

Social Action Commission Focus for August

Call to Family, Community, and Participation

FOCUS: Working for the Common Good

From the Catechism of the Catholic Church

II. The Common Good

In keeping with the social nature of man, the good of each individual is necessarily related to the common good, which in turn can be defined only in reference to the human person:

Do not live entirely isolated, having retreated into yourselves, as if you were already justified, but gather instead to seek the common good together.

By 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 person. 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.”

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 ensure by morally acceptable means the security of society and its members. It is the basis of the right to legitimate personal and collective defence.

https://www.vatican.va/content/catechism/en/part_three/section_one/chapter_two/article_2/ii_the_common_good.html

"Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others."

Philippians 2:4



What can we do?



O God, you have given all people one common origin and desire to gather them into one family for yourself. Fill our hearts with the fire of your love and kindle in us a desire to ensure the common good for all our sisters and brothers. By sharing with one another, may we secure justice for all people, an end to division and a society built on justice, love and peace. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

This prayer can be said as part of your daily prayer practice, with your family perhaps at meal time, or with any group you meet with during the month.

From St. Mary's Food Shelf

Molly Engelhart asked her kids why they like volunteering at the Food Shelf. Here is a polished version of what they said:

"Our favorite part is stocking and organizing the shelves. We like knowing we're helping people get food. It makes us happy to be a small part of something that helps others."

Joanna Engelhart, age 7
Eli Engelhart, age 9

What exactly is the Common Good?

At the foundation of Catholic Social Teaching is the concept of the "common good." You've likely heard this phrase, but have you thought about what it truly means and how it fits as a part of Catholic social teachings? The Center for Catholic Faith and Culture at Duquesne University is exploring "Catholicism and the Common Good" as a multi-year project generously supported by the Henry Luce Foundation. <https://youtu.be/x6oSJg6wuBg?si=q4SkRq9XuNA5TPo>

from USCCB

The Common Good

"In short, we should seek 'to build that kind of society where it is easier for people to be good.'"

<https://www.usccb.org/resources/Common-Good.pdf>



Daily Actions in Your Community

Give your time: Volunteer at a local food bank, shelter, or community garden.

Support local groups: Shop at nearby small businesses or join neighborhood clean-up days. Help others learn: Tutor students or mentor young people in your area.

Connect with neighbors: Build relationships with people who have different life experiences than you.

Civic and Group Involvement

Attend public meetings: Go to local government or town meetings to stay informed and share your voice.

Join boards or committees: Serve on local advisory groups, school boards, or non-profit committees.

Advocate for fairness: Support policies that build a level economic playing field and protect workers.