



Youth Ministry
Limerick Diocese

Catholic Social Justice

A Resource
Pack for
Secondary Schools



diocese
of limerick
our catholic community



Catholic Social Justice

Resource Pack for Schools

Dear Teachers,

In July of 2021 the Youth Ministry Team in the Diocese of Limerick ran a social media campaign focused on the area of Catholic Social Justice. This resource pack contains the images used with the accompanying quotes and comments. These images could be used as discussion points in class or as catalysts for group work or projects. Each page contains some general discussion points as well as a suggestion for further action, research or study.

For each page you could also ask the question: What has Pope Francis or other Church leaders said / done about this issue? Has my faith community responded to this crisis, if so, how? How am I called to respond to this issue? If you work through all the issues it might be useful to do some reflection about the issues which impacted most on your students and talk about why. It could also be good to involve students in creating a prayer service to pray for the people who are most affected by these social justice issues. We have provided some reflective prose, poetry, scripture and prayer that relates to the theme of social justice which might help.

We hope that you will find this a useful resource and that you will make your own of it.

Thank you,

Aoife Walsh - Youth Ministry (Diocese of Limerick)

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Catholic Social Justice

To live charitably means not looking out for our own interests, but carrying the burdens of the weakest and poorest among us. Pope Francis

CARE FOR
THE EARTH

COMMON
GOOD

Right to Work

Option for
the Poor

DIGNITY

Peace

SOLIDARITY



Discussion points...

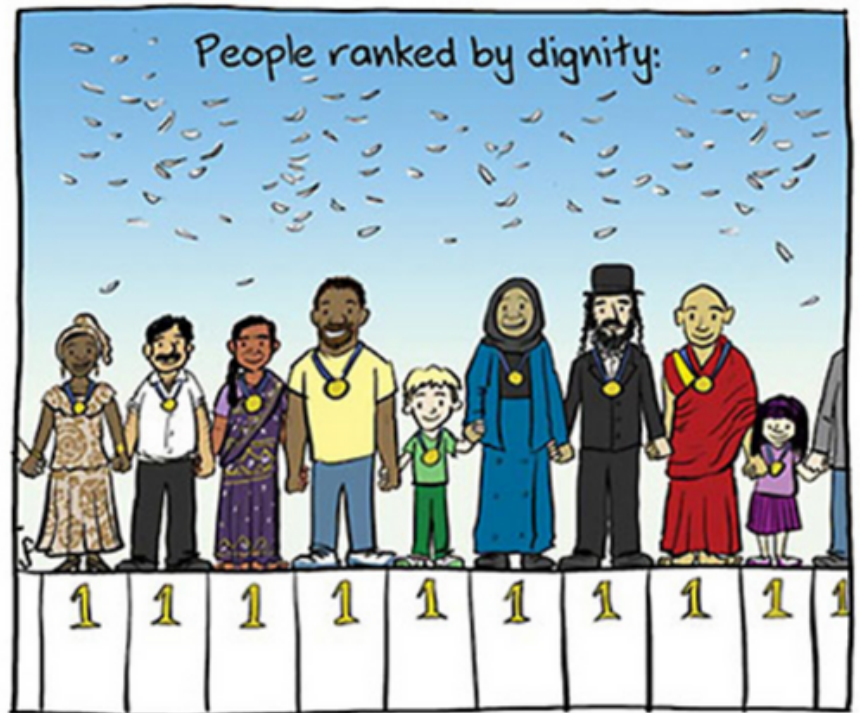
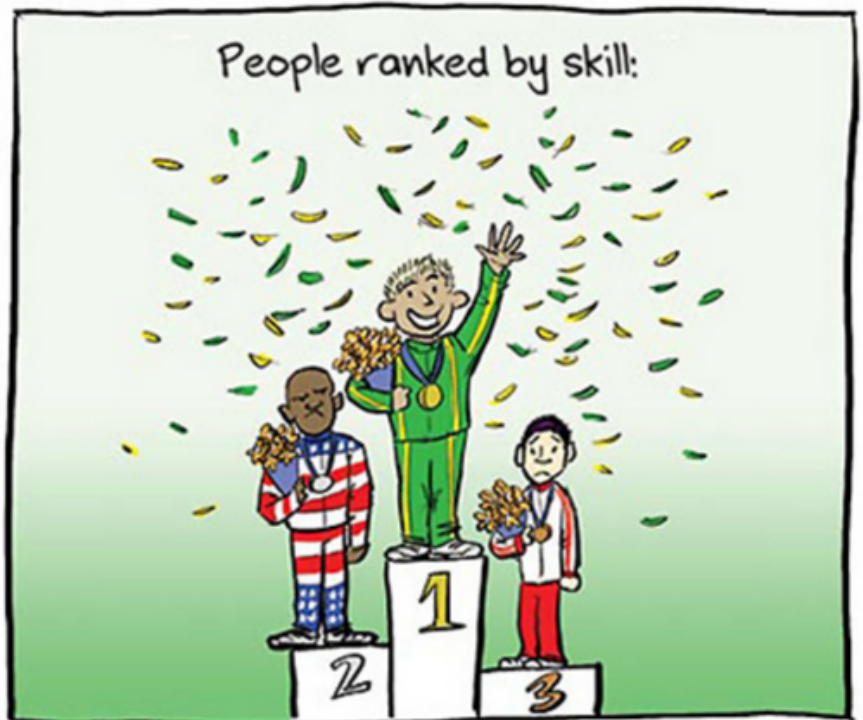
- The message of Catholic Social Justice proposes a way of seeing, thinking and being in our world that is about connection, community and compassion. What does the term Social Justice mean to you?
- Pope Francis says that we should be willing to carry the burdens of the poorest and weakest among us. Do you agree? How much responsibility do you think we should have for other people?
- The seven words highlighted here are the Principles of Catholic Social Justice teaching. Which one do you feel strongly about? Why?

further study suggestions...

- Find out more about Catholic Social Justice, you could google some quotes from Pope Francis that relate to something happening in the world right now or perhaps try to find some biblical stories about justice.
- You could also check to see if your school motto makes any reference to justice, or if your school was founded by a religious order what did the founder have to say about social justice?

DIGNITY

ALL people are
worthy of
respect... people
have value by
virtue of their
humanity



Discussion Points...

- The first principle of Catholic Social Justice sees life as sacred and views dignity as the moral foundation of society. It reminds us that people have value by virtue of their birth, not because of their gender, age, ability, race, sexuality or religion. God created our world and every human being can be considered a unique child of God. Being a Christian means being able to recognise Christ in everyone you meet.
- What does the word dignity mean to you?
- The world we live in tends to rank people by skill not by dignity. Can you think of examples of this? How would the world be better if people were valued for their inherent dignity as opposed to their skill.

further study suggestions...

- Make a list of local, national or international groups whose work is centred on human rights.
- Read the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and talk about which rights are most often neglected.
- Draw up your own Classroom Charter that outlines how people should be treated
- Make a list of inspirational people who have worked to highlight human rights issues.

SOLIDARITY

We are connected as a human family and if one of us suffers, we all suffer.



Discussion Points...

- Solidarity means standing shoulder to shoulder with one another and especially with the most vulnerable among us. During the COVID pandemic UNICEF delivered over 80 million vaccines to 129 countries but funding was a huge concern and it was only possible through donations from people who cared.
- What does the word solidarity mean to you?
- Why should it impact on us if someone we don't know is suffering somewhere else?

further study suggestions...

- Protest marches have been a good way for people to show their solidarity to other nations and to support causes from afar. Find some examples of protest banners or slogans that are very impactful or clever and then come up with your own slogan and make your own protest banner.
- As a class pick a human rights issue that you feel passionate about and plan a fundraising and awareness raising campaign to highlight your concerns.

COMMON GOOD

To work for the common good is the greatest creed – Albert Schweitzer



Discussion Points...

- There is an old proverb that says "the rising tide lifts all boats" meaning that what helps the least of us will help all of us. To work for the common good is to work for the wellbeing of our society and wider world and not just our own needs. Unfortunately a lot of people believe that there are those among us who don't "deserve" to be helped. What do you think about this?
- What do you understand by the term "for the common good"?
- Who do you think should be involved when it comes to making decisions for "the common good"?

further study suggestions...

- Read the parable of the Workers in the Vineyard and organise the class into groups of the various workers. Have them argue their case in relation to how they should all be paid.
- Hold a class debate on one of the following topics:
 1. "Immunisation for all is in everyone's best interest"
 2. "There is no such thing as a victimless crime"

POVERTY

Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity, it is an act of justice - Nelson Mandela



Discussion Points...

- There are currently 637,000 people living in poverty in Ireland; 193,600 of them are children. Poverty has many causes, including unemployment, poor health and structural economic inequalities. What surprises you about these numbers? Talk about some other factors that you think might contribute to poverty.
- Complete this sentence: Poverty is...
- Why do you think Nelson Mandela said that poverty is a justice issue and not a charity issue?

further study suggestions...

- Find out about agencies / organisations in Ireland who work to combat poverty.
- Can you think of any examples of poverty that you have seen in your county / city.
- Make a list of some of the things you take for granted that other people might never have experienced e.g. foreign holidays, new clothes, concerts...
- Some religious orders ask their members to take a vow of poverty when they enter the order. Do some research to find out more about the reasons behind it.

PEACE

When adults wage war, children perish.

Elie Wiesel



Discussion Points...

- Pope Francis has said that we are in the midst of a third world war which is being fought in a piecemeal way with crime, massacres and destruction. The number of countries experiencing violent conflict is the highest it has been in the last 30 years. The result is that more than 30 million children have been displaced by conflict. Take some time to discuss what the implications of displacement might be for these children.
- In Catholic Social Justice teaching the four pillars of Peace are Truth, Justice, Love and Freedom. What does the word *peace* mean to you? Where do you experience peace in your life? If you had to draw a picture of peace what would you draw and why?

further study suggestions...

- What do you know about the work of these agencies? Red Cross, Trócaire, Oxfam, Concern, Doctors Without Borders or Catholic Relief Services.
- Create a list of films / songs on the theme of conflict / war / peace.
- Learn about the movement of Passive Resistance and discuss the strategies used by people like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.

CARE FOR THE EARTH

Gorillas share 98.3% of our DNA. Gorillas can laugh and feel emotions. Three out of four species of Gorilla are critically endangered due to loss of habitat and climate change. You can help to save them.



Discussion Points...

- Loss of habitat is caused by pollution, invasive species, farming, deforestation, diminished resources, such as water and food, urban sprawl, mining and destructive fishing practices. Are you aware of any animals that are in danger due to loss of habitat?
- Talk about where your information on this issue comes from (TV / Internet / Social Media) Have you come across any good environmental pages online, what issues do they highlight?

further study suggestions...

- Do some research and find out about Irish species of plants and animals that are endangered. <https://biodiversityireland.ie/>
- March 3 is World Wildlife day. Visit the World Wildlife fund website to find out about a fundraising event that you could take part in called Wear it Wild! <https://www.worldwildlife.org/>
- Maybe you could organise a class visit to a local conservation project. The Cabragh Wetlands near Thurles in Co Tipperary caters for class groups. <http://www.cabraghwetlands.ie>
- If the Earth was 24 hours old, how old would humans be? Find the answer to this question online.

DIGNITY OF THE WORKER

The human person should always come before the pursuit of profit. Everyone deserves the chance to work, to earn a fair wage to support themselves and their family. (CAFOD)



Discussion Points...

- Work is more than doing a job to get money. It gives a person dignity; it's where we express ourselves and can contribute to society. What kind of obstacles do people face when it comes to finding good jobs for themselves?
- A living wage is one which makes it possible to have an acceptable standard of living. What things do you think a living wage should be able to provide for a family? Consider the difference between what people might need, and what they might want.
- Think about a job/career you might like and consider the resources and supports you would need to reach your goal? Are these available to you?

further study suggestions...

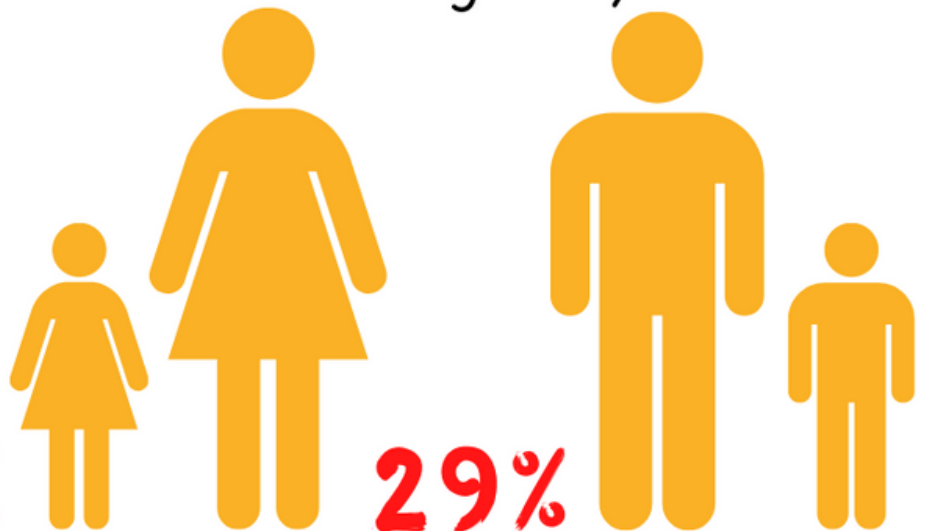
- Find out more about the living wage by visiting: <https://www.livingwage.ie/>
- Access to education is a huge factor when it comes to employability. The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind (on Netflix) is a movie that demonstrates what is possible when people have access to education. Watch the movie and discuss it with your class group.
- Learn more about Fairtrade and consider making your school one that promotes it. <https://www.fairtrade.ie/>
- Find out more about Dorothy Day, social activist.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

... the transportation of people for the purposes of exploitation, such as forced labour, marriage, prostitution, and organ removal.

40.3 million

estimated victims globally



71%

victims are women and girls

29%

victims are men and boys



Discussion Points...

- Human trafficking is modern day slavery. Most of the victims are female and in Ireland most of these victims end up as sex workers. Issues like this will never be properly dealt with unless people become more aware of the reality of the situation. What do you know about human trafficking?
- What type of people do you think are targeted by those who traffic humans? Are there risk factors that would increase the chance of being trafficked?

further study suggestions...

- Find out more about what The Gardaí, Immigrant Council, Doras and other groups like Ruhama, APT (Act to Prevent Trafficking) and the Santa Marta Group are doing to raise awareness about human trafficking.
- Google "human trafficking poster campaigns" and look at some of the posters that have been used to raise awareness about this issue. Why are images so powerful when it comes to this issue? Which one speaks to you? Why?
- Find out more about St. Josephine Margaret Bakhita the patron saint of Human Trafficking.

HUNGER

690,000 people go to bed hungry every night across the world. If you can't feed one hundred people then feed just one (St Teresa of Calcutta)



Discussion Points...

- Globally, about 8.9% of the world's population – 690 million people – go to bed on an empty stomach each night. Since 2014, the number of people affected by hunger has been slowly on the rise and the pandemic has made the situation even worse. Do you think this is an issue that affects people in our country / county / city?
- Hunger is one of the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Name any other sustainable goals that you know?

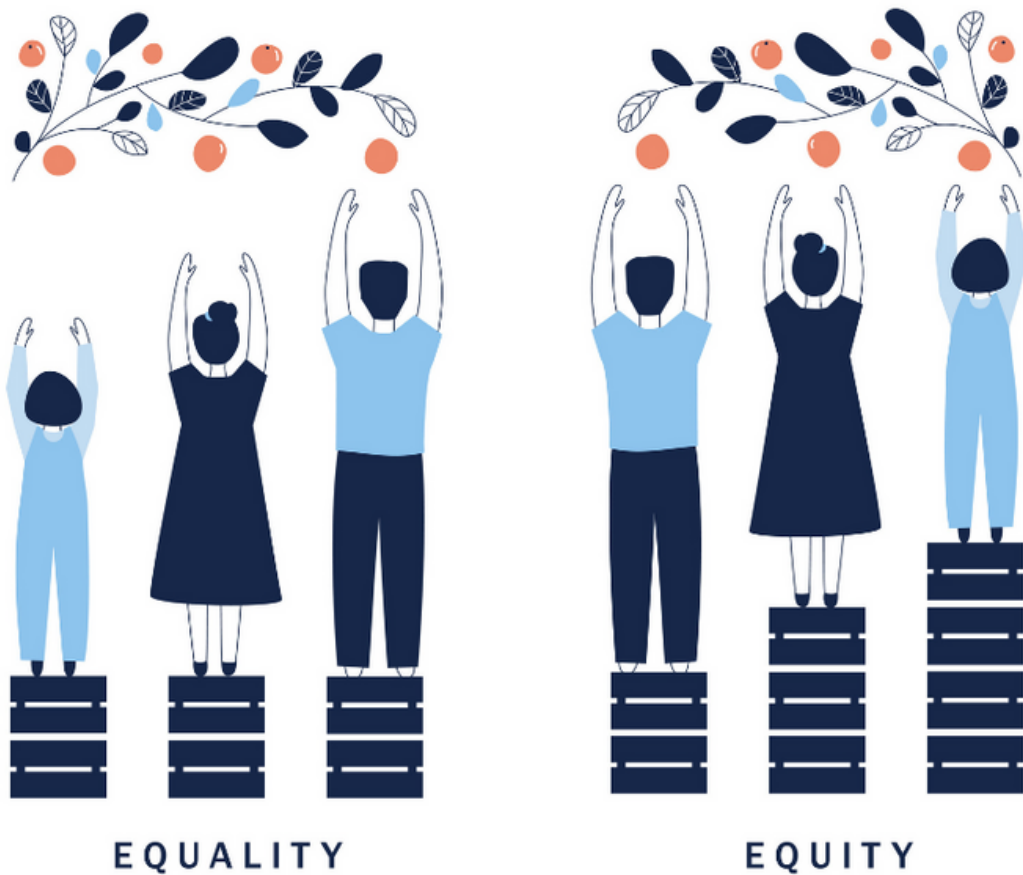
further study suggestions...

- In Limerick the Mid-West branch of the Simon Community have a food bank where they give food out daily to those who need it. Find out more at <https://www.midwestsimon.ie/donate/>
- Organise a fast to raise money and awareness about this issue. Take time to talk about the experience afterwards, especially how it felt to be hungry and how it affected you physically and emotionally.
- Google "Is there enough food in the world" and write a newspaper article and headline based on what you find.
- Watch this film on You Tube and discuss <https://youtu.be/sn5PdFbmT9A>

EQUITY

Fair doesn't mean giving every child the same thing,
it means giving every child what they need.

Rick Lavoie



EQUALITY

EQUITY



Discussion Points...

- The term "equity" refers to fairness and justice and is distinguished from equality. Equality means providing the same to all, equity means recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to imbalances. What examples, if any, can you think of that demonstrate a lack of equity?
- There is a belief that everyone can achieve their dreams if they just believe in themselves and work hard enough. Do you think this is true? Why?

further study suggestions...

- Watch this short clip on You Tube and discuss it with your class: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4K5fbQ1-zps>
- In groups try to develop an activity/game that might help to demonstrate the difference between equality and equity.
- Can you name any inspiring people who have overcome the obstacles they faced and who have helped others to succeed as well. They can be famous or maybe they are people you know.

HOMELESSNESS

These things become the norm: that some homeless people die of cold on the streets is not news. In contrast, a ten-point drop in the stock markets of some cities is a tragedy. – Pope Francis



Discussion Points...

- In April 2020 there were over 8000 homeless people in Ireland. In many cases the reason for homelessness is down to a lack of affordable housing and structural economic factors. Most people who find themselves homeless have never been homeless in their lives before. Talk about what it might be like to be homeless?
- Pope Francis says that no family drops from heaven perfectly formed, each family has its own journey. *Rosie* is an Irish film that casts a light on the issue of homelessness and the important role of the family. Watch the film and discuss it with your class. Did it change your perceptions about homelessness? What did you feel while watching the film? What could have helped Rosie and her family? Discuss the important role played by the family in this film, and for you personally.

further study suggestions...

- Please visit the Focus Ireland website to find out about their proposals for positive change...
<https://www.focusireland.ie/>
- Overnight sleep-outs help to raise awareness about homelessness. What other things you could do to raise awareness about this issue?
- Find out more about Fr Peter McVerry and the work he does to help homeless people in Ireland.

GLOBAL CONFLICT

Privilege is when you think something is not a problem, because it's not a problem to you personally.



Discussion Points...

- It is so easy to forget how big the world is. We can get so caught up in ourselves and our immediate world, that we don't think about what's going on in the wider world until we hear about a natural disaster, a tidal wave or a war... Even then it doesn't really affect us because it's happening so far away. Why should we care about what is happening so far away from us?
- Imagine having to leave your home at a moment's notice in fear of your life. What three things would you take with you that might help you on the road ahead? Think about the things you would have to leave behind...

further study suggestions...

- Do you know what countries are currently engaged in armed conflict in the world? Do some research online and find out. Do you have any links to any of these countries?
- Pick one of these countries and prepare a 3 minute news bulletin about the current situation. The report should contain a brief history of the situation, how long it has been going on and some statistics about those who have been affected.
- Create / print a large map of the world and highlight the countries who are experiencing conflict today.

CARE FOR THE EARTH

PROTECTING OUR PLANET STARTS WITH YOU

bike more
drive less



EDUCATE YOURSELF



conserve
water



shop wisely

SPEAK
OUT



USE
LONG
LASTING
LIGHT
BULBS



plant
a tree

eat sustainable foods
(don't eat animals)



VOLUNTEER

What are you doing today to help care for our common home? You CAN make a difference!



SOCIAL JUSTICE JULY

Discussion Points...

- Laudato Si' is an encyclical (letter) written by Pope Francis in 2015. The title translates to "On Care for Our Common Home" and it was addressed to "every single person living on this planet". It urges us all to listen to "the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor". How environmentally aware do you think you are?
- What do you do to help the environment?
- In what ways do you think young people are more environmentally aware than their parents?

further study suggestions...

- Make a list of simple things that people could do that would help the environment.
- Visit <https://laudatosiainactionplatform.org/> to see Laudato Si' Goals
- Watch this video and make a poster based on something that struck you about it: <https://youtu.be/eRLJscAik1M>
- Ireland was once completely covered in trees, but now only 11% of Ireland is forested. Only 2% is covered in native trees which means that our native animals and plants are in danger of extinction. CRANN aims to plant 1 Million trees by 2023 in the Plant-for-the-Planet Challenge #easytreesie You can find out more and even participate. Visit: <https://easytreesie.com/> for more information.

CHILD LABOUR

Fast fashion isn't free. Someone somewhere is paying.
Lucy Siegle



Discussion Points...

- Fast fashion can be defined as cheap, trendy clothing that samples ideas from the catwalk or celebrity culture and turns them into garments in high street stores at breakneck speed to meet consumer demand. What do you know about the effects that fast fashion has on the environment and the workers who make the clothes?
- How important is it for you to wear "on-trend" clothes and brands?

further study suggestions...

- Do some research to find out the impact of fast fashion on the environment and workers. Try to find examples of both good and poor practice. This video might be a good place to start <https://youtu.be/fr7bXsoNwwE>
- Think about ways to raise awareness about this issue... maybe you could organise a fashion show and second-hand clothes sale?
- Try to find some pages on Instagram that you could follow which promote sustainability in the fashion industry.
- Use recycled clothes and household items to create some junk-couture.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Human dignity is the same for all human beings; when I trample on the dignity of another, I am trampling on my own. Pope Francis



Discussion Points...

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights came into being in 1948, following WWII. Before reading or looking up the document on line talk about the rights that you think it should contain.
- You can watch a brief youtube video about the UDHR here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nDgIVseTkuE>
- After you watch the video talk about examples you have heard where people's human rights were denied or exploited.

further study suggestions...

- Do some research about organisations and groups who work to promote Human Rights. Try to identify one local, one national and one international organisation.
- In groups, pick a human rights issue or leader that you feel strongly about, or who has inspired you and make a presentation to the class about it.
- Create a drama / mime / film which outlines the UDHR.
- December 10 is the World Day for Human Rights. Look up other World Days online. Why do we need them? What injustices are they highlighting?

GENDER EQUALITY

I raise up my voice, not so I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard... we cannot succeed when half of us are held back. Malala Yousafzai

**39,000 GIRLS
BECOME
CHILD BRIDES
EVERY DAY**



**EVERY 2 MINUTES
ONE DIES IN
PREGNANCY OR
CHILDBIRTH**



**875 MILLION
CANNOT
READ OR
WRITE**



**WOMEN
MAKE UP THE
MAJORITY
OF THE
WORLD'S
POOREST
PEOPLE**

**1 IN 3 WILL BE
BEATEN OR
SEXUALLY
ABUSED IN
THEIR
LIFETIME**



**THEY EARN ONLY
10% OF THE
WORLD'S INCOME**



**THEY OWN JUST
1% OF THE
WORLD'S LAND**



Discussion Points...

- Which of the statistics above most surprises you? Why?
- Do you think this is only a problem in the developing world? Can you think of any instances of gender discrimination that exist in our society?
- How do you think traditional gender roles are changing?
- Women are not a minority group. They make up half the human race... however they do not make up half of our Governments, Business Leaders or Policy Makers. Why do you think this is?

further study suggestions...

- Pick a woman who has excelled in a traditionally masculine field and prepare a presentation for the class to let them know about her.
- Identify and interview an older woman you know about the issue of feminism and what they think it means. What changes have they noticed in their lifetime? Write about the impact of the conversation and what you learned about them and about your attitude to the issue of gender discrimination.

ABILITY

There is no greater disability in society, than the inability to see a person as more. Robert M Hensel



Discussion Points...

- When we think of the word *disability* we often only think about physical challenges. The graphic above identifies many different types of physical challenges that people face. Try to identify the ones in the image and then think outside the box to identify other challenges people can face that are not just physical.
- Joanne O'Riordan is an Irish activist and columnist with the Irish Times who believes passionately about inclusion in sport. Find out more about her story here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_nFXeg8Y2s

further study suggestions...

- Find out about other activists who have helped to change the world for people facing physical, or intellectual challenges.
- Find out about Irish Organisations that work with people who have a physical / intellectual disability. What kind of work do they do?
- Some films / documentaries that might be worth watching and discussing include: Crip Camp / The Peanut Butter Falcon / Rising Phoenix / Atypical

RACISM

If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. Bishop Desmond Tutu



Discussion Points...

- Racism takes many shapes and forms, from verbal abuse, discrimination and physical assaults to online attacks. It can be tempting for us to believe that this isn't really a problem here in Ireland, but unfortunately that is not true. Can you think of examples of racism that you have seen or heard about in your area?
- The Black Lives Matter movement has had a big impact on young people due to platforms like Instagram / You Tube and TikTok. Talk about the posts / people who have influenced what you think about it all.

further study suggestions...

- Learn more about racism in Ireland by visiting the Irish Network Against Racism website and support the National Action Plan Against Racism today. <https://inar.ie/>
- There is an excellent talk on You Tube about racism in Ireland which could be good to watch and discuss: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfE7_Z27h5c
- Try to think of things that your class / school could do to make it more inclusive.

REFUGEES

No-one puts their children on a boat, unless the water is safer than the land. Warsan Shire



Discussion Points...

- The United Nations High Commission for Refugees tells us that at the end of 2020, there were 82.4 million forcibly displaced people in the world. What do you understand by the word *refugee* or *asylum seeker*?
- Imagine having to leave the country you've known your entire life... talk about the reasons that might compel you to leave your home?
- Watch the following video and talk about what struck you about it <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7XhrXUoD6U>

further study suggestions...

- Do some research into the organisations and groups who work with refugees to find out more. Which country do most refugees originate in? Which countries are most accepting of them? What are the reasons they had to leave their home countries?
- Are you aware of a Direct Provision centre in your area? Do you know how many people live there? Try to find some information from someone who has lived in one.
- For more videos and testimonies visit <https://refugeeweek.org.uk/resources/artists-and-films/online-films/>

OCEAN CONSERVATION

PLASTIC
FREE

50% of plastic is used to make items that are only used once... Stop using Plastic Bottles, Cups, Straws & Bags and help to protect our seas and all marine life.



Discussion Points...

- *Before the Flood* is a movie about climate change that is free to watch on YouTube. Watch the movie and talk about what you learned.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zbEn0YtsXHA&t=103s>
- Can you name any environmental activists or campaigners? What influence if any have they had on you?

further study suggestions...

- This planet that we live on is made up of 71% water and yet only 1% of the earth's water is available for drinking, making it a very precious resource which we need to protect. How much water do you think we waste every day? How much plastic has already been removed from our oceans? Do some research to find out the answers and create some posters to raise awareness about water and ocean conservation to display in school.
- Does your school have a green flag? If not, is this something you could work towards?
- Organise a clean-up in your area to prevent the plastic reaching the ocean!
- Watch *My Octopus Teacher* (Netflix) to get a better appreciation of the miracle that is the Ocean!

Right to Life

The fundamental human right, the presupposition of every other right, is the right to life itself.

Pope Benedict XVI



Discussion Points...

- Article 4 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights says that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person. The Irish Constitution specifically recognises and protects your right to life (Article 40.4). Your right to life also means the right to have nature take its course and to die a natural death. That does not mean that you have the right to have your life terminated or death unnaturally accelerated.
- Discuss the implications of the above information and Pope Benedict's quote.
- In what ways is this right being denied in the world today?

further study suggestions...

- The Right to Life argument is often used in discussions about abortion, euthanasia, suicide and genocide. Pick one of these issues, do some research on the position of scientists and religious and hold a debate on it.
- As human beings we have so much in common with animals and plants. We are all composed of cells, atoms, and DNA. Try to capture this in a poster that connects the right to life issue with the environment.
- Make a list of life-affirming activities that help us to feel fully alive. What can you do today that would be life-affirming for someone else?

Social Justice Prayers / Poems / Reflections

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Being the Loudest - Rupi Kaur
The Good Samaritan - Parable

Social Justice Prayer - the Ayachucho Youth Group, Peru

I believe in the equality of all, rich and poor

I believe in liberty

I believe in humanity

I believe in the love that is within each one of us

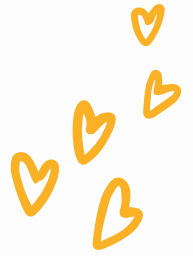
I believe that everyone deserves a happy, healthy home

I believe in forgiveness

I believe that with divine help, we will have strength to establish equality in our world

I believe in unity

I believe that working together is the only way to achieve peace and that working together in peace we can obtain justice.



Extract from Laudato Si' - Pope Francis

Never have we so hurt and mistreated our common home as we have in the last 200 years. Each year sees the disappearance of hundreds of plants and animal species which we will never know, which our children will never see, because they have been lost for ever. The great majority become extinct for reasons related to human activity. Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us. What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?

Invitation - Mary Oliver

Oh do you have time to linger for just a little while
out of your busy very important day
for the goldfinches that have gathered
in a field of thistles for a musical battle,
to see who can sing the highest note, or the lowest,
or the most expressive of mirth, or the most tender?
Their strong blunt beaks drink the air as they strive melodiously,
not for your sake and not for mine, and not for the sake of winning,
but for sheer delight and gratitude- believe us, they say,
it is a serious thing just to be alive on this fresh morning
In this broken world.
I beg of you, do not walk by without pausing
to attend to this rather ridiculous performance.
It could mean something. It could mean everything.
Or it could be what we mean when we say:* We must change our life.



Eulogy For the Martyred Children - Martin Luther King

Now I say to you in conclusion, life is hard, at times as hard as crucible steel. It has its bleak and difficult moments. Like the ever-flowing waters of the river, life has its moments of drought and its moments of flood. Like the ever-changing cycle of the seasons, life has the soothing warmth of its summers and the piercing chill of its winters. But if one will hold on, he will discover that God walks with him, and that God is able to lift you from the fatigue of despair to the buoyancy of hope and transform dark and desolate valleys into sunlit paths of inner peace.

Reflection - Chief Seattle

Every part of the earth is sacred, every shining pine needle, every sandy shore
Every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy.
The rocky crest, the juices of the meadow, the beasts and all the people,
All belong to the same family.
Teach your children that the earth is our mother;
Whatever befalls the earth befalls the children of the earth.
The water's murmur is the voice of our father's father,
We are part of the earth, and the earth is part of us.
The rivers are our brothers; they quench our thirst.
The perfumed flowers are our sisters.
The air is precious for all of us share the same breath.
The wind that gave our grandparents breath
Also receives their last sigh.
The wind gave our children the spirit of life.
This we know: the earth does not belong to us;
We belong to the earth.
This we know: all things are connected. Our God is the same God,
Whose compassion is equal for all.
For we did not weave the web of life: we are merely a strand in it.
Let us give thanks for the web in the circle that connects us.
Thanks be to God, the God of all.



Today Lord Jesus

Today Lord Jesus,
I give you my hands to do your work,
I give you my feet to go your way.
I give you my eyes to see as you do.
I give you my tongue to speak your words.
I give you my mind that you may think in me.
I give you my spirit that you may pray in me. Above all, I give you my heart that you may love in me, your Father and all people.
I give you my whole self that you may grow in me, so that it is you, Lord Jesus, who live and work and prays in me. Make me sensitive to those I meet – the tired, the angry, the happy, the different. All people everywhere, all are my neighbours, no one is really a stranger, unless I choose to make them so. Amen

The Beatitudes

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.
Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.
Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the pure of heart, for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.



The Garden is Burning by Richard Hendrick

For a long time now
a fire has been burning in my mind
a flood has rolled across my heart
an earthquake rumbles in my soul.
I am afraid it is breaking,
this world of ours,
how could it not?
It bears so much weight
the weight of sadness,
the weight of fear,
the weight of pain.
Last week in Greece
a two thousand year old
Olive Tree,
an elder, ancient and wise in ways we cannot even begin to know,
burned,
as people fled the lands
that fed them and us for ages untold.
The trees don't get to leave.
Here in Ireland we smile
and take pictures of a Walrus,
a prince of the cold kingdom,
now an exile, lost, wandering, alone,
iceless, friendless, bewildered by boats.
In Siberia, the tundra burns and mammoth bones have their slumbering rest disturbed
long thought safe and sleeping by the peoples who live and love upon the frosted lands.
In Afghanistan, a wordless groan erupts,
the pain of a tortured soul,
the ache of a land so long in agony
its voice is near a death rattle
despair of a people fearing a veil being drawn over their faces, a stifling of song, an ending of hope,
a blanket of hate, and loss, and loss, and loss, and betrayal.
In Haiti, earthquakes again.
In Lebanon, explosions again.
In America, fires again.
In Turkey, floods again.
My litany is nowhere near complete...
Lord have mercy.
The world is breaking.
How could it not?
What was meant as garden
needs its gardeners,
needs us to be Adams, gardeners, again;
needs us to be Eves, mothers of life, again;



that was the original blessing after all;
to grow, to steward, to bring forth life,
to bless, to give thanks, to guard and keep
all that lives, all that breathes, all that is.

So what must I do?

What can you do?

Be a gardener.

Now,
right where you are.

Dig.

Dig deep within,

Dig over the hard soil of the heart that cannot bear to hear anymore and let it breathe again
original blessing.

Plant seeds of kindness.

Plant seeds of compassion.

Plant seeds of love.

Water it with your tears for all beings who suffer.

Grow a harvest of tenderness for those who suffer

Grow flowers of welcome for the lost and the lonely

Grow the fruit of peace in yourself and offer it to all beings to eat.

Act with reverence for all that is,

for all that is, is holy.

Allow that little plot of life

and earth around you to heal.

It will spread.

Remember we are all sons of Adam

Remember we are all daughters of Eve

Hear again the song of sister Mother Earth

Sing again the hymn of creation

Be again, blessing

Be again, the gardener,

Be at last the steward.

Be.

May I Become

May I become a light for those in darkness,
A source of hope for those in despair,
A companion for those who are burdened,
A peacemaker for those gripped with anger,
A selfless giver for those who are without,
A compassionate friend for those you mourn,
A protector for those without protection,
A bridge for those separated by love.
From this day onwards may I become,
Fully human and fully alive.



Paul's Letter to the Phillipians 4:8-9

Finally, sisters and brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worth of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing what you have learned and received and heard and seen. Then the God of peace will be with you.

Compassion - Henri J.M. Nouwen

Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into the places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human.

What God Won't Ask!

God won't ask what kind of car you drove,
but will ask how many people you drove
who didn't have transportation.
God won't ask the square footage of your house, but
will ask how many people
you welcomed into your home.
God won't ask about the fancy clothes you had in your
closet, but will ask how many
of those clothes helped the needy
God won't ask about your social status,
but will ask what kind of class you displayed.
God won't ask how many material possessions you had,
but will ask if they dictated your life.
God won't ask what your highest salary was,
but will ask if you compromised
your character to obtain that salary.
God won't ask how much overtime you worked,
but will ask if you worked overtime
for your family and loved ones.
God won't ask how many promotions you received, but
will ask how you promoted others.
God won't ask what your job title was,
but will ask if you performed your job
to the best of your ability.
God won't ask what you did to help yourself,
but will ask what you did to help others.
God won't ask how many friends you had,
but will ask how many people
to whom you were a true friend.
God won't ask what you did to protect your rights, but
will ask what you did
to protect the rights of others.
God won't ask in what neighbourhood you lived,
but will ask how you treated your neighbours.
God won't ask about the colour of your skin,
but will ask about the content of your character.
God won't ask how many times your deeds matched
your words, but will ask how many times they didn't.
When there is nothing left but God, that is when you
find out God is all you need.

The More you Give - Helen Steiner Rice

The more you give, the more you get.
The more you laugh, the less you fret.
The more you do unselfishly,
The more you live abundantly.
The more of everything you share,
The more you'll always have to spare.
The more you love, the more you'll find,
That life is good and friends are kind,
For only what we give away,
Enriches us from day to day.

All Things Bright and Beautiful C.F. Alexander

All things bright and beautiful
All creatures great and small
All things wise and wonderful
The Lord God made them all
He gave us eyes to see them
And lips that we may tell
How great is God Almighty
Who has made all things well

The Spirit of God

In the singing of birds
Is the sound of God
In the swimming of fish
Is the power of God
In the moving of beasts
Is the will of God
In the heart of humankind
Is the dwelling place of God
In my heart and my head
In my hands and in my feet
God's Spirit within me
Shall move and shall speak



For Prayers for Peace from other faith traditions click this link

<https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/prayers-for-peace>

Dare to Be - Steve Maraboli

When a new day begins, dare to smile gratefully.
When there is darkness, dare to be the first to shine a light.
When there is injustice, dare to be the first to condemn it.
When something seems difficult, dare to do it anyway.
When life seems to beat you down, dare to fight back.
When there seems to be no hope, dare to find some.
When you're feeling tired, dare to keep going.
When times are tough, dare to be tougher.
When love hurts you, dare to love again.
When someone is hurting, dare to help them heal.
When another is lost, dare to help them find the way.
When a friend falls, dare to be the first to extend a hand.
When you cross paths with another, dare to make them smile.
When you feel great, dare to help someone else feel great too.
When the day has ended, dare to feel as you've done your best.
Dare to be the best you can - At all times, Dare to be!"

The 5 R's

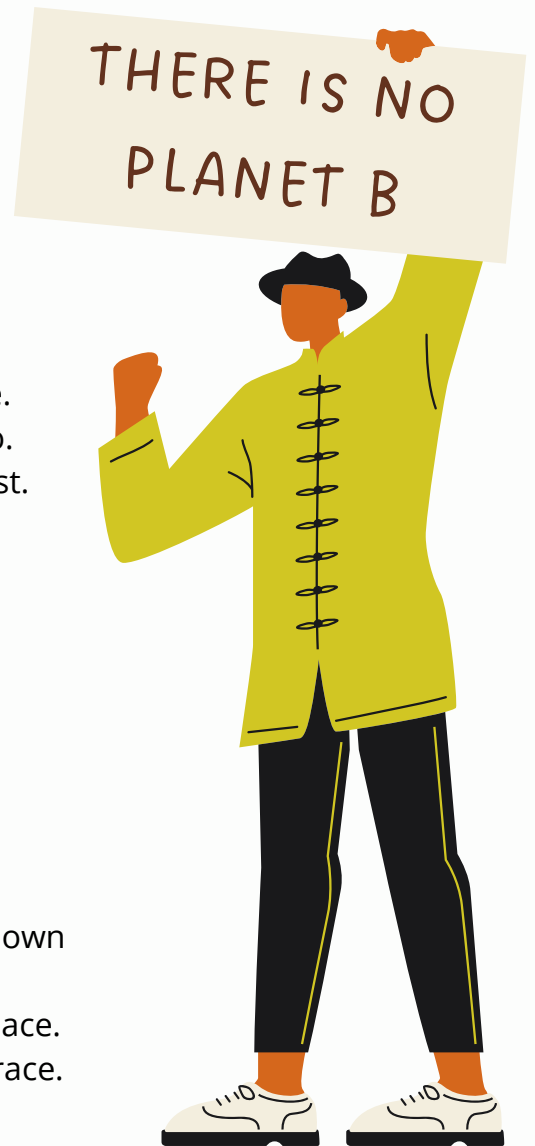
We cannot let the beauty of our planet slip away.
Let's work together and make a difference today!
The 5 R's will help us in our effort to protect;
Respect, Reduce, Recycle, Re-use and Reflect.
Respect God's creation. Reduce the amount of waste.
Recycle all the empties. Re-use with a bit of taste.
When we have tried the first four R's there's a need to settle down
And Reflect upon our actions - but there's no need to frown.
It's not too late to love our planet, to cherish this God-given place.
We ask you Lord to guide our efforts and instil us with your grace.

Street Corner Christ - Patrick Kavanagh

I saw Christ to-day
At a street corner stand,
In the rags of a beggar he stood
He held ballads in his hand.
He was crying out: - "Two for a penny
Will anyone buy
The finest ballads ever made
From the stuff of joy?"
But the blind and deaf went past
Knowing only there
An uncouth ballad-seller
With tail-matted hair.
And I whom men call fool
His ballads bought,
Found him whom the pieties
Have vainly sought.

Open Our Eyes Lord

God, the image of your son is not visible;
In the pages of our newspapers
In the faces of our leaders
In the deployment of our weapons
In the violence of our actions...
Take our words, our world, our weapons, our work
And transform them in the image of your son Jesus
So that we may see your face
In truth where news is reported
In justice where power is abused
In peace where war is threatened
In reconciliation where deeds foster hatred...
Open our eyes, Lord.



What Does Hope Do For Mankind? - John Maxwell

Hope shines brightest when the hour is darkest.
Hope motivates when discouragement comes.
Hope energizes when the body is tired.
Hope sweetens while bitterness bites.
Hope sings when all melodies are gone.
Hope believes when evidence is eliminated.
Hope listens for answers when no one is talking.
Hope climbs over obstacles when no one is helping.
Hope endures hardship when no one is caring.
Hope smiles confidently when no one is laughing.
Hope reaches for answers when no one is asking.
Hope presses toward victory when no one is encouraging.
Hope dares to give when no one is sharing.
Hope brings the victory when no one is winning.

Traditional Gaelic Prayer

Deep peace of the running wave to you.
Deep peace of the flowing air to you.
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you.
Deep peace of the shining stars to you.
Deep peace of the infinite peace to you.

The Fruit of... St Mother Teresa

The fruit of silence is prayer;
The fruit of prayer is faith;
The fruit of faith is love;
The fruit of love is service;
The fruit of service is peace.

Notice the Joy - Richelle E. Goodrich

The world seems to want us to be sad and angry because bad things frequently happen. But I say we should feel the opposite. We should be happy and cheerful because good things happen. We should be delighted to see the sun rise and stars glow and rainbows colour stormy skies. We should savour every simple breath and eat each meal with gratitude. We should slumber in sweet dreams and relish moments of laughter and love. We should take more notice of the joys and kindnesses that do exist, still dictating the actions of millions of good people all over the world. Life is filled with pleasant moments, not just grief. We should be happy because this is true.

A Different Point of View - Lois Rock

May we learn to appreciate different points of view:
To know that the view from the hill is different from the view in the valley;
The view from the east is different to the view from the west;
The view in the morning is different to the view in the evening;
The view of a parent is different to the view of a child;
The view of a friend is different to the view of a stranger;
The view of human kind is different to the view of God.
May we learn to see what is good, what is true and what is worthwhile.

Do It Anyway - St. Mother Teresa

People are often unreasonable, illogical and self centered; Forgive them anyway.
If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives; Be kind anyway.
If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies; Succeed anyway.
If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you; Be honest and frank anyway.
What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight; Build anyway.
If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous; Be happy anyway.
The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow; Do good anyway.
Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough;
Give the world the best you've got anyway.
You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and your God;
It was never between you and them anyway.



Act Justly, Love Tenderly, Walk Humbly

What is it God that you ask of me?
Three things my child, just three.

First to act justly to all you meet,
At home, at work and on the street.
Always be fair and never be greedy.
Be generous to the sick, the poor and needy.
Be a voice for those whom no one hears,
Protect those whom war has brought to tears.
Care for the homeless and the oppressed
Work for equality and you will be blessed.

Secondly, my child in all that you do,
Love others tenderly just as I love you.
Be gentle of spirit, be caring and kind,
Let your love be my living sign.
Through your works let my love speak
To the lost and lonely whose lives feel bleak
Let care and compassion rule your days,
And love in abundance will be yours always.

And now my child, task number three
Requires so little, just humility.
Be selfless and humble not arrogant and proud,
Let your voice be quiet and your actions loud.
Remember that service is the key,
To contentment and tranquillity.
Seek not praise, applause, recognition
Remember humility is your mission.

Act justly always and love tenderly
And ever my child walk humbly with Me
Remember in all things by your side I'll be
For today, for tomorrow, for eternity.

Prayer of Saint Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy.

O, Divine Master, Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; To be understood as to understand; To be loved as to love; For it is in giving that we receive; It is in pardoning that we are pardoned; It is in dying that we are born to eternal life.



A Single Light

In the darkness of the night
When our hope has taken flight
When our fears and doubts are great
A single light can give us faith.

One little flicker gives us hope
And helps us trust that we can cope.
A little light can help us see,
All that we are meant to be.

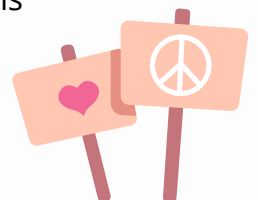
This light can shine through any sorrow,
And give us hope for each tomorrow.
Bringing healing, strength and self-belief,
To the sick and lonely it gives relief.

You are this light, just as you are,
Your essence is radiant, like a star,
This guiding light helps us to shine
A light that shows that we're divine.

Trust in yourself and try not to doubt
Your light is precious, just let it out.
It gives you strength to be the best,
A light for the world, a light that's blessed.

L.I.P. (Live in Peace) - MS Moem

We are not soldiers
Peace runs through our hearts
Wars rage on regardless
We need not take part
Life can be a struggle
A perpetual night
But the sun won't rise quicker
If we choose to fight
So let's down our weapons
And open our arms
Become a safe haven
Of kindness and calm
Life need not be a battle
Where we need to survive
We wait to rest in peace
We should live it while we are alive.



Prayer - St. Mother Teresa

Dear God, let your will for me be known.
Use me, oh God, as your creation.
When a kind word needs to be spoken, use my voice.
When a load needs to be lifted, use my back.
When a hug needs to be given, use my arms.
When a journey needs to be taken, use my feet.
When a message needs to be delivered, use my mind.
When a friend needs to be loved, use my heart.
In all things, in all ways, use me God,
as your instrument of love, faith, peace and tranquillity.

Peace - Lao Tse

If there is to be peace in the world,
There must be peace in the nations.
If there is to be peace in the nations,
There must be peace in the cities.
If there is to be peace in the cities,
There must be peace between neighbours.
If there is to be peace between neighbours,
There must be peace in the home.
If there is to be peace in the home,
There must be peace in the heart.



We Stand Outside Where The Wind Blows

We stand outside where the wind blows,
We wanderers without a home,
Cast out or stepped out, into the unknown.
Wanderers, nomads, homeless, no.
We are still in You.
We are not lost, we are not alone,
Though we fear and worry, and lose our way.
You hold our souls, eternally home, always safe.
You make us pilgrims, journeying from You, to You, through You.
We are not alone,
Dear God, we are not lost, when the way grows dark,
when our hearts grow numb or heavy, empty, shivering, broken.
Shatter them, remake them, pilgrims, wanderers in You.

May We Never Give Up Hope - Andrew Harvey

May we never give up hope, whatever the terrors, difficulties and obstacles that rise up against us.
May those obstacles only inspire us to even deeper determination. May we have faith in the undying love and power of all the enlightened beings that have blessed and still bless the earth with their presence. May the visions of so many mystic masters of all traditions of a future world free of cruelty and horror, where humanity can live on earth in the ultimate joy of union, be realised through all our efforts.

The Final Judgment (Matthew 25:31-40)

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'



Children Learn What They Live - Dorothy Law Nolte, Ph.D.

If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn.
If children live with hostility, they learn to fight.
If children live with fear, they learn to be apprehensive.
If children live with pity, they learn to feel sorry for themselves.
If children live with ridicule, they learn to feel shy.
If children live with jealousy, they learn to feel envy.
If children live with shame, they learn to feel guilty.
If children live with encouragement, they learn confidence.
If children live with tolerance, they learn patience.
If children live with praise, they learn appreciation.
If children live with acceptance, they learn to love.
If children live with approval, they learn to like themselves.
If children live with recognition, they learn it is good to have a goal.
If children live with sharing, they learn generosity.
If children live with honesty, they learn truthfulness.
If children live with fairness, they learn justice.
If children live with kindness and consideration, they learn respect.
If children live with security,
they learn to have faith in themselves and in those about them.
If children live with friendliness,
they learn the world is a nice place in which to live.



Brighten Your Corner - Helen Steiner Rice

We cannot all be famous or be listed in "Who's Who",
But every person, great or small, has important work to do.
For seldom do we realize the importance of small deeds,
Or to what degree of greatness unnoticed kindness leads.
For it's not the big celebrity in a world of fame and praise,
But it's doing unpretentiously in an undistinguished way.
The work that God assigned to us, unimportant as it seems,
That makes our task outstanding, and brings reality to dreams.
So do not sit and idly wish for wider, new dimensions
where you can put into practice, your many good intentions.
But at the spot God placed you begin at once to do,
Little things to brighten up the lives surrounding you.
If everybody brightened up the spot where they're standing,
By being more considerate, and a little less demanding.
This dark old world would very soon eclipse the evening star,
If everybody brightened up the corner where they are!



Ripples - Robert F Kennedy

Few will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events. It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centres of energy and daring those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.

Still I Rise - Maya Angelou

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
Weakened by my soulful cries?

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own backyard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame - I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain - I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear - I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear - I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.



Caged Bird - Maya Angelou

A free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wing
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

The free bird thinks of another breeze
and the trade winds soft through the
sighing trees
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn
bright lawn
and he names the sky his own.

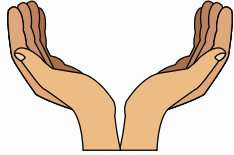
But a caged bird stands on the grave of
dreams
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.



Prayer of St Ignatius Loyola

Lord, teach me to be generous.
Teach me to serve you as you deserve;
To give, and not count the cost;
To fight, and not to heed the wounds;
To labour, and not to seek rest;
To give of myself and not to seek reward,
Save that of knowing,
That I do Your Most holy will.
Amen



Prayer of St Teresa of Avila

Christ has no body but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which He looks
Compassion on this world,
Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good,
Yours are the hands, with which He blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
Yours are the eyes, you are His body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
No hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.

For Courage to Do Justice - Alan Paton

O Lord, open my eyes that I may see the needs of others
Open my ears that I may hear their cries;
Open my heart so that they need not be without succor;
Let me not be afraid to defend the weak,
Because of the anger of the strong,
Nor afraid to defend the poor because of the anger of the rich.
Show me where love and hope and faith are needed,
And use me to bring them to those places.
And so open my eyes and my ears
That I may this coming day be able to do some work of peace for thee.

Prayer for Justice

Grant us, Lord God, a vision of your world as your love would have it:
a world where the weak are protected, and none go hungry or poor;
a world where the riches of creation are shared, and everyone can enjoy them;
a world where different races and cultures live in harmony and mutual respect;
a world where peace is built with justice, and justice is guided by love.
Give us the inspiration and courage to build it, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Tomorrow

Lend a hand to one another
In the daily toil of life;
When we meet a weaker brother,
Let us help him in the strife.
There is none so rich but may,
In his turn, be forced to borrow;
And the poor man's lot today
May become our own tomorrow.
Lend a hand to one another:
When malicious tongues have thrown
Dark suspicion on your brother,
Be not prompt to cast a stone.
There is none so good but may
Run adrift in shame and sorrow.
Lend a hand to one another:
In the race for Honour's crown;
Should it fall upon your brother,
Let not envy tear it down.
Lend a hand to all, we pray,
In their sunshine or their sorrow;
And the prize they've won today
May become our own tomorrow.



Extracts from 6 Human Rights speeches that changed the world.

From Freedom or Death, Emmeline Pankhurst 1913 (English Political Activist who organised the Suffragette movement and helped women win the right to vote. This speech was one of many she made denouncing inequality)

Human life for us is sacred, but we say if any life is to be sacrificed it shall be ours; we won't do it ourselves, but we will put the enemy in the position where they will have to choose between giving us freedom or giving us death.



From The Struggle for Human Rights Speech, Eleanor Roosevelt 1948 (Eleanor Roosevelt was the first chairperson of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and she played an instrumental role in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

We must not be confused about what freedom is. Basic human rights are simple and easily understood: freedom of speech and a free press; freedom of religion and worship; freedom of assembly and the right of petition; the right of men to be secure in their homes and free from unreasonable search and seizure and from arbitrary arrest and punishment.

From The Wind of Change, Harold Macmillan 1960 (Prime Minister of England - this speech was addressed to the South African Parliament and was about racial discrimination and slavery)

The wind of change is blowing through this continent, and whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact. We must all accept it as a fact, and our national policies must take account of it..

From the I Have a Dream Speech, Martin Luther King 1963 (Leader of the Civil Rights Movement in USA - this speech was made during the March on Washington where 10s of thousands of people marched to demand equality and freedom)

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.



From I Am Prepared to Die, Nelson Mandela 1964 (This speech was made from the dock during the trial which would end with Nelson Mandela being sentenced to life in prison. He served 27 years before being released in 1990)

During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die

From The Perils of Indifference, Elie Wiesel 1999 (Elie was a Holocaust survivor who became a writer, professor and activist. In 1986 he won the Nobel Peace Prize. This speech was made to President Clinton and others in the White House)

Indifference elicits no response. Indifference is not a response. Indifference is not a beginning; it is an end. And, therefore, indifference is always the friend of the enemy, for it benefits the aggressor — never his victim, whose pain is magnified when he or she feels forgotten. The political prisoner in his cell, the hungry children, the homeless refugees — not to respond to their plight, not to relieve their solitude by offering them a spark of hope is to exile them from human memory. And in denying their humanity, we betray our own.

The Hill We Climb - Amanda Gorman

When day comes, we ask ourselves where can we find light in this never-ending shade?

The loss we carry, a sea we must wade.

We've braved the belly of the beast.

We've learned that quiet isn't always peace,
and the norms and notions of what "just" is isn't always justice.

And yet, the dawn is ours before we knew it.

Somehow we do it.

Somehow we've weathered and witnessed a nation that isn't broken,
but simply unfinished.

We, the successors of a country and a time where a skinny Black girl descended from slaves and
raised by a single mother can dream of becoming president, only to find herself reciting for one.

And yes, we are far from polished, far from pristine,
but that doesn't mean we are striving to form a union that is perfect.

We are striving to forge our union with purpose.

To compose a country committed to all cultures, colours, characters, and conditions of man.

And so we lift our gazes not to what stands between us, but what stands before us.

We close the divide because we know, to put our future first,
we must first put our differences aside.

We lay down our arms so we can reach out our arms to one another.

We seek harm to none and harmony for all.

Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is true:

That even as we grieved, we grew.

That even as we hurt, we hoped.

That even as we tired, we tried.

That we'll forever be tied together, victorious.

Not because we will never again know defeat, but because we will never again sow division.

Scripture tells us to envision that everyone shall sit under their own vine and fig tree
and no one shall make them afraid.

If we're to live up to our own time, then victory won't lie in the blade,
but in all the bridges we've made.

That is the promise to glade, the hill we climb, if only we dare.

It's because being American is more than a pride we inherit.

It's the past we step into and how we repair it.

We've seen a force that would shatter our nation rather than share it.

Would destroy our country if it meant delaying democracy.

This effort very nearly succeeded.

But while democracy can be periodically delayed,
it can never be permanently defeated.

In this truth, in this faith, we trust,
for while we have our eyes on the future,
history has its eyes on us.



This is the era of just redemption.

We feared it at its inception.

We did not feel prepared to be the heirs of such a terrifying hour,
but within it, we found the power to author a new chapter,
to offer hope and laughter to ourselves.

So while once we asked, 'How could we possibly prevail over catastrophe?' now we assert, 'How could catastrophe possibly prevail over us?'

We will not march back to what was, but move to what shall be:

A country that is bruised but whole, benevolent but bold, fierce and free.

We will not be turned around or interrupted by intimidation because we know our inaction and inertia will be the inheritance of the next generation.

Our blunders become their burdens.

But one thing is certain:

If we merge mercy with might, and might with right, then love becomes our legacy and change, our children's birth-right.

So let us leave behind a country better than the one we were left.

With every breath from my bronze-pounded chest,
we will raise this wounded world into a wondrous one.

We will rise from the golden hills of the west.

We will rise from the wind-swept north-east where our forefathers first realized revolution.

We will rise from the lake-rimmed cities of the midwestern states.

We will rise from the sun-baked south.

We will rebuild, reconcile, and recover.

In every known nook of our nation, in every corner called our country,
our people, diverse and beautiful, will emerge, battered and beautiful.

When day comes, we step out of the shade, aflame and unafraid.

The new dawn blooms as we free it.

For there is always light,

if only we're brave enough to see it.

If only we're brave enough to be it.

BE
BRAVE

A Prayer for Peace - John Birch

We are moulded, each one of us, in the image of God,
and within our souls there is a fingerprint none can erase.

We pray for those who have no regard for anyone but self,
who put no value on human life.

For nations and individuals who abuse and kill.

We are not called to be judge or jury, but we are called to be agents of change,
and if the butterfly that flaps its wings should be our attitude to others then so be it, Lord,
and may the hurricane this generates somewhere within the world

reach into the hearts and souls of those for whom we pray,
and reveal to them how precious are those

for whom they have no love, and how precious are they who now bring tears to the eyes of God.



Red Brocade - Naomi Shihab Nye

The Arabs used to say,
When a stranger appears at your door,
feed him for three days
before asking who he is,
where he's come from,
where he's headed.
That way, he'll have strength
enough to answer.
Or, by then you'll be
such good friends
you don't care.

Let's go back to that.
Rice? Pine nuts?
Here, take the red brocade pillow.
My child will serve water
to your horse.

No, I was not busy when you came!
I was not preparing to be busy.
That's the armor everyone put on
to pretend they had a purpose
in the world.

I refuse to be claimed.
Your plate is waiting.
We will snip fresh mint
into your tea

I Dream a World - Langston Hughes

I dream a world where man
No other man will scorn,
Where love will bless the earth
And peace its paths adorn
I dream a world where all
Will know sweet freedom's way,
Where greed no longer saps the soul
Nor avarice blights our day.
A world I dream where black or white,
Whatever race you be,
Will share the bounties of the earth
And every man is free,
Where wretchedness will hang its head
And joy, like a pearl,
Attends the needs of all mankind-
Of such I dream, my world!

The Ballard of the Landlord - Langston Hughes

Landlord, landlord,
My roof has sprung a leak.
Don't you 'member I told you about it
Way last week?

Landlord, landlord,
These steps is broken down.
When you come up yourself
It's a wonder you don't fall down.

Ten Bucks you say I owe you?
Ten Bucks you say is due?
Well, that's Ten Bucks more'n I'll pay you
Till you fix this house up new.

What? You gonna get eviction orders?
You gonna cut off my heat?
You gonna take my furniture and
Throw it in the street?

Um-huh! You talking high and mighty.
Talk on-till you get through.
You ain't gonna be able to say a word
If I land my fist on you.

Police! Police!
Come and get this man!
He's trying to ruin the government
And overturn the land!

Copper's whistle!
Patrol bell!
Arrest.
Precinct Station.
Iron cell.
Headlines in press:
MAN THREATENS LANDLORD
TENANT HELD NO BAIL
JUDGE GIVES NEGRO 90 DAYS IN COUNTY JAIL!



Quotes from Pope Francis on Social Justice Issues

“Jesus tells us what the ‘protocol’ is, on which we will be judged. It is the one we read in chapter 25 of Matthew’s Gospel: I was hungry, I was thirsty, I was in prison, I was sick, I was naked and you helped me, clothed me, visited me, took care of me. Whenever we do this to one of our brothers, we do this to Jesus. Caring for our neighbor; for those who are poor, who suffer in body and in soul, for those who are in need. This is the touchstone.”

“Without a solution to the problems of the poor, we will not solve the problems of the world. We need projects, mechanisms and processes to implement better distribution of resources, from the creation of new jobs to the integral promotion of those who are excluded’.”



“When money, instead of man, is at the center of the system, when money becomes an idol, men and women are reduced to simple instruments of a social and economic system, which is characterized, better yet dominated, by profound inequalities. So we discard whatever is not useful to this logic; it is this attitude that discards children and older people, and is now affecting the young.”

“We are all equal – all of us – but this truth is not recognized, this equality is not recognized, and for this reason some people are, we can say, happier than others. But this is not a right! We all have the same rights. When we do not see this, society is unjust. It does not follow the rule of justice, and where there is no justice, there cannot be peace. I would like to repeat this with you: where there is no justice, there is no peace!”

We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental. Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature.



If we approach nature and the environment without...openness to awe and wonder, if we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits on their immediate needs. By contrast, if we feel intimately united with all that exists, then sobriety and care will well up spontaneously.

“The Church is likewise conscious of the responsibility which all of us have for our world, for the whole of creation, which we must love and protect. There is much that we can do to benefit the poor, the needy and those who suffer, and to favour justice, promote reconciliation and build peace. But before all else we need to keep alive in our world the thirst for the absolute, and to counter the dominance of a one-dimensional vision of the human person, a vision which reduces human beings to what they produce and to what they consume: this is one of the most insidious temptations of our time.”

Migrants and refugees are not pawns on the chessboard of humanity. They are children, women and men who leave or who are forced to leave their homes for various reasons, who share a legitimate desire for knowing and having, but above all for being more



Prayer of Oscar Romero

It helps, now and then,
to step back and take a long view.
The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts,
it is even beyond our vision.
We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny
fraction of the magnificent enterprise
that is God's work.
Nothing we do is complete,
which is a way of saying
that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.
No statement says all that could be said.
No prayer fully expresses our faith.
No confession brings perfection.
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.
No program accomplishes
the Church's mission.
No set of goals and objectives
includes everything.
This is what we are about.
We plant the seeds that one day will grow.
We water seeds already planted,
knowing that they hold future promise.
We lay foundations
that will need further development.
We provide yeast that produces effects
far beyond our capabilities.
We cannot do everything,
and there is a sense of liberation
in realizing that.
This enables us to do something,
and to do it very well.
It may be incomplete,
but it is a beginning,
a step along the way,
an opportunity
for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.
We may never see the end results,
but that is the difference
between the master builder and the worker.
We are workers, not master builders;
ministers, not messiahs.
We are prophets
of a future that is not our own.
Amen

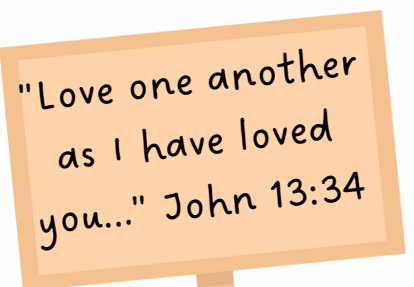
Go Be Justice to God's People - Martin Willett

Go, be justice to God's people;
Open wide your hearts to learn.
Break the bread of true communion,
Pour the cup of true concern.
Feed the hungry, house the homeless,
Catch the tyrants in their lies;
Be the Lord's anointed servants
So God's justice never dies.

Go be healing to God's people;
Seek and share the saving call.
Be the touch of Christ for others,
Be the voice of Christ for all.
Lives are broken all around you,
And Christ has no hands but yours;
Hold in them the ones who suffer
So Christ's healing love endures.

Go, be mercy to God's people
In forgiveness freely shown;
Find the stranger, call her kindred,
Find the exile, call him home.
Age to age God's mercy welcomes
With a love that will not cease;
Go, be Christ light to God's people,
Be an instrument of peace.

Go, be courage; God now sends us
to bear fruit that will remain.
Urged by Christ's love, we give our love
to the vision of God's reign.
Trust the Spirit's power within us;
Dare to risk love faithfully.
Go, be good news for the whole world;
Sing forever charity!



"Love one another
as I have loved
you..." John 13:34

Eco-Examen Resources - An Ignatian Examen

1. I give thanks to God for creation and for being wonderfully made. Where did I feel God's presence in creation today?
2. I ask for the grace to see creation as God does – in all its splendour and suffering. Do I see the beauty of creation and hear the cries of the earth and the poor?
3. I ask for the grace to look closely to see how my life choices impact creation and the poor and vulnerable. What challenges or joys do I experience as I recall my care for creation? How can I turn away from a throwaway culture and instead stand in solidarity with creation and the poor?
4. I ask for the grace of conversion towards ecological justice and reconciliation. Where have I fallen short in caring for creation and my brothers and sisters? How do I ask for a conversion of heart?
5. I ask for the grace to reconcile my relationship with God, creation and humanity, and to stand in solidarity through my actions. How can I repair my relationship with creation and make choices consistent with my desire for reconciliation with creation?

Being the loudest - Rupi Kaur

Being the loudest on earth's playground
doesn't make us any more important than
the dirt we crush beneath our feet
we are nothing except air
and fire and water and soil
we are a people
who forgot what we are made of
a people who talk about the weather
as if it's mundane and not magic
as if the oceans
are not holy waters
as if the sky
is not a vision
as if the animals
are not our siblings
as if nature is not god
and rain is not god's tears
and we are not god's children
as if god is not the earth itself



The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'" "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?" In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

"Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him." Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

See Pope Francis' wonderful reflection on this parable in Fratelli Tutti:
https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html