



Social Justice

Living Faithfully

Contributed by Kathy Wipf, Director of Faith Formation, St. Theresa Parish, Des Moines; Member of St. Cecilia Parish and the St. Cecilia Social Justice Committee

What is required to live as faithful Catholics while we reside in this world? What has God given us that enables us to be authentic witnesses of living faithfully each day? What is the goal of living faithfully?

Let's begin by answering the easiest question, the last one, to which there is a plain and simple answer: The goal of living faithfully is eternal union with God in heaven. Living faithfully leads to this goal.

"Simple ain't easy." (Thelonius Monk, jazz pianist/composer, 1917-1982)

Responding to the other questions is not as plain and simple but becomes so once we allow ourselves to view things in new and unique ways. Catholic teaching does not always agree with trending views and is not adequately reflected in government law and policies. For example:

All life is precious and worthy of protection. The death penalty eliminates the possibility for repentance and conversion, and war must be vigorously avoided because it always produces violence.

Grace is a freely given quality, not a quantity.

The genuine practice of the Corporal Works of Mercy asks us to recognize that the "real presence" of Jesus extends beyond the elements of Eucharist to one another, especially in the least of our brothers and sisters.

Stewardship is a way of life that is cultivated by the knowledge that all we have been given comes from God to be increased and used in building the kingdom, bettering the world and bringing about salvation.

**"Success is not access to excess."
(Anonymous)**

Scripture does not advocate poverty as much as cautioning against the accumulation (or desire for the accumulation) of wealth. Being immersed in a culture of material wealth and excess, with success based on the pursuit of more "stuff," takes vigilance in seeing that our choices, plans, and desires do not interfere with living life faithfully and succeeding in accomplishing the goal of union with God. The key word to apply here is simplicity.

Living a simple lifestyle is consistent with Church teaching, which calls us to "practice poverty of spirit and generosity of heart. These virtues liberate us from being slaves to money and possessions...They also enable us to adopt a simplicity of life that frees us from consumerism and helps us preserve God's creation" (U.S. Catholic Catechism for Adults, pp. 449-450).

**"Nothing is impossible with God."
(The angel's words to Mary at the Annunciation, Luke 1:37)**

The Gospel writers tell of a conversation between Jesus and a rich young man. Jesus called on the young man to give up his possessions and follow Him. Unable to do so, the young man departed sadly, an indication that he was "possessed by his possessions." Jesus addressed his disciples, "Amen, I say to you, it will be hard for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." Startled, the apostles asked, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus responded, "For human beings this is impossible, but for God all things are possible" (Matthew 19, Mark 10).

"He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away."

SAINT CECILIA CONTACTS:

ALTERNATIVE GIFT MARKET.
1-800-842-2243 STC Contact: Cynthia
Shriver 292-6584

AMOS. STC Contact: Mary Ross
232-5080

APPALACHIA WAREHOUSE, 2019
Pullman Street, Ames. STC Contact:
Lynn Franco 232-0898

BIRTHRIGHT OF AMES, 108
Hayward Ave., Suite 202, Ames 515-
292-8414. STC Contact: Kathy
Ridnour 232-1697

CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS OF THE
AMERICAS. STC Contact: Sharon
Jenkins 233-2570

EMERGENCY RESIDENCE
PROJECT. STC Contact Jamie
Hamilton 233-2499

FOOD AT FIRST, 516 Kellogg Ave.,
Ames. 515-344-4357 STC Contact:
Doreen Berg 956-3414

GABRIEL PROJECT, Rosemary
Wilson 232-5828 or Lynn Lynch
231-9026

GOOD NEIGHBOR EMERGENCY
ASSISTANCE, INC., 3206 S. Duff,
Ames 515-296-1449. STC Contact:
Doreen Berg 956-3414

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF
CENTRAL IOWA. 515-232-8815.
STC Contact: Alan Christy 231-8099

MEALS ON WHEELS (Homeward),
1114 S. Duff, Ames. STC Contact:
Cathy Kaspar 233-0517

OPERATION RICE BOWL. STC
Contact: Cynthia Shriver 292-6584

PRISON MINISTRY. STC Contact:
Ron Smith 382-5654

SAINT CECILIA SOCIAL JUSTICE
COMMITTEE. STC Contact: Mary
Ross 232-5080

SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE. STC
Contact: Garland Dahlke 460-0403

(cont'd) This is our goal. Once we develop our own spirits of poverty, living in dependence upon Jesus (the Bread of Life), we have true wealth. When we have Him we have everything, even if we own nothing. There is dignity in this type of poverty, leading to holiness and union with God in heaven.

What is required, and what has God given us, to live faithfully?

Listen to Jesus: "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her." (Luke 10:41-42)

Listen to God at the Transfiguration: "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." (Mark 9:7)

Listen to Mary's instruction at Cana: "Do whatever he tells you." (John 2:5)

O Lord, we are still so easily deceived into expecting from you a kingdom governed according to the laws of this world. Keep our eyes fixed on the triumph of life over death through the mystery of the cross, so that we may grow into a deeper understanding of the power of your law of love over the laws of human expectation, through Christ our Lord. Amen. (Magnificat, April 2009, page 21)



10th Anniversary of Black Bags

Ten years ago, Arlene Stacey, who was the parish business manager, suggested that St Cecilia change its method of collecting money for those in need. At Arlene's former parish a "black bag" was passed once a month at weekend masses with all donations going to the needs of others. Patty Rua brought the idea to the Social Concerns Committee and all thought it sounded good. Lynn Franco made the eight black bags (still in use today) and the passing of the black bags began in February, 2003. Contributions grew over the years, and approximately \$40,000 was donated in 2012 through the black bag collection to help those in need.



Our parish is participating in CRS Rice Bowl, Catholic Relief Services' Lenten program, as a way to encounter Jesus through others, especially through the most vulnerable in our world. Rice Bowls have been available since Ash Wednesday. Rice bowls, as well as Lenten Spiritual

Guides, are available with the Rice Bowl display in the Narthex as well as in baskets on the tables at the back entrance of the church. If you have not already done so, please take one home and use the easy and fun resources to deepen your family's Lenten experience. Your prayers, fasting and almsgiving this Lenten season will help Catholic Relief Services continue to provide life-saving assistance in nearly 100 countries. CRS acts as our hearts and hands to care for the poorest in our world. Donate the dollar value of your Lenten sacrifices to help families in need. What you give up for Lent changes lives.

The Saint Cecilia Social Justice Committee meets on the third Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Sunroom. Everyone is welcome to attend. All donations are made in accordance with Catholic Social Justice teachings. Financial reports and budget information are available from the parish office.