Understanding Justice & Peace and the Catholic Social Teaching



A training manual for Justice and Peace groups

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UNDERSTANDING JUSTICE & PEACE AND THE CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

A Training Manual for Justice and Peace Groups No. 001A

"The joy and hope, grief and anguish of the men of our time, are the joy and hope, grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well."

> Vatican II, Gaudium et Spes #.1

"THE MANDATE THAT JESUS GAVE TO HIS DISCIPLES AT THE MOMENT OF HIS ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN IS ADDRESSED TO THE CHURCH OF GOD IN ALL TIMES AND PLACES. THE CHURCH AS FAMILY OF GOD IN AFRICA MUST BEAR WITNESS TO CHRIST ASLO BY PROMOTING JUSTICE AND PEACE ON THE CONTINENT AND THROUGH THE WORLD".

POST SYNODAL APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION ECCLESIA IN AFRICA #.105.

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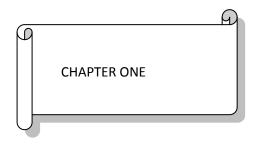
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INTRODUCTION

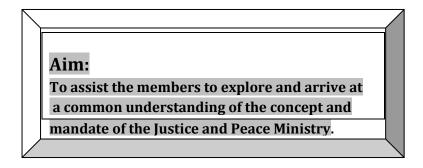
This Manual Understanding Justice and Peace and the Catholic Social Doctrine has emerged from a call from Small Christian Communities, Mission Stations, Parishes and other Church-based organizations not forgetting other secular organizations NGOs and CSOs to understand what Justice and Peace and the Catholic Social Doctrine is all about, how to begin groups and to work for Justice and Peace.

This manual is the first edition of a series of 10 intended to be used as a complimentary effort with other available books in assisting communities to become involved in the Justice Peace Ministry. In this edition, we treat the basic concepts of Justice and Peace. We try to avoid highly technical language since our greatest desire is to reach as many people as possible, at the grassroots. So we begin with a definition of the two concepts: Justice and Peace, and a brief mention about the Catholic Social Doctrine. For each we give some types and then briefly discuss the relationship between the two words, and how connected the Catholic Social Doctrine is to justice and peace work. We have also tried to elucidate a practical method or pattern of work that can be used in the Justice and Peace Ministry.

The book is the fruit of a combined effort of Justice and Peace workers in the Archdiocese of Bamenda, and the Archdiocesan Pastoral Formation Team. A number of consultations took place with the Justice and Peace Department of the National Episcopal Conference of Cameroon, some Priests and Religious men and women, and some secular organizations. Though this manual is the fruit of countless reflection workshops, a number of individuals have made significant contributions. We are grateful to Most Rev. Paul Verdzekov Archbishop Emeritus of Bamenda, who first gave us the chance to coordinate the Justice and Peace Commission in the Archdiocese of Bamenda, and who particularly concerned about matters of justice and peace gave his untiring support to our work. We are equally grateful to His Grace Cornelius Fontem ESUA, the present Archbishop who has forwarded with great intuition the justice and peace ministry in the archdiocese of Bamenda. Reverend Fathers Ernest Tubuo and Joseph Tangka, who carried out the initial reflection on the production of this manual, Professor Pierre Titi Nwel, for his valuable contributions in popularizing the Catholic Social Teaching, Fr Humphrey Tatah Mbuy who accepted to be the editor for these series of Justice and Peace, and for our partners MISEREOR – Germany and CMC-Nederland, for providing financial support in the realization of this series.



CONCEPT OF JUSTICE AND PEACE



The justice and peace ministry is about making sure that all people are treated with justice so that there is peace.

I. WHAT IS JUSTICE?

- a) **Definition:** The English word "justice" is derived from the Latin "iustistia", a concept which comes from the fact that all of us are "HUMAN"; that we live in the same world, and that we are all controlled by the same laws of nature. No human being can decide to fly like birds do; none can decide to do without air and none can decide NOT TO DIE. All of us-black and whites, young and old, rich and poor, educated and rustic are bound by the same laws of nature. In this way, no human being can ever claim to be more "human" than the other. So, "justice" simply put, is "giving to each person what is his right".
- b) **Basis:** For a believer, every human being is created in the "**image** and likeness" of God (Gen. 1:26). So we all share equality in dignity as persons. Each of us has the right to live in this world, to benefit from all the

natural resources that God created and gave to all humankind. The sun, for example, shines for all; the rain falls for everyone and the air is there for everybody. Every human being has a RIGHT to enjoy all that God has given us. Therefore, no matter his status, possession, and position, no human being can claim to be more human than the other. Death shows us our limitation and our equality. We are dust and into dust we shall all return. So, justice demands that we give to each person what is his due. This means concretely, that we should not treat people based on where they come from, what they have and what their family background is.

The men and women of law are often blamed for not inspiring justice in the courts. This is because, "justice" in the courts is based on the *evidence* received, not on what is "supposed" to be. Lawyers act on the evidence they receive, not on what they presume, not even on what they know! They must act on the facts that they have before them. The onus in court is for each party to prove its case as eloquently and as convincingly as they can. Justice here depends on whoever can prove his point.

In traditional Africa, we instinctively think of others, because for us, the logic of our existence is: "I am because you are; because we are." (The OBUNTU) Africans believe that the individual only gains his identity by being united with others. That is why in our traditional society, it is not what a person has that is important. Rather, it is how he shares what he has. No one eats a kola nut or drinks palm wine alone; not if there are others around! Justice, for the typical African, is to let everyone share in the commonwealth of the society and tribe. That is why, no matter how much a rich man is prepared to offer, there are certain "family assets" in the N.W. Region of Cameroon, that no-one will be prepared to sell the family palm bushes, the traditional horn etc. Here, as in the entire Western Grasslands of Cameroon, the palace is always seen as the neutral ground for everyone. So anyone who has problems can find refuge in the palace of the king.

II. TYPES OF JUSTICE

Iustice is action in accordance requirements of some law. Whether these rules are grounded in human consensus or societal norms, they are supposed to ensure that all members of society receive fair treatment. Issues of justice arise in several different spheres and play a significant role in causing, perpetuating, and addressing conflict. Just institutions tend to instill a sense of stability, well-being, and satisfaction among society members, while perceived injustices can lead to dissatisfaction, rebellion, or revolution. Each of the different spheres expresses the principles of justice and fairness in its own way, resulting in different types and concepts of justice: distributive, procedural, retributive, and restorative. These types of justice have important implications for socio-economic, political, civil, and criminal justice at both the national international level.

Justice ensures:

- that people receive their "fair share" of the goods available;
- that people receive "fair treatment" from society's institutions;
- that people's actions conform to rules of "fair play"

Distributive justice, or economic justice, is concerned with giving all members of society a "fair share" of the benefits and resources available. However, while everyone might agree that wealth should be distributed fairly, there is much disagreement about what counts as a "fair share." Some possible criteria of distribution are equity, equality, and need. (Equity means that one's rewards should be equal to one's contributions to a society, while "equality" means that everyone gets the same amount, regardless of their input. Distribution on the basis of need means that people who need more will get more, while people who need less will get less.) Fair allocation of resources, or distributive justice, is crucial to the stability of a society and the well-being of its members. When <u>issues of distributive justice</u> are inadequately addressed and the item to be distributed is highly valued, intractable conflicts frequently result.

Procedural justice is concerned with making and implementing decisions according to fair processes that ensure "fair treatment." Rules must be impartially followed and consistently applied in order to generate an unbiased

decision. Those carrying out the procedures should be neutral, and those directly affected by the decisions should have some voice or representation in the decision-making process. (Public participation.) If people believe procedures to be fair, they will be more likely to accept outcomes, even ones that they do not like. Implementing fair procedures is central to many dispute resolution procedures, including negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and adjudication.

Retributive justice appeals to the notion of "just dessert" -- the idea that people deserve to be treated in the same way they treat others. It is a retroactive approach that justifies punishment as a response to past injustice or wrongdoing. The central idea is that the offender has gained unfair advantages through his or her behavior, and that punishment will set this imbalance straight. In other words, those who do not play by the rules should be brought to justice and deserve to suffer penalties for their

Mark Amstutz, finds fault with retributive approaches to justice because they do not pay sufficient attention to how individuals are to reconstruct their lives.

transgressions. Retributive justice plays a central role in legal proceedings, responding to violations of <u>international law</u> and <u>human rights</u>, and <u>war crimes adjudication</u>.

However, because there is a tendency to slip from retributive justice to an emphasis on revenge, some suggest that **restorative justice** processes are While a retributive justice approach conceives more effective. transgressions as crimes against the state or nation, restorative justice focuses on violations as crimes against individuals. It is concerned with healing victims' wounds, restoring offenders to law-abiding lives, and repairing harm done to interpersonal relationships and the community. Victims take an active role in directing the exchange that takes place, as well as defining the responsibilities and obligations of offenders. Offenders are encouraged to understand the harm they have caused their victims and take responsibility for it. Restorative justice aims to strengthen the community and prevent similar harms from happening in the future. At the national level, such processes are often carried out through victim-offender mediation programs, while at the international level restorative justice is often a matter of instituting truth and reconciliation commissions.

Most people have experience of some form of justice or injustice, justice and injustice are part of human history and of our own lives. A helpful place to begin to understand the concept of justice is by thinking about our personal experiences of justice in the light of our faith. It is also important to do analysis of what happens in a just situation and what happens in an unjust situation.

✓ Some Biblical story could be used to deepen our understanding on what is involved in the exercising justice.

*The stoning of the Woman Accused of Adultery (Jn. 8:3-11).

*Susanna and her accusers (Daniel 13:1-64

✓ There are some other examples in our communities;

*Babies born with infirmity are considered to be ill omen so they are murdered in the name of sacrifice to cleanse the family to which they are born. There are many of such tales from which we can draw inspiration.

Group Reflections and lead exercises

Divide into groups of 5 and reflect on any of these stories from the Bible and discuss the questions that follow.

❖ The Book of Genesis 1:26-31

- Why should we respect each other? Why should each person be treated with dignity?
- In what way are people abused in our community?
- Do we notice any damage of our immediate environment? How is it done?

❖ Prophet Amos 5:10-15

- What does God desire?
- If an Old Testament Prophet were to speak to us today what would be his message?
- Why do we need to be aware of these things? Are they harmful? Why?

III. WHAT IS PEACE?

"...the first peace we must attain is that of a heart freed from sin. . .

Cardinal Renato Raphaele Martino.

Many people often think of peace in terms of a state where there is harmony and the absence of war, violence and any form of disturbance. But one could still be in such a state and yet not be at peace. That is why moralists define peace as a state of integration and tranquility. In the Bible, peace is associated with good relationship with God.

IV. TYPES OF PEACE

Basically there are two types of peace- external and internal peace.

- a) **External Peace** refers to an "outward" lack of violence or disturbance. It is a physical state of security. This can come about if there is sufficient food, some social security and political understanding. It can also come from coercion and fear. Anyone who comes to Cameroon or who has read about the wars in Africa will immediately think that Cameroon is a great oasis of peace. Externally this is true. Cameroon has external peace. But, as they say, all that glisters is not gold!
- b) Internal Peace: This refers to a situation where the individual feels within himself a true sense of security and integration. Such a situation is only possible if a person is comfortable with himself, comfortable with others and at peace with God. Such peace is psychological; it is spiritual, sublime and intangible. This is real peace. That is why many people who live in affluence, who seem to have all the material needs of life, still end up stressed because a good number have not got their wealth the right way. St Augustine of Hippo once said: "our hearts are restless O God, until they rest in you".

V. THE LINK BETWEEN JUSTICE AND PEACE

Mutual forgiveness must not eliminate the need for justice and still less does it block the path that leads to truth. On the contrary, justice and truth represent the concrete requisites for reconciliation.

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church.No.518.

From what we have seen so far, it is easy for one to conclude that, "Justice and Peace" are often considered as a set of Siamese twins. They seem so interwoven that it is difficult to have one without the other.

- a) What is the Link between Justice and Peace? Justice is based on fairness. All of us have equal rights as persons living in the same world and guided by the same natural principles. When this justice is achieved, there is a certain amount of security that everyone feels at peace and comfortable with himself and others. That is why Justice and Peace are linked.
- b) Is it Possible to have Justice without Peace? In the strict sense of the words, it is impossible to have justice without peace, or peace without justice. In fact, one influences and gives birth to the other. Yet we are so used to hearing politicians in particular talk about how peaceful we are, even when they know that the actual situations is bad. The peace which these politicians are thinking about is the absence of war. At the same time, many people have a very weird sense of "justice".

They are convinced that our family background, our acquaintances and our educational background make some people better and more than others. Hence justice for them is treating people according to their status and other considerations. Furthermore, a good number of people in our society have not been properly brought up to form and respect their consciences. So sometimes, they consider what is "objectively" wrong as "right" and vice versa. In these circumstances, one can understand why

some people would think that it is possible to have justice without peace and vice versa. But objectively, this is impossible.

VI. OBSTACLES TO JUSTICE AND PEACE

There are many obstacles to justice and peace in our society. They differ from one society to another, from one group to the other and from one institution to another. However, we can identify the following obstacles that are relevant for our society: conceptual difficulties; historical and socio-political influences; selfishness; cultural influences; lack of proper education of the conscience; religious convictions.

- a) Cultural Influences: The first obstacle that we can identify is our cultural heritage. The human being is a cultural animal and cultures differ enormously from one society to another. What others may think are cases of injustice are seen by other cultures as the correct way to behave. For example, in a traditional African society, it is taken for granted that the man decides and the wife follows. This, in other cultures, would be referred to as suppression. In a typically Indian culture, parents think it is their duty to select a girl as wife for their sons. In some other cultures, this would be thought of as a violation of fundamental rights to choose. Apart from our various cultures, even within the same cultures, the influence of modernity equally create an obstacle to what the people of a particular culture have for long considered as justice and peace as opposed to what the present generation thinks.
- b) Conceptual Difficulties: The second obstacle to justice and peace lies in the fact that some people do not understand what these concepts actually mean. They use the words but a good number do not fully grasp the real meaning of these notions. Some people use them just as part of rhetorical jargon while others use it with different shades of understanding.
- c) Historical and Socio-Political Influences: We are part of history and the experiences of some people have made them react differently to the concepts and reality of justice and peace. At the same time the socio-political influences that have affected the lives of people equally stand as an obstacle to justice and peace. For example, a young person who grew up under the apartheid regime in South Africa will react differently to justice and peace than his counterpart who grew up in democratic America. A

Cameroonian school child who lived through the socio-political events of the 90s will equally react differently to justice and peace than one who has grown up in another country. Communism and dictatorship do not believe in the concepts of individual liberties and rights.

- **d) Selfishness:** Another big hindrance to the calls for justice and peace is a natural human selfishness which we all have. Some people, however, are so self-centered that they hardly think about others. They are more concerned about themselves that whatever happens to others does not seem to bother them. In a world where individualism, materialism and greed are gradually coming to the fore, justice and peace face greater difficulty.
- e) Lack of Proper Education of the Conscience: Relativism has come into our educational system as various philosophies seek to elbow each other out. To make a bad case worse, justice and peace as moral concepts are absent from many educational systems. Some educational systems have not given people the opportunity to form their consciences in conventionally acceptable manner. Some have simply not had the chance to go into quality schools where there is greater emphasis on morality and formation of the conscience.
- f) Religious Convictions: Religious plurality is a fact of our experience today. In such a pluralistic atmosphere, we must accept that different religious convictions will colour the way we look at justice and peace. For example, while others may condemn the acts of Moslem fundamentalist and refer to these acts as terrorism and vandalism, adherents of these Islamic sects are convinced that they act in the "name of Allah". That is why in 2001, Osama bin Laden was convinced that his strike at the Twin Towers in USA, on the early morning of September 11, was a religious act against an enemy of Islam. As we witness more and more alternative religions come into our world today, we equally witness a difference in vision of what justice and peace mean.

VI. THE WAY FORWARD

We all need justice and peace; our world is in dire need of an atmosphere where everyone can feel at home and have a fair share of what God has given all of us. We need a world and society where everyone is given equal opportunities and treated as human beings, not because of their race, colour, education, status or possession. In order to do this there are many things that could be done. But we suggest the following three: Proper Education of our Kids; Retrieval of our Value Systems; a meaningful approach to pluralism in our world.

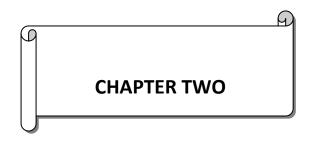
- a) **Proper Education of our Kids:** Education is a key to the proper upbringing of a person. Today, more than ever before, there is a need for the proper education of our children. A good number of our parents need to take up their responsibility and obligation to educate their children in good and decent institutions. For this there can be no compromise. Here there is a great and urgent need for politicians and political decision makers to realize that we cannot continue to politicize our education and manipulating our youth the way we do today.
- b) Retrieval of our Value Systems: Human life has no meaning if there are no value systems. In our so-called modern life, relativism makes people to believe that one person's way of doing things is just as good as the others. But we must be able, while respecting the views of others, and insist on a scale of value systems.

There is need for children to grow up knowing what is right and wrong, what is true and false. Children must be brought up to know that some things are not just done; that others are acceptable while others are inadmissible. The African, for example, is conjugated in his religiosity. The modern tendency where some African leaders and policy makers, think that it is conventional to treat religion as a commodity which we can leave out of educational and public life, is a tragedy that modern Africa should handle immediately. Rejection of our value-systems has brought about crimes and violence that beset our society today.

c) A Meaningful Approach to Pluralism: We are different, meant to be different, should be different and will forever remain different. This is what makes for the beautiful variety amongst us. Yet despite our differences, we share so much in common that life is meaningful only when we celebrate our differences and see this as an invitation to appreciate and recognize our need for each other. We all have the intellect and this gives each of us the capacity to see what is true and what is not true. Truth is the object of the mind. Therefore, pluralism has meaning only within the context of truth. We can only truly achieve justice and peace in our society if our differences help us to be more focused on the truth.

WORKSHOPS FOR PARISH COMMITTEES:

- 1. List at least 5 words in your language which suggest Justice?
- 2. List at least 5 words which suggest or mean Peace?
- 3. Do these words mean the same as what you have read above about *Justice and Peace*?
- 4. Suggest other obstacles to the concepts of Justice and Peace in our society.
- 5. Give other suggestions as to how we can move forward.



JUSTICE AND PEACE MINISTRY: METHOD OF WORK.

"IF THE PROCLAIMATION OF JUSTICE AND PEACE IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE TASK OF EVANGELISATION, IT FOLLOWS THAT THE PROMOTION OF THESE VALUES SHOULD ALSO BE PART OF A PASTORAL PROGRAMME OF EACH CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY. THAT IS WHY I URGE THAT ALL PASTORAL AGENTS ARE TO BE ADEQUATELY TRAINED FOR THIS APOSTOLATE..."

POPE JP II in Ecclesia in Africa. 1995

Aim: To provide a general understanding of the method of work for the Justice and Peace Ministry

PASTORAL CIRCLE: A useful tool for social analysis

The Pastoral circle is a method of social analysis, a method of work that can be found in the scriptures that justice and peace groups can adopt. It follows 5 simple steps;

- I. Life Experience,
- II. Social Analysis,

- III. Faith Reflection,
- IV. Planning and Taking action,
- V. Evaluating Action.

These 5 steps are going to be explained in a more comprehensive manner in the paragraphs that follow.

I. LIFE EXPERIENCE

This step is about observing and asking questions like what, 'what is happening around us? It is about actually identifying the issues, clearly seeing what these issues are concretely. It is about researching, investigating and gathering information or empirical evidence about the issues.

Identifying and researching the issues would have to do with the **relevance** of such issues; i.e. issues affecting the people in the community at the time.

how **practical** the issues are; i.e. the issues must be those we can do something about, must be based on facts and not rumours, must be a **source of injustice** affecting the people, such issues have **implications**, i.e. it must be issues that are likely to cause further problems if not tackled.

One important thing we must bear in mind is that we all live in a community, and experience the world around us every day. We know there are many problems plaguing our community. As members of justice and peace groups we feel we must do something about the problems in our community. But one thing is very certain; we cannot address all the problems in our community at the same time for which reason we have to be realistic and tackle the issues we can do something about. Some issues cut across the entire country and cannot be addressed by a parish justice and peace group. Such national issues would have to involve all justice and

peace groups in the entire country or a national campaign could be appropriate to address the issues.

The issues of injustice identified must be based on factual information and not mere romours, it must be one that cut across the community and very visible. The issues must be within the reach of the justice and peace group to manage. The justice and peace group therefore has to identify only issues that they have the capacity to handle. There must not be any private interest in the issues the group has identified. It is important to identify issues that will benefit the whole community without which the community will lose trust in out justice and peace group.

Group Reflection and practical exercise

1. As members of a parish justice and peace group, split up into 3 working groups according to mission stations. Let members of the different working groups identify issues of injustice that cut across the different mission station which could be addressed as a parish.

In plenary, present the issues identified and discuss.

II. SOCIAL ANALYSIS

This is the second step of the Pastoral Circle. At this step we still look around us and like in the first step we asked the question 'what is happening?' at this step, the question is 'why is this happening?' This question has to do with analyzing the issues to understand why the issues exist, understanding the root cause of the issues, how time (past, present and future of the issue), structures (political, economic, cultural and religious) are involved and affect the issue, values and attitudes of people affect the issue, and the root cause.

After the first step when the group has identified the issues, this second step helps to analyze the issues identified and this is social analysis. In social analysis we look at *why* the world is the way it is and search for *the root cause.* Social analysis helps us to understand why problems and issues exist in our community.

This method helps us:

- Examine deeply an issue so that we can understand the causes of the issue, the connections between people and structures involved in the issue, and the consequences of the issue;
- Understand the bigger picture and how an issue fits into this bigger picture;
- Understand the historical and structural relationships that affect the issue;
- Diagnose the causes of an issue so that effective action can be taken.

III. FAITH REFLECTION

This is the third step of the Pastoral Circle. At this step which follows identification and analyzing the issues, we are now faced with this reflection, 'Lord, what do you say about what is happening', i.e. **reflecting** on the issues in the light of our faith; and also looking at what **scriptures** and **Catholic Social Teaching** say about the issue.

Our Christian faith-life is part of the pastoral Circle and influences every step in the circle. As committed Christians our faith is part of our way of life. Our faith guides us as we identify research and analyze issues before we plan to take action. Faith reflection in this third step therefore, is a very conscious attempt to discern the will of God as regard the issues faced. It is important for us to take a moment to reflect on an issue in terms of faith before planning to take action. The Social Teaching of the Church tells us to 'read the signs of the times'. In steps one and two we read the signs of our time. Once this is done, we need to take a moment to reflect on what we have learnt and discovered in terms of our faith. We need to see what our faith brings to our analysis.

Does it deepen our understanding of the issue?

Does it help us to see the issue in another way?

Does it help us to see the issue in another way?

Does it help us to see another aspect of the issue? And we ask,

'Lord, what do you say about this situation?

'Lord, what do you want us to do?

The documents of the Social Teaching of the Church serve as a further guide to action. The Church is our community and offers guidance to all its members.

IV. PLANNING AND TAKING ACTION

This is the fourth step in the Pastoral Circle and it is a step to plan effective social action. Earlier on we looked at what is happening in our community, why it is happening and what God says about it. Now that we understand the issue we face, we can identify the root causes and we are in search for God's teachings about it, we are ready to work out the most effective and appropriate way to address this issue. We are ready to take action.

So far we have worked uniquely as a justice and peace group without involving other people in our analysis. We might have interacted with other people but they have not been particularly involved in our work. This step four takes a new dimension. The community is to be involved in the action for it to be effective. Community involvement here is essential for effective social action because the more the people are involved the

greater impact of the action. An important part of taking social action is raising awareness about the issue to the people affected and actively involving them in addressing the issue.

It should be noted that justice and peace groups are not there to do things for people, but to motivate and empower people to take collective action. To arrive at effective collective social action, we first of all have to identify the people we need to involve in the action, and the different roles they will play in bringing about social change.

V. EVALUATING ACTION

This is the fifth step when we are called to evaluate each action taken on an issue in the community. At this step, we look at what we have achieved and not achieved. In evaluating, we celebrate at the successes and also look at the failures to we can learn for future actions.

Evaluation is not the end of the social action, but it is just one step in continuing the action. Evaluation is the part of the Pastoral Circle that provides us with a deeper understanding of the issues and realities of the work, so that we are better able to continue to tackle the same issue or new issues in the future. Evaluating our current social action brings us to another circle of identifying issues, analyzing them, reflecting on them in terms of our faith, planning and taking action and evaluating action once more.

SEE- JUDGE -AND- ACT

See-Judge-Act; are three independent concepts in social transformation analysis. This concept generally considered as a Catholic action was conceived by Card. Leon Joseph CARDJIN of Belgian origin. He used this as a method of evangelizing Young Christian Workers who in solidarity could work together to change the world. This is another method the justice and peace group use to develop actions.

SIGNIFICANCE OF SEE-JUDGE-ACT

a) SEE

*Someone in a justice and peace shares a story about a problem that s/he has experienced. It may also be a problem that someone in the group or community has experienced.

*The members of the group starts analyzing the problem, by asking questions which will help them understand more about the problem, and the root causes of the problem. They also try to find out how people who are concerned with the problem feel.

b) JUDGE

*The group tries to find out what the Scriptures say about the problem. The group chooses texts that might help them to understand how Jesus responded to injustice.

c) ACT

*The group collectively brain storm on possible actions to take to solve the problem raised. These best possible actions are grouped and prioritized according to the problems analyzed. The decision arrived at will be a unanimous one so it will be executed without hurting the dignity of the persons involved. These actions should lead to forgiveness, reconciliation, peace and harmony between the aggrieved parties.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION.

1). What are the steps that can be followed to transform a negative situation in a community into a positive one?



CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

The Catholic Social Teaching is social wisdom based on the word of God and is developed through a reading of the signs of the times.

"...THE FORMATION OF CLERGY, RELIGIOUS AND LAITY, IMPARTED IN THE AREAS OF THEIR APOSTOLATE, SHOULD LAY EMPHASIS ON THE SOCIAL TEACHING OF THE CHURCH. EACH PERSON, ACCRORDING TO HIS STATE OF LIFE, SHOULD BE SPECIALLY TRAINED TO KNOW HIS RIGHTS AND DUTIES, MEANINF THE SERVICE OF THE COMMON GOOD, HONEST MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC GOODS AND PROPER MANNER OF PARTICIPATING IN POLITICAL LIFE, IN ORDER TOBE ABLE TO ACT IN A CREDIBLE MANNER IN THE FACE OF SOCIAL INJUSTICES".

POST SYNODAL APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION ECCLESIA IN AFRICA

POPE JOHN PAUL II, 1995, # 107

Aim: To assist groups arrive at a practical understanding of the Catholic Social Teaching.

The social concern of the Church, directed toward an authentic development of man and society that would respect and promote all the dimensions of the human person, has always expressed itself in the most varied ways. In recent years, one of the special means of intervention has been the Magisterium of the Roman Pontiffs which, beginning with the encyclical Rerum Novarum of Leo XIII as a point of reference, has frequently dealt with the question and has sometimes made the dates of publication of the various social documents coincide with the anniversaries of that first document. The Popes have not failed to throw fresh light by means of those messages upon new aspects of the social doctrine of the Church. As a result, this doctrine, beginning with the outstanding contribution of Leo XIII and enriched by the successive contributions of the Magisterium, has now become an updated doctrinal `corpus.' It builds up gradually, as the Church, in the fullness of the word revealed by Christ Jesus (cf. Dei Verbum, n. 4) and with the assistance of the Holy Spirit (cf. Jn. 14:16, 26; 16:13 15), reads events as they unfold in the course of history. She thus seeks to lead people to respond, with the support also of rational reflection and of the human sciences, to their vocation as responsible builders of earthly society.

(Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, # 1)

The Social Teaching of the Church is the guideline provided for us to live our faith in the world. At the close of the 19th Century the Popes, the Vatican and Bishops Conferences have observed what is happening in the world and applied the scriptures to what they have seen. These guidelines provide us with guidance of living our faith in a world that is changing.

The bishops of Africa met in Yaoundé-Cameroon in 1981 for their Sixth General Assembly of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM). They discussed and approved the following document *Justice and Evangelization in Africa (JEA)*, and proposed the following challenge to the Church in Africa:

"The Social Teaching of the Church has been worked out over the past few decades deserves particular attention. We ought to go back to it more firmly, assimilate it more fully and draw inspiration from it more often for our sermons, catechesis and courses of religious formation". (# 20)

Many observers are of the opinion that few Catholics know about and understand the Social Teaching of the Church. It is for this reason that the Justice and Peace Commission find it not only important but imperative to begin this series with a basic introduction to this treasure of the Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church has always recognized, commented on and responded to issues of social justice or rather, justice and injustice in the world. As Christians we respond to the injustice we see around us and actively work for justice and peace. The Catholic Social Teaching provides us with guidelines for working for justice and peace.

The Catholic Social Teaching equally referred to as the *Social Teaching of the Catholic Church* and the *Social Doctrine of the Church* does not consist of a single document with a clear response to the question to the world around us. It is a collection of documents written by Popes, Bishops, National Episcopal Conferences, and Special Commissions. These documents challenge us to look at our society and the world in a new and critical manner and question the things that happen and which we take for granted and accept, because 'that is the way things are'. We must be able to analyze our community and the world using the teaching of the Church rather than just accepting the world as it is. We could be caused to act appropriately and more responsibly as Christians by using these documents in analyzing our community and the world. The Teaching provides us guidelines for planning actions we should take as Christians in response to the issues and problems around us.

In His Apostolic Letter, *Octagesima Adveniens* - 'A Call to Action", one of the documents that make up the Social Teaching of the Church, Pope Paul VI exhorts greater efforts for justice, noting that the responsibility of the Christian community is to:

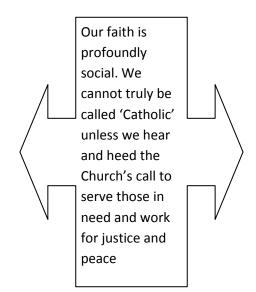
- Be aware of the signs of the times and the main changes taking place in the world;
- Analyze the situation in a given country and community;
- Use the Gospel and the Church's Social Teaching to guide this analysis;
- Decide on what should be done about the situation, and,
- Implement the plans and put the ideas into action.

The Catholic Social Teaching is based on the example of Jesus we read about in the Gospel. The Teaching is there to support and liberate people both spiritually and socially as they go about their daily lives as it addresses economic, political, social, gender, environmental and cultural aspects of our lives. As times and conditions change in the world different social teachings are needed to guide and help us respond appropriately these changes. So the teachings are written in response to what is happening in the world. The Teaching deals with topics on human rights, politics and democracy, economic justice, marriage and the family, education, peace, leisure, private property, etc.

The purpose of this teaching can be addressed at three levels;

- ➤ **Personal:** it gives guidance to the individual to make informed decisions and to know how to respond to society.
- ➤ **Ecclesial:** Shapes the responses of the church and its influence on society with regard to social issues.
- ➤ **Public:** To shape public policy in areas of politics, economics, social relationships, etc.

PRINCIPLES OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING



The principles of the Social Teaching of the Church forms an instrument for the discernment and examination of conscience when one is involved in the process of undertaking social change. The major principles of the Church's Teaching discussed below are;

Human dignity,

The Common good,

Subsidiarity, and,

Solidarity.

♥ HUMAN DIGNITY

(Centesimus Annus, n. 5)

In effect, to teach and to spread her social doctrine pertains to the Church's evangelizing mission and is an essential part of the Christian message, since this doctrine points out the direct consequences of that message in the life of society and situates daily work and struggles for justice in the context of bearing witness to Christ the Savior. This doctrine is likewise a source of unity and peace in dealing with the conflicts which inevitably arise in social and economic life. Thus it is possible to meet these new situations without degrading the human person's transcendent dignity, either in oneself or in one's adversaries, and to direct those situations toward

just solutions.

This is why the Church has something to say today, just as twenty years ago, and also in the future, about the nature, conditions, requirements and aims of authentic development, and also about the obstacles which stand in its way. In doing so the Church fulfills her mission to evangelize, for she offers her first contribution to the solution of the urgent problem of development when she proclaims the truth about Christ, about herself and about man, applying this truth to a concrete situation. As her instrument for reaching this goal, the Church uses her social doctrine. In today's difficult situation, a more exact awareness and a wider diffusion of the set of principles for reflection, criteria for judgment and directives for action proposed by the Church's teaching would be of great help in promoting both the correct definition of the problems being faced and the best solution to them. It will thus be seen at once that the questions facing us are above all moral questions; and that neither the analysis of the problem of development as such nor the means to overcome the present difficulties ignore this essential dimension. can

The dignity of the person is manifested in all its radiance when the person's origin and destiny are considered: created by God in his image and likeness as well as redeemed by the most precious blood of Christ, the person is called to be a 'child in the Son' and a living temple of the Spirit, destined for eternal life of blessed communion with God. For this very reason every violation of the personal dignity of the human being cries out in vengeance to God and is an offense against the Creator of the individual. (Christifideles Laici, # 37)

The dignity of the human person is a transcendent value, always recognized as such by those who sincerely search for the truth. Indeed, the whole of human history should be interpreted in the light of this certainty. Every person, created in the image and likeness of God (cf. Gn. 1:26 28), is therefore radically oriented towards the Creator, and is constantly in relationship with those possessed of the same dignity. To promote the good of the individual is thus to serve the common good, which is that point where rights and duties converge and reinforce one another. (World Day of Peace Message, 1999, # 2)

Respect for the human person entails respect for the rights that flow from his dignity as a creature. These rights are prior to society and must be recognized by it. They are the basis of the moral legitimacy of every authority; by flouting them, or by refusing to recognize them in its positive legislation, a society undermines its own moral legitimacy ... *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1930

▼ THE COMMON GOOD

By the common good is to be understood the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily. The common good concerns the life of all. It calls for prudence from each, and even more from those who exercise the office of authority. It consists of three essential elements: First, the common good presupposes respect for the person as such. In the name of the common good, public authorities are bound to respect the fundamental and inalienable rights of the human per son. Society should permit each of its members to fulfill his vocation. In particular, the common good resides in the conditions for the exercise of the natural freedoms indispensable for the development of the human vocation, such as the right to act according to a sound norm of conscience and to safeguard ... privacy, and rightful freedom also in matters of religion (GS, # 26). Second, the common good requires the social well being and development of the group itself. Development is the epitome of all social duties. Certainly, it is the proper function of authority to arbitrate, in the name of the common good, between various particular interests; but it should make accessible to each what is needed to lead a truly human life: food, clothing, health, work, education and culture, suitable information, the right to establish a family, and so on. Finally, the common good requires peace, that is, the stability and security of a just order. It presupposes that authority should en sure by morally acceptable means the security of society and its members. It is the basis of the right to legitimate personal and collective defense.

Every day, human interdependence grows more tightly drawn and spreads by degrees over the whole world. As a result, the common good, that is, the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfillment, today takes on an increasingly universal complexion and consequently involves rights and duties with respect to the whole human race. Every social group must take account of the needs and legitimate aspirations of other groups, and even of the general welfare of the entire

human family.... This social order requires constant improvement. It must be founded on truth, built on justice and animated by love; in freedom it should grow every day toward a more humane balance. An improvement in attitudes and abundant changes in society will have to take place if these objectives are to be gained. God's Spirit, Who with a marvelous providence directs the unfolding of time and renews the face of the earth, is not absent from this development. The ferment of the Gospel, too, has aroused and continues to arouse in man's heart the irresistible requirements of his dignity. (Gaudium et Spes, # 26)

Authority is exercised legitimately only when it seeks the common good of the group concerned and if it employs morally licit means to attain it. If rulers were to enact unjust laws or take measures contrary to the moral order, such arrangements would not be binding in conscience. In such a case, authority breaks down completely and results in shameful abuse.

(PT,#51).

Moreover, if we carefully consider the essential nature of the common good on the one hand, and the nature and function of public authority on the other, everyone sees that there is an intrinsic connection between the two. And, indeed, just as the moral order needs public authority to promote the common good in civil society, it likewise demands that public authority actually be able to attain it. From this it follows that the governmental institutions, on which public authority depends and through which it functions and pursues its end, should be provided with such structure and efficacy that they can lead to the common good by ways and methods which are suitably adapted to various contingencies. (Pacem in Terris, # 136)

Considering the common good on the national level, the following points are relevant and should not be overlooked: to provide employment for as many workers as possible; to take care lest privileged groups arise even among the workers themselves; to maintain a balance between wages and prices; to make accessible the goods and services for a better life to as many persons as possible; either to eliminate or to keep within bounds the inequalities that exist between different sectors of the economy that is, between agriculture, industry and services; to balance properly any increases in output with advances in services provided to citizens, especially by public authority; to adjust, as far as possible, the means of

production to the progress of science and technology; finally, to ensure that the advantages of a more humane way of existence not merely sub serve the present generation but have regard for future generations as well. As regards the common good of human society as a whole, the following conditions should be fulfilled: that the competitive striving of peoples to increase output be free of bad faith; that harmony in economic affairs and a friendly and beneficial cooperation be fostered; and, finally, that effective aid be given in developing the economically underdeveloped nations. (Mater et Magistra, ## 79, 80)

It is agreed that in our time the common good is chiefly guaranteed when personal rights and duties are maintained. The chief concern of civil authorities must therefore be to ensure that these rights are acknowledged, respected, coordinated with other rights, defended and promoted, so that in this way each one may more easily carry out his duties. For to safeguard the inviolable rights of the human person, and to facilitate the fulfillment of his duties, should be the chief duty of every public authority.

That these desired objectives be more readily obtained, it is necessary that public authorities have a correct understanding of the common good. This embraces the sum total of those conditions of social living, whereby men are enabled more fully and more readily to achieve their own perfection. Hence, we regard it as necessary that the various intermediary bodies and the numerous social undertakings wherein an expanded social structure primarily finds expression be ruled by their own laws, and as the common good itself progresses, pursue this objective in a spirit of sincere concord among themselves. Nor is it less necessary that the above mentioned groups present the form and substance of a true community. This they will do, only if individual members are considered and treated as persons, and are encouraged to participate in the affairs of the group. Accordingly, as relationships multiply between men, binding them more closely together, commonwealths will more readily and appropriately order their affairs to the extent these two factors are kept in balance: (1) the freedom of individual citizens and groups of citizens to act autonomously, while cooperating one with the other; (2) the activity of the State whereby the undertakings of private individuals and groups are suitably regulated and fostered. (Mater et Magistra, ## 65, 66)

It is also demanded by the common good that civil authorities should make earnest efforts to bring about a situation in which individual citizens can easily exercise their rights and fulfill their duties as well. For experience has taught us that, unless these authorities take suitable action with regard to economic, political, and cultural matters, inequalities between the citizens tend to become more and more widespread, especially in the modern world, and as a result human rights are rendered totally ineffective and the fulfillment of duties is compromised. (Pacem in Terris, # 63)

The common good is the guarantor of individual rights in the community/nation. It is the prime responsibility of the public authority. This means that everyone has a duty to share in promoting the welfare of the community/nation as well as a right to benefit from that welfare.

We are all really responsible for each other and must work for social conditions which ensure that every group in society is able to meet their needs and realize their potential.

Every group in society must take in to account the rights and aspirations of other groups, and of the well being of the whole family.

God made the goods of creation for the use of all, and so everyone has a right to access the goods of creation to meet their needs.

Everyday human interdependence grows more tightly drawn by degrees over the whole world. As a result the common good, that is, the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfillment, today takes an increasingly universal complexion and consequently involves rights and duties with respect to the whole human race. Every social group must take account of the needs and legitimate aspirations of other groups, and even of the entire human family. (*Gaudium et Spes # 26.*)

♥ SUBSIDIARITY

The teaching of the Church has elaborated the principle of subsidiary, according to which a community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in case of need and help to co-

ordinate its activity with the activities of the rest of society, always with a view to the common good. God has not willed to reserve to himself all exercise of power. He entrusts to every creature the functions it is capable of performing, according to the capacities of its own nature. This mode of governance ought to be followed in social life. The way God acts in governing the world, which bears witness to such great regard for human freedom, should inspire the wisdom of those who govern human communities. They should behave as ministers of divine providence. The principle of subsidiary is opposed to all forms of collectivism. It sets limits for state intervention. It aims at harmonizing the relationships between individuals and societies. It tends toward the establishment of true international order.

In very simple terms, would mean responsibility should be kept as close as possible to the grassroots. The people or groups most directly affected by a decision or policy should have a key decision making role.

More encompassing groups should only intervene to support smaller, more local groups in case of need, and where it is necessary in order to coordinate their activities with the activities of other groups in order to promote the common good.

On the basis of the principle of subsidiarity, all societies of a superior order must adopt attitudes of help 'subsidium'- therefore of support, promotion, development – with respect to lower order societies. In this way intermediate lower entities can properly perform the functions that fall to them without being required to hand them over unjustly to other social entities of a higher level, by which they will end up being absorbed and substituted, in the end seeing themselves denied their dignity and essential place.

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church #186

Questions for group Reflection

- 1. How can the existing hierarchical structure and practice of the Church be reconciled with a genuine spirit and practice of subsidiarity?
- 2. Could team work be a visible model of cooperation between the clergy, religious and laity?

♥ SOLIDARITY

Solidarity is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is 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. This determination is based on the solid conviction that what is hindering full development is that desire for profit and that thirst for power already mentioned. These attitudes and 'structures of sin' are only conquered presupposing the help of divine grace by a diametrically opposed attitude: a commitment to the good of one's neighbour with the readiness, in the gospel sense, to 'lose oneself' for the sake of the other instead of exploiting him, and to 'serve him' instead of oppressing him for one's own advantage.

In the spirit of solidarity and with the instruments of dialogue we will learn: respect for every human person; respect for the true values and cultures of others; respect for the legitimate autonomy and self determination of others; to look beyond ourselves in order to understand and support the good of others; to contribute to our own resources in social solidarity for the development and growth that come from equity and justice; to build structures that will ensure that social solidarity and dialogue are permanent features of the world we live in. (World Day of Peace Message, 1986, # 5)

The same duty of solidarity that rests on individuals exists also for nations: Advanced nations have a very heavy obligation to help the developing peoples (GS, # 86). It is necessary to put this teaching of the Council into effect. Although it is normal that a nation should be the first to benefit from the gifts that Providence has bestowed on it as the fruit of the labors of its people, still no country can claim on that account to keep its wealth for itself alone. Every nation must produce more and better quality goods to give to all its inhabitants a truly human standard of living, and also to contribute to the common development of the human race. Given the increasing needs of the under developed countries, it should be considered quite normal for an advanced country to devote a part of its production to meet their needs, and to train teachers, engineers, technicians and scholars prepared to put their knowledge and their skill at

the disposal of less fortunate peoples. (Populorum Progressio, # 48)

In order to overcome today's widespread individualistic mentality, what is required is a concrete commitment to solidarity and charity, beginning in the family with the mutual support of husband and wife and the care which the different generations give to one another. In this sense the family, too, can be called a community of work and solidarity. (Centesimus Annus, # 49)

We are all united in this progress toward God. We have desired to remind all men how crucial is the present moment, how urgent the work to be done. The hour for action has now sounded. At stake is the survival of so many innocent children and, for so many families overcome by misery, the access to conditions fit for human beings; at stake are the peace of the world and the future of civilization. It is time for all men and all peoples to face up to their responsibilities. (Populorum Progressio, # 80)

The exercise of solidarity within each society is valid when its members recognize one another as persons. Those who are more influential because they have a greater share of goods and common services should feel responsible for the weaker and be ready to share with them all they possess. Those who are weaker, for their part, in the same spirit of solidarity, should not adopt a purely passive attitude or one that is destructive of the social fabric, but, while claiming their legitimate rights, should do what they can for the good of all. The intermediate groups, in their turn, should not selfishly insist on their particular interests, but respect the interests of others. (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, # 39)

In this way what we nowadays call the principle of solidarity, is clearly seen to be one of the fundamental principles of the Christian view of social and political organization. This principle was frequently stated by Pope Leo XIII, with the term `friendship,' Pope Pius XI referred to it with the equally meaningful term `social charity.' Pope Paul VI, expanding the concept to cover the many modern aspects of the social question, spoke of a `civilization of love'

Solidarity helps us to see the 'other' whether a person, people or nation not just as some kind of instrument, with a work capacity and physical strength to be exploited at low cost and then discarded when no longer useful, but as our `neighbor,' a `helper' (cf. Gn. 2:18 20) to be made a share, on a par with ourselves, in the banquet of life to which all are equally invited by God. (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, # 39)

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

- 1. What does solidarity mean to me and to the people of my small Christian community, Mission Station and Parish?
- 2. Are there local expressions or proverbs to better express solidarity?
- 3. Towards whom do I feel solidarity? How is solidarity practiced by people in the local Church and society? Are there any limitations to solidarity? What are the challenges involved in these limitations?
- 4. By what actions can we enhance Christian solidarity, thereby contributing towards a peaceful community?

INTRODUCTION TO SOME DOCUMENT OUTLINES

These outlines constitute an attempt to summarize some of the major documents of the Catholic Social Teaching. They are designed to highlight the major points of each document and serve as a further reference for study and explanation.

These documents are not the only examples of the Church's Social Teaching. They are chosen because they deal almost exclusively with matters of justice and peace and are generally considered by most 'experts' to be the primary documents in the field.

1. Rerum Novarum (The Condition of Labour) by (Pope Leo XII)

- Lays out rights and responsibilities of capital and labour.
- Describes proper role of government.
- Condemns atheistic socialism.

2. Quadragesimo Anno (The Reconstruction of the Social Order) 1931by Pope (Pius XI)

- Decries the effects of greed and concentrated economic power on working class.
- Proposes a society based on subsidiarity.

3. Mater et Magistra (Christianity and Social Progress) 1961 – by (Pope John XXIII)

- Deplores the widening gap between rich and poor nations, arms race and plight of farmers.
- Calls Christians to work for a more just world.

4. Pacem in Terris (Peace on Earth) 1963 - by (Pope John XXIII)

- Affirms full range of human rights as the basis for peace.
- Calls for the integration of faith and action.
- Calls for disarmament and a world-wide public authority to promote universal common good.

5. Gaudium et Spes (The Church in the Modern World) 1965 - (Vatican II)

- Laments growing world poverty and threat of nuclear war.
- Challenges Christians to be responsible for what happens in the world.
- States responsibility of Christians to work for structures to make a more just and peaceful world.

6. Populorum Progressio (The Development of Peoples) 1966 – by (Pope Paul VI)

- Affirms the right of poor nations to full human development.
- Decries economic structures promoting inequality.
- Makes the link between development and peace.
- Calls for new international organizations and agreements.

7. Octogesima Adveniens (A call to Action) 1971 - by (Pope Paul VI)

- Calls for political action for economic justice.
- Calls for the use of social justice analysis to find root causes injustice.
- Develops role of individual Christians and local churches in responding to unjust situations.

8. Justice in the World 1971 - (Synod of Bishops)

- Names action for justice a constituent part of being Christian.
- Calls the Church to model the justice preached.

9. Evangelii Nuntiandi (Evangelization in the Modern World) 1975 - by (Paul VI)

- Notes the dramatic social changes and their challenges to the Church.
- Calls "evangelization" the transforming of all aspects of life from within.

10. Redemptor Hominis (Redeemer of Humankind) 1979 - by (Pope John Paul II)

- Describes the threats to human dignity and freedom.
- States that the current economic and political structures are inadequate to remedy injustice.

11. Laborem Exercens (On Human Work) 1981 - by (Pope John Paul II)

- Affirms the dignity of work based on the dignity of the worker.
- Calls for workplace justice and responsibility of society, employer, and worker.
- Outlines the spirituality of work.

12. Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (The Social Concerns of the Church). 1987 - by (Pope John Paul II)

- Names East-West blocs and other "structures of sin" that hinder development of the poor nations.
- Calls for solidarity and for an option for the poor by affluent nations.

13. Centesimus Annus (The Hundredth Year) 1991 - by (Pope John Paul II)

- Reaffirms principles of *Rerum Novarum*.
- Identifies failure of both socialist and market economies.
- Calls for society of free work, enterprise and participation

14. DEUS CARITAS EST (GOD IS LOVE) 2005- by (Pope Benedict XVI)

- Establishes the vital connection between love of God and love of neighbor.
- Explains that the Church's charitable activity manifests God's Trinitarian love.
- Affirms how love is to be embodied in our daily life as Christians.

THE SOCIAL TEACHING OF THE BISHOPS OF CAMEROON

During the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the National Episcopal Conference of Cameroon, (NECC) 1955-2005, the Bishops of Cameroon produced a document comprising the Church's Social Doctrine communicated in; Pastoral Letters, Messages, communiqués, and Declarations on very pertinent issues. The document, **L'ENSEIGNMENT SOCIAL DES EVEQUES DU CAMEROUN 1995-2005, Edition AMA-CENC 2005,** is a reference document not only for the clergy and religious but for the laity as well and to all those who would want to better acquaint themselves with the mission of evangelization of the Church. The book

spells out the documents in their entirety for the period mentioned, and goes further to give an analytic approach to the Pastoral Letters, Messages, Communiqués, and Declarations.

It would be important to list some of the teachings of the Bishops of Cameroon on some very pertinent social issues.

15. PASTORAL LETTER ON ECONOMIC CRISIS -17 MAY 1990 by THE BISHOPS OF CAMEROON.

- Identifies the characteristics and causes of economic crisis.
- Proposes solutions to overcome the crisis.
- Calls all Christians and citizens to conversion.

16. PASTORAL LETTER TO ALL CHRISTIANS AND PEOPLE OF GOOD WILL ON CORRUPTION -3 SEPTEMBER 2000 by THE BISHOPS OF CAMEROON.

- Reacts to the classification of Cameroon as the most corrupt country in the world for 2 consecutive years.
- Proposes remedies to combat corruption.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION.

- 1. What is the situation of workers and of the poor in your community? Are their basic rights being upheld?
- 2. Name 3 ways in which the new developments that Pope John XXIII writes about affect your life and that of your community.
- 3. List 3 of your own joys, hopes, grief, and anxieties. Name 2 'signs of the times' which contributes to these feelings.
- 4. List 3 ways in which your culture can be used to advance the Gospel.
- 5. List 3 ways in which members of your community including you can participate in the political life of your country. What factors hinder the full participation of all?
- 6. Think of just one structure in your country that you would like to change. How can you and members of your community act to help change this structure?