultimate goal of overcoming poverty and seeking human development is a deeper relationship with the human community and with Christ (*Caritas in Veritate*, nos. 11 and 18; Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, nos. 35-36; *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 186, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 118).

When CCHD grantees work to eliminate causes of poverty in their communities, they are working to overcome those conditions that impede human development, creating a situation in which all people can flourish and develop in all aspects of their personhood. In a video on the CCHD website, Fr. Toribio Guerrero, a pastor in Laredo, TX, tells the story of how one parishioner, Margarita, was only able to grow and develop in her faith and to become more active in parish life after experiencing empowerment, through the parish’s organizing efforts, to become a leader in addressing poverty.

Family

The human person is social by nature (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 12; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 1879; *Pacem in Terris*, no. 31), and it is first and foremost within the social unit of the family that people develop as human persons. The family is the most basic unit of society, where children are formed in their morals, values, and views, and where they are first taught to develop a

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relationship with God (John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 42). For this reason, the family unit is in need of special protection and society's laws, policies and institutions should support the well-being of the family (*Populorum Progressio*, no. 36 and *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 29). For example, *Quadragesimo Anno* is concerned about the impact on families when workers are not paid a sufficient wage, since the stress of making ends meet can limit parents' capacity to care for their children at home (Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*, no. 71), *Evangelium Vitae* emphasizes the need for social policies that support families (John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, no. 90), and in *Caritas in Veritate*, Benedict XVI discusses how unemployment and "uncertainty over working conditions" can affect a person's psychological stability, which in turn affects the stability of marriage and the family (*Caritas in Veritate*, no. 25 ; see also *Amoris Laetitia*, no. 44 and *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 162).

CST's concern for the protection of the family is reflected in the work of CCHD grantees to support policies that are pro-family and to help create conditions where families can be safe, healthy, and stable, instead of struggling under the weight of the difficulties of poverty. CCHD grantee Women's Action to Gain Economic Security (WAGES) tells the story of Evelin, whose family noticed a difference in her ability to be present to the family's needs due to safer and better working conditions attained because of the grantee's work.

Participation

Members of communities have both a right and responsibility to be civically involved by voting (if citizens), educating themselves about issues facing their communities, being politically active, and bringing their faith to the public sphere (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, no. 13). Everyone has an obligation to join efforts to make present the kingdom of God in their communities, acting as "leaven" in society (*Justitia in Mundo*, no. 49; *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 43; see also *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 276).

When CCHD grantees build organizations made up of poor persons and help them to be active in their communities and to use their voices to advocate on their own behalf, they are helping them to fulfill their duty to participate in public life.

For example, when 8,000 low-income tenants in Alexandria, VA were threatened with eviction, Tenants and Workers United (TWU) organized the tenants to engage in the political process so that the crisis could be averted. Subsequently, TWU helped tenants create Alexandria's first community-owned, limited-equity housing cooperative. TWU also created a youth program that empowers young people to learn about and then

help educate local leaders about issues around development and the need to protect low-income housing.

Subsidiarity

Subsidiarity emphasizes that when problems arise, the lowest levels of society should be allowed to solve them as possible, including first the individual, then the family, and then intermediary communities, with help from higher levels, such as the government, provided as needed (*Populorum Progressio*, no. 77, *Quadragesimo Anno*, nos. 79-80, *Mater et Magistra*, no. 53; *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 240; *Laudato Si'*, no. 157). Note that, while subsidiarity emphasizes action at the local level, it does not excuse government from its responsibilities, since sometimes that may very well be the most appropriate level to address a problem in the interest of the common good.

Members of local communities have first-hand experience of local problems and should have a voice in determining what solutions to those problems are chosen (*Sollicitudo rei Socialis*, no. 43; *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 169). Local communities must engage in social analysis from the ground up, exploring the causes of problems in the light of their faith, and proposing the solutions necessary to solve them (*Octogesima Adveniens*, no. 4). They should be supported with the resources they need to solve problems and implement solutions; when help from higher levels is needed, it should be available (*Quadragesimo Anno*, no. 80, *Centesimus Annus*, no. 48).

Subsidiarity says that the lowest levels of society should be allowed to solve problems when possible, with help from higher levels, such as the government, provided as needed.

Subsidiarity is linked to the preferential option for the poor, solidarity, and the common good (which will be discussed in more detail below): community members, in solidarity with one another, should work in particular to address problems that affect their weakest members—with those members participating in developing the solutions—and to transform their local setting so that the good of every individual member of society can be realized.

CCHD groups are a vehicle for low-income voices to be heard, and to be involved in decision making in communities. They make sure that those who are most affected have a voice in solving problems. They also demand accountability from higher levels to provide help and resources when needed.

For example, in Camden, NJ, area churches were convinced that the mayor’s solution of simply bringing in more law-enforcement officials would not solve the crime problem; rather, they suspected that drug crime might be related to the high number of abandoned buildings. Camden Churches Organized for People (CCOP) members enlisted Rutgers University to conduct a research study, and then CCOP brought the findings to the attention of the city council, which then agreed to change the city’s focus. When local government proved incapable of implementing an effective solution, they advocated for state intervention to finally get a handle on the crime plaguing the city.

Solidarity and the Common Good

Social by nature (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 12; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 1879; *Pacem in Terris*, no. 31), we are truly interdependent; our decisions affect many others in our communities and world, all of whom are our neighbors and our brothers and sisters. We must respond to this interdependence with the virtue of solidarity: a “moral and social attitude” that is “not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress” at the suffering of others, but rather “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” (*Sollicitudo rei Socialis*, no. 38). Pope Francis describes the parable of the Good Samaritan as a call to recommit to our common humanity and to respond in the face of suffering. Instead of accepting a “society of exclusion,” we must “act instead as neighbors, lifting up and rehabilitating the fallen for the sake of the common good” (*Fratelli Tutti*, no. 67).

Solidarity, then, requires work for the common good, or work to create the conditions in which every member of our one human family can flourish and the rights of every person can be fulfilled. The common good is not merely the overall good, but includes the good of each and every person. As one writer put it, “Rising tides may indeed lift all boats, but in terms of the Catholic notion of the common good, the conditions of each craft matters.”¹

CCHD groups call on public officials to enact policies that have a practical impact on the well-being of brothers and sisters in need and which promote the common good.

CCHD grantees work to create communities where all can flourish and this is an exhibition of solidarity and the common good. In doing this

¹ Robert F. Pecorella, “Property Rights, the Common Good and the State,” *Journal of Catholic Social Thought* 5, no. 2 (2008): 257.

work, they call on public officials to enact policies that have a practical impact on the well-being of brothers and sisters in need and which promote the common good.

For example, in the face of a high number of drownings related to a badly-constructed sewage system's incapacity to handle heavy rain, Communities Organized for Public Services in San Antonio helped low-income residents organize to gain a public commitment to fix the neglected portion of the system in the low-income area of the city.

Finally, solidarity requires that "the poor among themselves" work in solidarity with one another (*Sollicitudo rei Socialis*, no. 39; see also *Querida Amazonia*, no. 27). The CCHD funding criterion of low-income leadership encourages this solidarity.

Preferential Option for the Poor

Based in the scriptural concern for those who are poor and the obligation to give special attention to those who are vulnerable, including the orphan, the widow and the stranger, the preferential option for the poor affirms God's equal love for all, but notes that special attention is needed by persons who are poor and vulnerable (*Justicia in Mundo*, nos. 30-31; *Octogesima Adveniens*, no. 23; *Evangelii Gaudium*, nos. 197-199).

The wealthy have an obligation to help those in need (*Sollicitudo rei Socialis*, no. 42), as well as to always consider how policy decisions will affect persons in poverty (*Economic Justice for All*, no. 24). At the same time, everyone must work to help those who are marginalized to become empowered themselves, to be active members of society (*Centesimus Annus*, no. 58), and to "claim their legitimate rights" (*Sollicitudo rei Socialis*, no. 39; *Justicia in Mundo*, nos. 4 and 17).

The Puebla and Medellín documents of the Latin American bishops emphasize that the preferential option for the poor means not only promoting their well-being, but also listening to their voices, paying attention to their lived experience, and following their lead in addressing injustice.² In a series of World Meetings of Popular Movements, including [one held in the U.S.](#), and in the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis has lifted up the witness of the "popular movements," which insist that integral human development must go beyond "the idea of social policies being a policy *for* the poor, but never *with* the poor and never *of* the poor, much less part of a project that reunites peoples" (*Fratelli Tutti*, no. 169).

² Episcopal Conference of Latin America (CELAM), "Medellín documents: Justice," 445-454, and "Puebla document: Message to the Peoples of Latin America," in *Puebla and Beyond: Documentation and Commentary*, ed. John Eagleson and Philip Scharper, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1979), nos. 485, 733, 1134, 1136, 1142, 1145, 1217.

*When CCHD grantees advocate for special attention to be given to society's poorest, and for the creation of policies that benefit them, they are urging a preferential option for the poor. One example is Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights (GLAHR), **which develops grassroots leadership within immigrant communities in Atlanta, GA to defend the dignity of immigrants by challenging** anti-immigrant legislation like 287g policies and promoting the Dream ACT.*

Also, CCHD funding criteria require at least fifty percent of those who benefit from a grantee's work to be people living in poverty, and also require that the work of grantees be geared toward the elimination of the root causes of poverty and to enact institutional change.

Institutional Change

Based in the scriptural concern for those who are poor and the obligation to give special attention to those who are vulnerable, including the orphan, the widow and the stranger In the Catholic social tradition, love, or *caritas*, is what impels Christians to be concerned for the situation of our neighbors, and to respond (*Caritas in Veritate*, no. 7; *Economic Justice for All*, no. 120). Addressing injustice must go beyond meeting immediate needs to address often deeply-entrenched attitudes and flawed systems, structures, laws, and policies. Such structures perpetuate injustice and are sinful and in need of conversion, beginning with every individual and extending to society, its laws, policies and structures (*Sollicitudo rei Socialis*, nos. 36-40; *Gaudium et Spes*, nos. 25, 29; *Justicia in Mundo*, no. 16; *Evangelii Gaudium*, nos. 59, 188).

This "institutional path" of love, or caritas, is the focus for CCHD grantees. They are interested in attacking root causes and seeking changes in attitudes, systems, laws, and institutions that are in need of conversion. One example of how this looks in practice is that in the face of high unemployment among African Americans, the Boston Workers' Alliance (BWA) went beyond the traditional charitable solution of simply enrolling the unemployed in social services. When BWA's listening sessions found that many of the unemployed were ex-offenders who could not be hired because of stigma and because of a law that required even misdemeanors to remain on a person's record for ten years, BWA created a temporary employment agency for ex-offenders and also successfully lobbied to get the problematic law changed.

Rights and Responsibilities

Every person, by virtue of his or her dignity as a human person, has certain rights—both social and economic, such as food, shelter, healthcare, etc., that is, freedom “for” rights, and civil and political, such as speech, assembly, participation, etc., that is, freedom “from” rights (*Pacem in Terris*, no. 11-12). All persons not only have a right to these things; they also have duties to responsibly care for themselves and seek the fulfillment of their own rights, as well as duties to ensure that others’ rights are recognized and fulfilled. Individuals, communities, and civil authorities share this responsibility to ensure that the rights of all persons are protected (*Pacem in Terris*, no. 60; see also: *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 22).

CCHD grantees organize low-income persons to advocate for their own rights and call on civil authorities and on all of society to fulfill their duty to ensure the rights of all, such as a place to live (i.e. affordable housing), health (i.e. access to healthcare for all), employment (i.e. job creation and training), food and clothing (i.e. living wage), and so forth etc. For example, A Midwest Organizing Strategy, or AMOS, trains leaders from faith communities to advocate for their rights. Together, they have secured more affordable healthcare for uninsured patients, including free pre-natal care; helped pass a bill to ensure that home daycare providers are paid promptly and accurately; prevented the passage of legislation that would have limited the rights of immigrants; and helped begin a new workforce development initiative.

Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

Catholic social teaching emphasizes that workers have the right to a sufficient wage to support themselves and their families, to safe and decent working conditions, to social insurance in old age and unemployment, and to organize unions (*Laborem Exercens*, no. 18-20, *Centesimus Annus*, no. 15). These rights flow from human dignity. When these rights are not met, the worker’s dignity is threatened and work becomes inhuman, instead of affirming his or her role as co-worker with God (*Laborem Exercens*, nos. 7 and 10. See also: *Amoris Laetitia*, nos. 23-24 and *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 162).

CCHD groups organize workers to advocate for their rights. CCHD grantee Chinese Staff and Workers’ Association helped twenty-six workers file a landmark lawsuit against Liberty Apparel, whose subcontractor had been operating a modern-day sweatshop in New York City. There, workers made less than three dollars an hour, sometimes worked eighty hour weeks and were even denied their wages when the factory closed unexpectedly. The lawsuit, which won \$600,000 for the workers, set an important precedent in the industry in favor of workers’ rights.

Economic Justice

All economic activity should have as its ultimate goal the good of the human person; in other words, the person should be prioritized over economic gain (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 63; *Caritas in Veritate*, nos. 25 and 37). Economic activity should be oriented, above all, toward the common good.

The right to private property is balanced by the rights, needs, and well-being of others (*Quadragesimo Anno*, no. 57). The free market encourages individual creativity and growth, but can also create inequality. Guidance and intervention may be needed in order to ensure that the market works for the common good (*Centesimus Annus*, no. 48; *Economic Justice for All*, nos. 8, 93, and 154; and *Caritas in Veritate*, nos. 25, 36, and 65).

All the players in economic activity, from business owners to investors to consumers, have a role and responsibility to orient that economic activity toward the common good (*Economic Justice for All*, nos. 4 and 110. *Centesimus Annus*, no. 35). Businesses should not have mere profit as their goal, but ensure that their activity benefits, instead of harms, surrounding populations (*Populorum Progressio*, no. 70; *Caritas in Veritate*, no. 37, echoing *Centesimus Annus*, no. 35). Pope Francis writes, "Just as the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' sets a clear limit in order to safeguard the value of human life, today we also have to say 'thou shalt not' to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills" (*Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 53; see also: *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 22).

CCHD grantees work on a variety of economic justice issues, urging decisions and policies which place the good of persons above economic profit.

CCHD grantees work on a variety of economic justice issues, urging decisions and policies which place the good of persons above economic profit; they seek a more equal distribution of benefits and burdens; and they pursue the means for all to live with dignity. They also draw attention to inequalities in access to power and wealth and ask who gains from policies that concentrate benefits in the hands of a few and give some more access than others to decision-making.

For example, in Springfield, MA, low-income tenants learned that the federal subsidies keeping their housing affordable were set to expire and that owners planned to sell the building to developers, who would upgrade the units and force those unable to pay increased rent to move. Together with religious and community leaders, the tenants formed the Anti-Displacement Project (ADP), learned their legal rights, and ultimately

purchased the building, which is now a resident-controlled cooperative, guaranteeing the right of the low-income tenants to affordable housing.

Care for God's Creation

Creation is a gift from God, and we, its stewards, are called to care for and protect it. To fail to treat creation as gift and to instead “use with impunity” the earth’s resources is to fail in our obligation as stewards (*Sollicitudo rei Socialis*, no. 34). While our Creator allows us to make use of the environment to meet our needs, we must do so responsibly, remembering that it is a special gift that reveals the Creator to us.

CCHD groups are involved in numerous efforts to urge better care for creation and protection of those low-income communities that are the most likely to suffer the effects of environmental contamination.

As people who are both matter and spirit, we have a special relationship to the environment—one which must be “marked by solidarity and inter-generational justice” (*Caritas in Veritate*, no. 48). Thus, in hurting the environment, we also hurt ourselves, since “everything is connected” (*Laudato Si'*, no. 117). Catholic teaching recognizes that it is often the poorest and most vulnerable persons who are particularly affected by environmental challenges even though they are least responsible for causing them (*Caritas in Veritate*, no. 48; *Redemptor Hominis*, no. 8; and *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good; Laudato Si'*, nos. 25, 158). Thus, it becomes “incumbent upon the competent authorities to make every effort to ensure that the economic and social costs of using up shared environmental resources are recognized with transparency and fully borne by those who incur them, not by other peoples or future generations” (*Caritas in Veritate*, no. 50).

CCHD groups are involved in numerous efforts to urge better care for creation and protection of those low-income communities that are the most likely to suffer the effects of environmental contamination. Members of the Northern Plains Resource Council are currently working to educate citizens and local officials about the impacts of deep shale gas drilling, which uses the process of fracking to pump water, toxic chemicals, and synthetic sand under high pressure in order to crack the rock formation that contains gas. Fracking often leads to water contamination for local communities.

MISSION OF THE CHURCH AND CCHD

The work of CCHD is essential to the Church because it is an important vehicle for the Church to live out its mission in the world.

The Mission of the Church: Both Spiritual and Social

The mission of the Church is to reveal the love of God made manifest in Jesus Christ to every person (*Redemptoris Missio*, no. 2). Yet, this mission is not only spiritual. The mission of the Church also encompasses the social questions that affect the human person. Because of the “unbreakable bond between love of God and love of neighbor” that Pope Benedict XVI describes in *Deus Caritas Est* (no. 16)—and which Jesus describes in the Gospels in Mt. 22:35-40, Mk. 12:28-34, and Lk. 10:25-28—the spiritual and social questions are both of central importance to the Church which seeks to fulfill her mission. The extraordinary force of God’s love, Benedict XVI writes, must propel us to action on behalf of our neighbors, in whom God is present (*Deus Caritas Est*, no. 16; see also: *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 272 and *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 67).

As Pope Benedict XVI notes in *Deus Caritas Est*, God’s love must propel us to action on behalf of our neighbors, in whom God is present.

For this reason, there are “profound links” between evangelization and human advancement. “The man who is to be evangelized is not an abstract being but is subject to social and economic questions,” Paul VI notes. Thus, the proclamation of God’s love cannot occur “without promoting in justice and in peace the true, authentic advancement of man” (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 31). Pope Francis reminds us in *Gaudete et Exsultate* that essential to the “call to holiness” is the ability to recognize Christ in those who are poor or suffering (no. 95) as well as the “restoration of just social and economic systems” so that there is no more exclusion (no. 99).

The Church’s Mission Includes Direct Concern and Involvement in Human Affairs

Emphasizing the Church’s dual concern for the spiritual and the social, the Second Vatican Council proclaims, “The joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted, are the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well” (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 1). Part of the

mission of the Church is to enter into dialogue with the human family about the problems facing the world and humanity, “throwing the light of the Gospel on them and supplying humanity the saving resources which the church has received” from God (no. 3).

“The mission of the Church is not only to bring the message and grace of Christ to men but also to penetrate and perfect the temporal order with the spirit of the Gospel” (*Apostolicum Actuositatem*, no. 5).

The Church is described by the Second Vatican Council as the light of the world and salt of the earth; the people of God, made one; the “mystical body of Christ” that includes both the divine and human (*Lumen Gentium*, nos. 9, 4 and 8); “a leaven”; and “the soul of humanity” since it “travels the same journey” as humanity and works to transform it (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 40).

The images reaffirm the Church’s call to be directly involved in the earthly structures and systems that affect humankind. This sentiment is affirmed in *Apostolicum Actuositatem*, when the Second Vatican Council writes: “The mission of the Church is not only to bring the message and grace of Christ to men but also to penetrate and perfect the temporal order with the spirit of the Gospel” (no. 5).

Proclaiming the Kingdom Involves Liberation from Injustice

In *Redemptoris Missio*, John Paul II describes how Jesus’ proclamation of the Kingdom included bring good news to the poor, healing the sick, and transforming human relationships (nos. 14-15). Jesus’ life, work and teachings are evidence that working for liberation is part of proclaiming the Kingdom of God. “Working for the kingdom means acknowledging and promoting God’s activity, which is present in human history and transforms it,” John Paul writes. “Building the kingdom means working for liberation from evil in all its forms” (no. 15). Pope Francis writes, “Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 187).

“Building the kingdom means working for liberation from evil in all its forms.”

John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, no. 15

When CCHD groups work to respond to the griefs and anguishes facing communities, when they empower those who are poor to experience liberation from injustice, they are

doing more than simply “good work.” They are helping the Church to live out her mission as salt, light, and leaven to transform the structures that prevent people and communities from being able to develop authentically. CCHD groups are a vehicle for the Church to fulfill her mission, which includes responding to social questions and seeking human advancement.

CCHD AND THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

What is the New Evangelization?

The New Evangelization calls all followers of Christ to be formed in the faith, celebrate the faith, and be witnesses to the ends of the earth, proclaiming the good news to all people everywhere, starting with those in our own Church.

The work of the Church is to bring all people into relationship with God, and also to transform and sanctify the society in which we live (U.S. Catholic bishops, Disciples Called to Witness: The New Evangelization). Thus, “the Church teaches that social justice is an integral part of evangelization, a constitutive dimension of preaching the gospel, and an essential part of the Church’s mission (U.S. bishops, Communities of Salt and Light).

The New Evangelization was first introduced by Blessed John Paul II, but has roots in the teaching of Pope Paul VI and the Second Vatican Council. Pope Benedict XVI established a Year of Faith from Oct. 11, 2012 through Nov. 24, 2013 during which all Catholics were called to be evangelized and then go forth to evangelize. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ work during this year focused on inviting Catholics to grow in faith; inspiring confidence in the gospel and teachings of the faith as expressed in a vibrant sacramental life; and “engaging believers in their vocation to be witnesses who transform society through living and sharing their faith in Jesus Christ and giving recognition to the life and dignity of the human person.”

Quotes on the New Evangelization

Here are some quotes from documents about the New Evangelization that illustrate the strong tie between the new evangelization and our work for life, dignity, justice and peace.

The New Evangelization and the Witness of Love

“Faith without charity bears no fruit, while charity without faith would be a sentiment constantly at the mercy of doubt. Faith and charity each require the other, in such a way that each allows the other to set out along its respective path. Indeed, many Christians dedicate their lives with love to those who are lonely, marginalized or excluded, as to those who are the first with a claim on our attention and the most important for us to support, because it is in them that the reflection of Christ’s own face is seen. Through faith, we can recognize the face of the risen Lord in those who ask for our love. ‘As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me’ (Mt 25:40). These words are a warning that must not be forgotten and a perennial invitation to return the love by which he takes care of us. It is faith that enables us to recognize Christ and it is his love that impels us to assist him whenever he becomes our neighbor along the journey of life. Supported by faith, let us look with hope at our commitment in the world, as we await ‘new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells’ (2 Pet 3:13; cf. Rev 21:1).”

- Pope Benedict XVI, *Porta Fidei*, no. 14

“From the heart of the Gospel we see the profound connection between evangelization and human advancement, which must necessarily find expression and develop in every work of evangelization. Accepting the first proclamation, which invites us to receive God’s love and to love him in return with the very love which is his gift, brings forth in our lives and actions a primary and fundamental response: to desire, seek and protect the good of others.”

- Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 178

Charitable Works and Social Justice Bring Us Closer to Christ

“Increasingly, we recognize that generosity of spirit and commitment to charity and justice are vehicles to bring people into relationship with Jesus and his church. Social justice and direct service opportunities provide powerful experiences with the person of Jesus, especially for adolescents and young adults.”

- U.S. Catholic Bishops, *Disciples Called to Witness: The New Evangelization*

“Additionally, the works of charity and justice as well as the promotion of solidarity, justice, peace and stewardship of creation build up the kingdom of God. Increasingly, we recognize that generosity of spirit and commitment to charity and justice are vehicles to bring people into relationship with Jesus and his church. Social justice and direct service opportunities provide powerful experiences with the person of Jesus, especially for adolescents and young adults. Service, when understood as serving Christ in others and as a means to share the Gospel, has the ability to bring the server and the one being served closer to Christ.”

- U.S. Catholic Bishops, *Disciples Called to Witness: The New Evangelization*

The Goal of the Ecology of the Human Person

"The goal of the Church's entire educational commitment is easily identified, namely, working to construct what Pope Benedict XVI calls an 'ecology of the human person'. "There is need for what might be called a human ecology, correctly understood. [...] The decisive issue is the overall moral tenor of society. If there is a lack of respect for the right to life and to a natural death, if human conception, gestation and birth are made artificial, if human embryos are sacrificed to research, the conscience of society ends up losing the concept of human ecology and, along with it, that of environmental ecology. It is contradictory to insist that future generations respect the natural environment when our educational systems and laws do not help them to respect themselves. The book of nature is one and indivisible: it takes in not only the environment but also life, sexuality, marriage, the family, social relations: in a word, integral human development. Our duties towards the environment are linked to our duties towards the human person, considered in himself and in relation to others. It would be wrong to uphold one set of duties while trampling on the other. Herein lies a grave contradiction in our mentality and practice today: one which demeans the person, disrupts the environment and damages society."

- Synod of Bishops, "The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith, no. 21, quoting Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, no. 51

The New Evangelization and the Transformation of the Temporal Order

"Evangelization needs to be seen as the process through which the Church, moved by the Spirit, proclaims and spreads the Gospel in the whole world, in conformity with magisterial teaching which has been summarized in the following manner: 'urged on by charity [evangelization] penetrates and transforms the entire temporal order, acquiring and renewing cultures, and is a witness among peoples of the new way of being and living, which is basic to the Christian identity.'"

- Synod of Bishops, "The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith," no. 12, quoting Congregation for the Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis*, 1997, no. 48

"A Christian life lived with charity and faith is the most effective form of evangelization. Evangelization testifies to the transformative power of the Gospel and the mission of the church to sanctify society..."

- U.S. Catholic Bishops, *Disciples Called to Witness: The New Evangelization*

In Need of Evangelization: The Economy

"A fourth sector in which changes call for the Church's evangelizing activity, is the economy. On many occasions, the Magisterium of many Popes has denounced the growing disproportion in the northern and southern hemispheres in access to resources and their distribution as well as the damage to creation. The persistent economic crisis today illustrates the problem of using material forces to establish rules in a global market intended to ensure greater justice in relations among peoples. Although the communications media is giving less coverage to these problems, beginning with the plight of the poor, the Church needs to become more aware of these concerns and take concrete measures to address them."

- Synod of Bishops, "The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith," no. 6

"Just as the commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' sets a clear limit in order to safeguard the value of human life, today we also have to say 'thou shalt not' to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills."

- Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 53

In Need of Evangelization: Civil and Political Life

"In this sector [civil and political life], the Gospel must be transmitted in the following endeavors: the duty to seek peace; the development and liberation of peoples; improvement in forms of world and national governments; the construction of possible forms of listening, living together, dialogue and collaboration by various cultures and

As we reflect on the New Evangelization, we can easily see how CCHD groups provide a vehicle for Christians to act as powerful witnesses of love who follow Christ's example of welcoming the stranger and healing the sick, and who live out the Church's mission to transform and sanctify society.

religions; the safeguarding of the rights of persons, entire peoples and, above all, minorities; support for the most vulnerable in society; and the stewardship of creation and the commitment to the future of our planet.”

- Synod of Bishops, “The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith,” no. 6

Likewise, the U.S. Catholic bishops identify particular areas in need of the hope of the Gospel, including current instances of war, injustice, the erosion of human rights, including religious freedom, disparity in economic development, and unequal distribution of goods. They note that “the new evangelization offers hope” in the face of these problems. We must be witnesses, the bishops say, to the “transformative power of the Gospel and the mission of the Church to sanctify society” (Disciples Called to Witness: The New Evangelization).

As we reflect on the New Evangelization, we can easily see how CCHD groups provide a vehicle for Christians to act as powerful witnesses of love who follow Christ’s example of welcoming the stranger and healing the sick. CCHD groups help us to carry out our work of transforming and sanctifying society, including economic, social and political life.

CCHD AND LIVING THE SACRAMENTAL CALL TO MISSION

Our Catholic call to mission in the world is also reflected in our understanding of the seven Sacraments. These short, two-page handouts from the Justice, Peace and Human Development website at www.usccb.org/jphd in the “Resources and Tools” section, detail how the sacraments lead us to mission as Christ’s disciples:

[Baptism: Incorporated into Christ's Body, Sent on Christ's Mission](#) | [en Español](#) Baptism is the rite of initiation into the Christian community. Through Baptism, we become members of the Body of Christ and are called to imitate Christ’s mission.

[Confirmation: Strengthened by the Spirit, Called to Action](#) | [en Español](#) Confirmation enriches the baptized with the strength of the Holy Spirit so that they can better witness to Christ in word and deed. Anointed by the Holy Spirit at Confirmation, Christians strengthen their bond with the Church and become better equipped to carry out the Church’s mission of love and service.

*The Sacraments lead us
to mission as Christ’s
disciples.*

[Eucharist and Social Mission: Body of Christ, Broken for the World](#) | [en Español](#) The Eucharist, celebrated as a community, teaches us about human dignity, calls us to right relationship with God, ourselves and others, invites us to community and solidarity, and sends us on mission to help transform our communities, neighborhoods and world.

[Penance: Reconciled to Right Relationship, Called to Heal and Restore](#) | [en Español](#) Through the sacrament of Penance, we are called to examine our consciences to identify those ways in which we are not in right relationship with God and with others. This examination also challenges us to recognize our own participation in the “structures of sin” which degrade others’ lives and dignity, and to do what we can to repair the damage done.

[Anointing of the Sick: Joined to Christ, Witnesses of Hope and Healing](#) | [en Español](#) Through the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, the Church carries out Jesus’ mission of compassion and healing for the sick. As Christ’s disciples, we have a role in alleviating the suffering of others. The one who is ill can also be a minister to others. By uniting their suffering to Christ, those who are sick can be signs of faith and witnesses of Christ’s resurrection to the entire community.

[Marriage: United in Love, Strengthened for Service](#) | [en Español](#) In Christian marriage, spouses model the love and self-giving of Christ. By giving of themselves and serving one

another, their family and community, they help one another live out Christ's call to discipleship, love and service. Marriage provides a foundation for a family committed to community, solidarity and Jesus' mission in the world.

[Holy Orders: Ordained to Serve, Gather, Transform and Send](#) | [en Español](#) In gathering the community, modeling Christ's love for those who are poor, presiding at Eucharist, and evangelizing social realities, ordained ministers help Christians to imitate Christ's mission of love and justice.

As baptized persons sent on mission, and as disciples intent on living the Eucharist in their daily lives, CCHD groups provide Catholics a vehicle to live out their sacramental life beyond church doors.

CCHD AND THE TWO FEET OF LOVE IN ACTION

“Social Justice” and “Charitable Works” are two different, but complimentary, ways that we act in response to God’s love. We call these the “Two Feet of Love in Action.”

Social Justice

Pope Benedict XVI calls Social Justice, the “primary way of charity,” or love, because “if we love others with charity, then first of all we are just towards them” (*Caritas in Veritate*, no. 6). We step with the “Social Justice” foot when we work to address the root causes of problems facing our communities by advocating for just public policies and helping to change the social structures that contribute to suffering and injustice at home and around the world (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, nos. 36-40; *Evangelii Gaudium*, nos. 59, 188; *Gaudete et Exsultate*, no. 99). We walk with the Social Justice foot when we work to foster peace and justice and work for long-term change in local and global communities. We also step with this foot when we support the efforts of low-income persons to transform their communities.



Charitable Works

The second “foot” of love in action is “Charitable Works.” We step with the Charitable Works foot when we work to aid or assist others both locally and globally to meet their immediate, short-term needs. Examples include engaging in direct service or providing food, clothing, shelter, or monetary assistance to help those in need. Pope Francis reminds us that our “gaze of faith” must lead us to go forth and encounter God himself, who dwells in the homes, streets and squares of those in poverty (*Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 71). Thus, part of our loving response to

CCHD groups are an example of the “Social Justice” foot of Love in Action because they realize that sometimes we have to address *injustices within systems and structures* to ensure that those who are disadvantaged have equal opportunities to succeed.

God leads us to “attend constantly to man's sufferings and his needs, including material needs” (*Deus Caritas Est*, no. 19). Charitable works, he says, are “the simple response to immediate needs and specific situations: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for and healing the sick, visiting those in prison, etc.” (no. 31).

CCHD and the Two Feet

What makes CCHD’s efforts distinct from the work of national Catholic anti-poverty programs, such as Catholic Charities USA, which focus on Charitable Works, is CCHD’s focus on Social Justice.

When CCHD groups work to address issues such as workers’ rights, affordable housing, access to health care, immigrants’ rights, economic opportunity, improving education systems, and environmental justice, the groups are working to address not the symptoms of these issues, but their systemic and structural causes.

CCHD groups are an example of the “Social Justice” foot of Love in Action because they realize that sometimes we have to address injustices within systems and structures to ensure that those who are disadvantaged have equal opportunities to succeed. The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* describes social justice as addressing “the social, political and economic aspects and, above all, the structural dimension of problems and their respective solutions” (no. 201). This is exactly the focus of CCHD groups.

This work is distinct from the social services programs that we often offer at our parishes or agencies to address immediate needs, such as feeding a hungry person at a soup kitchen, or tutoring underprivileged children, or helping women in crisis pregnancy through counseling and material support. CCHD challenges us to consider how structural and systemic solutions are also needed to eliminate the causes of these problems and reduce the need for these ministries. For example:

- Working persons can become **homeless** because their wages are too low to afford costly urban rent. CCHD groups might work to ensure that just wages are paid to workers and that

CCHD challenges us to consider how our ministries can not only meet the immediate needs of individuals (charitable works), but also change policies and structures so that it is easier meet everyone’s needs in the long-term (social justice).

affordable housing options are available for low-income people.

- CCHD groups might ask why the children we tutor in our church ministry are not getting a quality **education** at school. They might organize parents to be more involved in the school system and seek accountability for government leaders and school systems to ensure that children get a better education.
- CCHD groups often advocate for policies that create the conditions for more women to **choose life**, such as access to affordable childcare and other support for single parents.

CCHD challenges us to consider how our ministries can not only meet the immediate needs of individuals (charitable works), but also change policies and structures so that it is easier meet everyone's needs in the long-term (social justice).

For more information: "Two Feet of Love in Action" brochure, adult facilitator's guide, and youth ministry resource. Find these at www.usscb.org/jphd in the "Resources and Tools" menu item.

FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP AND CCHD

Participation in political life is essential for all Catholics. When we participate in political life, we are living out our baptismal call to be disciples who are salt for the earth and light for the world. We are also living out our obligation to walk with the Social Justice “foot” of love in action as we consider how we can influence elected officials and the policies for which they are responsible so that they seek the common good.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us, “It is necessary that all participate, according to his position and role, in promoting the common good. This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person ... As far as possible citizens should take an active part in public life” (nos. 1913, 1915).

This theme is also a major theme of [*Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States*](#). The U.S. Catholic bishops quote this excerpt from the *Catechism* and they remind all Catholics: “**Responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in political life is a moral obligation**” (no. 13).

How are Catholics called to participate in political life? There are many possibilities. We can:

- Learn about issues affecting our communities by attending community events, speakers and forums.
- Engage with elected officials by writing letters, sending emails and making phone calls on a regular basis to let them know what you think, and encouraging them to take positions that prioritize those who are poor and vulnerable.
- Visit our elected officials in person.
- Vote in an informed, responsible and faithful manner.
- Attend public meetings, vigils and marches in support of human life and the dignity of the human person.

“It is necessary that all participate, according to his position and role, in promoting the common good. This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person.”

Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 1913

As the bishops note, these kinds of activities are not only for during election, but all year round. As faithful citizens, we are called to be engaged citizens and community members all year round.

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There are many parallels between the ways just listed for Catholics can participate in public life, and the activities in which CCHD groups are regularly involved. *CCHD groups inform community members about how issues, decisions and policies affect those who are poor and vulnerable. They provide opportunities for residents to engage with elected officials, including community meetings to which they invite public officials. They arrange events such as vigils, marches, and many other opportunities to be public witnesses to life and dignity. In short, they provide opportunities for Catholics and others to live out the call to faithful citizenship.*

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER DENOMINATIONS AND RELIGIONS AND WITH PEOPLE OF GOOD WILL

Many CCHD groups bring together people of different faith traditions to work cooperatively for the common good. Catholic teaching about ecumenical and interfaith collaboration affirms that such efforts are a powerful witness of unity and an inspiring means of working together for good.

Ecumenical and Interfaith Collaboration is a Witness to Unity

In a time when the divisions between religions can seem scandalous to many, collaboration for justice between different churches and ecclesial communities is a witness to unity. The Second Vatican Council writes, "Cooperation among Christians" on issues such as poverty, illiteracy, and housing "vividly expresses the relationship which in fact already unites them" (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, no. 12). Even collaboration with non-Christian religious helps the Church fulfill her "task of promoting unity and love among men" (*Nostra Aetate*, no. 1; see also *Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 250 and *Fratelli Tutti*, nos. 5, 29).

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Collaboration Furthers the "Dialogue of Works"

The "dialogue of works" for "goals of a humanitarian, social, economic, or political nature which are directed toward the liberation and advancement of mankind" is one of the four essential forms of dialogue between Catholics and non-Christians identified in the Secretariat for Non-Christians' *The Attitude of the Church Toward the Followers of Other Religions* (no. 31). In *Dialogue and Proclamation*, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue similarly used the term "dialogue of action," to refer to collaboration with others "for the integral development and liberation of people" (no. 42). For Christians, as we shed the light of the Gospel on social life, our actions for justice are a silent, but powerful, witness to others (*Unitatis Redintegratio*, no. 12).

Collaboration Increases Effectiveness

On a practical level, work for justice is more effective when it is done together. Building on our common commitment to the dignity of all human beings and the rights that flow

from this dignity, our combined efforts can contribute to the recognition of human dignity and the promotion of peace (*Nostra Aetate*, no. 5). Together, we can work to “preserve and encourage the spiritual and moral truths” that we share in common and more effectively “promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values” (*Nostra Aetate*, nos. 2 and 3). In *Ut Unum Sint*, John Paul II affirms the need for such “practical cooperation” (no. 40) in “bold projects aimed at changing the world by inculcating respect for the rights and needs of everyone, especially the poor, the lowly and the defenseless” (no. 43).

Collaboration with People of Good Will

Collaboration for good extends beyond ecumenical and interfaith efforts. The Second Vatican Council exhorted: “Let Christians labor and collaborate with others in rightly regulating the affairs of social and economic life,” specifically working to uplift human dignity, create better living conditions, address poverty and disease, and secure peace in the world. “The faithful should be eager to offer prudent aid to projects sponsored by public and private organizations, by governments, by various Christian communities, and even by non - Christian religions,” the Council wrote (*Ad Gentes*, no. 12).

The Christian journey toward the heavenly city “involves not less, but greater commitment to working with everyone for the establishment of a more human world.”

Second Vatican Council,
Gaudium et Spes, no. 57

Christians should work with people of good will to “hold discussions” and “initiate research on social and public practices which should be improved in line with the spirit of the Gospel” (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*, no. 10). Christians should also “share in the efforts” of those seeking to attain better living conditions and those working for peace, and to “be eager to collaborate in projects initiated by private, public, state, or international bodies, or by other Christian or even non-Christian communities” (*Ad Gentes*, no. 12). *Gaudium et Spes* notes that there is one “human culture” and one “vocation of humanity” that unites all people, and that the word of God is “the true light that enlightens everyone” and which inspires positive advances in human progress (no. 57). Thus, the Christian journey toward the heavenly city “involves not less, but greater commitment to working with everyone for the establishment of a more human world” (no. 57).

CCHD-funded organizations provide a public vehicle for collaboration by the institutional Church and by individual Catholics with those of other faiths and with all people of good will. This collaboration is a witness to unity among religions and among the human race. It is also a way to further the “dialogue of works,” and a means to more effectively assist in the work of making God’s kingdom present on earth.

COLLABORATION: ITS VALUE AND ITS CHALLENGES

As we saw in the previous section, in order to maximize the effectiveness our work, and in testimony to our common human values toward promotion of human life and dignity, the Church values collaboration with others.

A History of Collaboration

Church teaching has long upheld the value of collaboration. Historically, we see that even in *Rerum Novarum*, the first of the modern-day social encyclicals, Leo XIII notes that although forming Christian associations was the ideal option, Catholics could legitimately join secular associations as well in order to more effectively organize themselves to guarantee their rights (no. 54). Likewise, *Quadragesimo Anno* (for example, nos. 87, 96, and 138) and *Divini Redemptoris* articulate a vision of “mutual aid and collaboration” (no. 31) that should exist between all parts of society, including the Church, in order to seek the common good of all.

Present Day Examples of Collaboration

In the present day, examples are numerous that testify to the Church’s commitment to collaboration with others—who may not share all its values—on issues and concerns about which both parties can agree. For example:

- *The Vatican* sends emissaries, delegates and ambassadors to recognize governments that undoubtedly hold positions or promote policies with which the Vatican does not agree. It does not remove its ambassador in protest each time a bad law is passed.
- The Vatican observes and participates regularly at the United Nations, often making interventions. At times it may withdraw in protest to wrong-doing, but the Vatican generally maintains relationships and works on a regular basis with governments and agencies around the world.
- *The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops* likewise cooperates regularly works in partnership with others to pass legislation. By its very nature, legislation often includes many programs and provisions, only some of which the bishops agree with. The Conference considers each piece of legislation individually, analyzing it and assessing whether there is greater value in supporting or not supporting the legislation.
- *State Catholic Conferences* regularly do the same, working with a diverse array of allies from Focus on the Family to the American Civil Liberties Union.

Participation in coalitions is important in order for our advocacy to be effective. One director of a State Catholic Conference reflected on how State Catholic Conferences' participation in coalitions are an important way to optimize financial and human resources around an issue, increase impact on policymakers, attract media attention, create effective educational efforts, and even draw attention to the moral aspects of an issue. He also noted that the Church's presence in coalitions can offer the opportunity to influence a coalition not to take a problematic position or action.³ Similarly, Cardinal Turkson, who was President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace from 2009-2017, has discussed the value of Holy See's participation at the *United Nations*. He sees the Church's voice as "serving as a reminder of certain issues that are often shoved under the rug," particularly issues of human life and dignity, "even if the position of the Holy See is not adopted."⁴

Collaboration with others is not always appropriate; its value must be discerned for each particular situation. Those considering collaboration will consider the positive benefits as well as possible negative effects for each individual situation.

Collaboration and CCHD

In his draft paper on "Cooperation and Collaboration" as it relates to CCHD, Fr. Daniel Mindling notes:

Collaboration through grants bring about not only effective solidarity with the poor and vulnerable, but also gives rise to a visible, accountable, participatory community of solidarity among collaborators themselves and with all who are served. Projects undertaken are subject to moral guidelines because the actions, methods, and goals of grant recipients become in some way the action, methods and goals of CCHD (and therefore the donors, Bishops and indeed the Church). The choice to enter into a collaborative effort and bring about a community of solidarity and public witness of collaborative efforts is also subject to moral evaluation. CCHD (and therefore the donors and Bishops) should only enter into such a community if its partners respect CCHD's identity and mission, contribute to it, and

"Collaboration through grants bring about not only effective solidarity with the poor and vulnerable, but also gives rise to a visible, accountable, participatory community of solidarity."

Fr. Daniel Mindling, OFM

³ Edward E. Dolejsi, "The Limits of Coalitions and Compromises: The California State Catholic Conference," in *American Catholics and Civic Engagement: A Distinctive Voice*, ed. Margaret O'Brien Steinfels (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004), 110-125.

⁴ Jason Adkins, "Social Justice and Evangelization (Part 2), Interview with Cardinal Peter Turkson," *Zenit*. Nov. 2, 2010, <http://www.zenit.org/article-30831?l=english>.

do not contradict either the moral principles which guide its efforts or clear Church teaching on matters such as marriage and family or the dignity of human life. CCHD exercises a prophetic role in its advocacy for the poor. This prophetic witness (the opposite of scandal) helps clarify the morality of collaboration and cooperation by the CCHD with those applying for grants.

CCHD provides guidelines for diocesan directors and CCHD grantees about when cooperation with others through a coalition is appropriate, and when it is not. In general, participation in a coalition may be appropriate when the coalition's purpose and work is consistent with Church teaching and the mission of CCHD. Participation in a coalition is never appropriate when the focus or work of the coalition includes positions that contradict Church teaching. Also, every case should be considered on a case-by-case basis with the consultation of the local bishop.

Teaching on Cooperation in Evil

Although an individual assessment should be made for each situation, it may also be helpful to consider Catholic teaching on different kinds of cooperation in evil. Fr. Mindling's draft paper on "Cooperation and Collaboration" summarizes Church teaching on various levels of cooperation, including formal vs. material cooperation; active vs. passive cooperation; indispensable vs. dispensable cooperation; mediate vs. immediate cooperation; and proximate vs. remote cooperation. He also discusses weighing scandal in otherwise licit cooperation and prudential judgment. All CCHD diocesan directors should read this document thoroughly in order to review Church teaching in this area.

HOW ORGANIZING STRATEGIES CAN SUPPORT LIFE AND DIGNITY: POWER

To help Catholic parishes understand how organizing strategies can be used to move forward their witness and ministry as disciples, the USCCB Justice for Immigrants Campaign worked with a community organizer to create *Enriching Our Diversity: A Parish outreach, education, and Organizing Manual in support of the Justice for Immigrants Campaign of the USCCB*. In this section, we will refer to this manual in abbreviated form, as JFI Organizing Manual. The Manual details the utility of several important organizing concepts for the work of Catholic parishes.

Negative Associations with Power

Many community organizing groups talk about “building power.” There are many connotations that come with the word “power.” Many people associate the word with having “power over” think of the negative manifestations of power, including top-down control, manipulation, trampling of rights, etc. However, this is not the type of power that community organizing groups are talking about.

Love-Thy-Neighbor Power

The JFI Organizing Manual distinguishes the use negative “power over” from the “Love-Thy-Neighbor” power that community organizing groups have in mind when they talk about power. They are talking about a positive use of democratic power to seek the well-being of every person, or the common good. This democratic power rests in relationships built among community members. In other words, when enough people of good will come together, they can hold public officials accountable and call attention to the needs of those who are poor and vulnerable.

The JFI Manual notes: “power or the capacity to act in the world lies in our ability to create a broad enough pool of relationships to act powerfully in the world where we can effectively act on solving our problems and realizing our community hopes and dreams. The focus is on power with the people rather than power over.”

Healthy, democratic power is surely the business of Christian communities and people of good will who wish to seek the common good of their communities and truly live out love for neighbor.

A Healthy Understanding of Power

Thus, it should be clear that power does not need to be understood in a negative way. Theologian Daniel Finn reminds us that neither force, nor coercion, nor influence, are inherently immoral. For example:

- *Force* often involves preventing someone from doing something that would harm others (e.g. passing a law to prevent a developer from tearing down a homeless shelter).
- *Coercion* often uses threat to pressure someone to do something they might not otherwise do (e.g. the implicit or explicit threat of not re-electing an elected official unless he or she addresses violence in our neighborhood).
- *Influence* often involves communication to persuade through use of reason (e.g. presenting evidence to build the case for a particular policy decision).

These examples all allow the decision-maker to maintain his or her ability to choose freely and exert resistance, and in each of the cases, there will probably be a democratic back-and-forth that will result in some type of compromise.

“Love-thy-neighbor” power means that “the capacity to act in the world lies in our ability to create a broad enough pool of relationships to act powerfully in the world where we can effectively act on solving our problems and realizing our community hopes and dreams. The focus is on power with the people rather than power over.”

- JFI Organizing Manual

Here is an example of how one parish used democratic, “love-thy-neighbor” power to stand up for human life and dignity in its community. In New Orleans, St. Peter Claver parish seemed to bury all-too-frequently young men and women affected by the violence and illegal activity that spilled out of a local nuisance club, the Domino Effect Night Club. The parish’s Organizing Ministry met to strategize. They knew that something must be done. With support from other member institutions of the CCHD-funded group MICAH, they talked to their fellow parishioners and knocked on doors, building democratic power. They met with public officials. They created great pressure and energy to close the nuisance bar down. In 2011, community members marched to the nuisance bar to hold a prayer vigil and press conference. Given the high level of community interest and pressure, the response by law enforcement was swift: there was an investigation, arrests, and the club closed in response to the community’s demands.

It should now be clear that in a system where the ability to be heard is sometimes based on who has money and connections, CCHD groups' work to help people bring their voices together helps ensure that those without money or connections can still be heard. Healthy, democratic power is surely the business of Christian communities and people of good will who wish to seek the common good of their communities and truly live out love for neighbor.

HOW ORGANIZING STRATEGIES CAN SUPPORT LIFE AND DIGNITY: BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS, IDENTIFYING LEADERS

Building Relationships

Why do we need to work to build relationships with one another within our communities? The first reason is because our celebration of the Eucharist each Sunday reminds us that we are one body of Christ. We are committed to one another as members of Christ's body. We strive to respond to Christ's command to love our neighbors and love one another. Yet, how can we love our neighbors if we do not know them? We need to be intentional about creating opportunities to build community and get to know one another.

But there is a second important reason why our parishes and communities can benefit from intentionally getting to know one another. In order to have the ability to influence the issues that face our communities and neighborhoods, we have to build relationships with one another. In order to make change, we have to build positive working relationships among diverse members of our community. As the JFI Organizing Manual notes:

Communities that are isolated usually do not have the power to create positive systemic change. Organized communities where people are in relationships with each other have the power and capacity to change the conditions in their communities and to move us closer to the world as we would like it to be. This is one way that we can bring the Kingdom of Heaven a little bit closer to our world.

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One-to-one Relational Meetings

One intentional way of building relationships is through one-to-one relational meetings. These thirty-minute conversations are geared towards building relationships with new people, discerning the core values of the community, naming common problems and shared concerns, and identifying potential leaders who are interested in helping make a difference. Sometimes organizing groups talk about identifying the “self-interest” of others during a one-to-one conversation. Self-interest is not “selfish” interest. Rather, it is

discovering what someone values and what he or she is concerned about it; what someone feels so passionate about that he or she would be willing to do something about it.

“One-to-one relational meeting” is simply a way of describing a structured conversation that two people can have with one another to “love their neighbor” and get to know others better. Building these relationships is important in order to be a cohesive community and to effectively join our voices to promote life and dignity.

Parishes that embark on a “one-to-one relational meeting campaign” may be pleasantly surprised to discover that this structured format of getting to know one another can help to unite the community, uncover hidden gifts, talents and interests that parishioners can contribute to the community, and discover new leaders within the parish.

Diocesan leaders that approach colleagues from other offices to have a thirty-minute relational meeting will also find that the new relationship they have built can lead to many possibilities for future mutual support and collaboration.

Identifying Leaders

One-to-one relational meetings can help to identify leaders in the parish or community who have or can build relationships with others, listen to their concerns, and inspire and motivate others to get involved in action on behalf of human life and dignity.

For parishes, identifying leaders is not only important to be able to successfully work on community issues; you may also find recruits for parish ministries!

In a video on the CCHD website, Fr. Toby Guerrero talks about a relational meeting campaign that he conducted at his parish helped build community and identify and empower new leaders. The campaign was very successful. It ended up increasing the size of the parish ten-fold, while also empowering parishioners to make a difference on an important community issue they care about.