

Catholic Social Teaching

with Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley



Call to family, community, and participation

The person is not only sacred but also social. How we organize our society — in economics and politics, in law and policy — directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. Marriage and family are the central social institutions that must be supported and strengthened, not undermined.

We believe people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.

Tradition

“The existence of each individual is deeply tied to that of others: life is not simply time that passes; life is a time for interactions.” (Pope Francis, *Brothers and Sisters to Us* [Fratelli Tutti], no. 66)

“Human beings are so made that they cannot live, develop and find fulfillment except ‘in the sincere gift of self to others.’ [62] Nor can they fully know themselves apart from an encounter with other persons: ‘I communicate effectively with myself only insofar as I communicate with others.’ [63] No one can experience the true beauty of life without relating to others, without having real faces to love. This is part of the mystery of authentic human existence. ‘Life exists where there is bonding, communion, fraternity; and life is stronger than death when it is built on true relationships and bonds of fidelity. On the contrary, there is no life when we claim to be self-sufficient and live as islands: in these attitudes, death prevails.’ [64]” (Pope Francis, *Brothers and Sisters to Us* [Fratelli Tutti], no. 87)

“The family is thus an agent of pastoral activity through its explicit proclamation of the Gospel and its legacy of varied forms of witness, namely solidarity with the poor, openness to a diversity of people, the protection of creation, moral and material solidarity with other families, including those most in need, commitment to the promotion of the common good and the transformation of unjust social structures, beginning in the territory in which the family lives, through the practice of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.” (Pope Francis, *On Love in the Family to the Joy of love* [Amoris Laetitia], no. 290, quoting the Final Report of the Synod of Bishops, 10/24/15)

Economic and social policies as well as organization of the work world should be continually evaluated in light of their impact on the strength and stability of family life. The long-range future of this nation is intimately linked with the well-being of families, for the family is the most basic form of human community. Efficiency and competition in the marketplace must be moderated by greater concern for the way work schedules and compensation support or threaten the bonds between spouses and

between parents and children. (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Economic Justice for All*, no. 93)

The first and fundamental structure for a “human ecology” is the family . . . founded on marriage, in which the mutual gift of self as husband and wife creates an environment in which children can be born and develop their potentialities, become aware of their dignity and prepare to face their unique and individual destiny. (St. John Paul II, *On the Hundredth Year* [Centesimus Annus], no. 39)

Insofar as it is a “small- scale Church,” the Christian family is called upon, like the “large- scale Church,” to be a sign of unity for the world and in this way to exercise its prophetic role by bearing witness to the Kingdom and peace of Christ, towards which the whole world is journeying. Christian families can do this through their educational activity — that is to say by presenting to their children a model of life based on the values of truth, freedom, justice and love. (St. John Paul II, *The Family in the Modern World* [Familiaris Consortio], no. 48)

Text is drawn from United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, <https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/call-to-family-community-and-participation>



Revolution of Tenderness: Noticing those who need our love



Today, we live in a time of fear. Fear of getting COVID or another illness, fear of mass shootings, fear of not meeting others' standards, fear of so many things around us.

Our faith summons us to trust in God. He tells us, “Be not afraid.” God created us to love and be loved and to care for one another. Yet somehow it appears we are disconnected from one another.

I have heard and witnessed the fear of many. From a young teenager who struggles with depression to an immigrant mother who fears for her child's safety. The young teenager shared with me that the pressure of her parents' expectations for her to do well in school weigh heavy on her. She is afraid she may not be able maintain her good grades and she will disappoint her parents.

Parents also live with fears they have for their children. Recently I witnessed a mother holding her baby close to her chest, hiding in a little corner after running inside an overcrowded refugee shelter when the volunteers opened the gate for a brief moment. She hoped no one would notice her. She was afraid of being turned away. I saw a mother's fear, a mother in need of a safe space, food, and water for her baby while she waited for an opportunity to enter the United States.

We must pay attention to people in need, people living in fear. We must wake up and notice others around us who need our love, who need our loving tenderness. Pope Francis speaks of the need for a revolution of tenderness, and of the importance of accompanying another on this journey of life. How we are present to others matters.

It is time, long overdue, to ignite a revolution of tenderness in our families and our communities. A revolution in which we all get involved in doing good for others. A revolution of tenderness in which we notice the people in our midst who are silently crying for help. How will you respond?

-Sister Norma Pimentel, MJ

Call to Action

- Every human being reflects a special characteristic of God. What characteristic of God do your grandparents represent?
- How can you contribute towards the common good this week?
- How can you ensure you are participating in building a more just community?
- How do you show respect to your friends?

If you would like to volunteer with us, please call our office at (956) 702-4088 or email our volunteer coordinator at volunteercoordinator@cdob.org

Catholic Social Teaching is divided into 7 themes:

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