



“ Every person is immensely holy and deserves our love

Pope Francis, Joy of the Gospel , 274



We believe that we are all made in God's image and likeness (Genesis 1). This lies at the heart of Catholic social teaching: that every single person deserves to be treated with respect because of their inherent dignity as a child of God.

Pope Francis talks of “learning to find Jesus in the face of others, in their voices, in their pleas” (Joy of the Gospel, 91). Remember the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats, where Jesus is asked when they have helped him. He says it's whenever they have helped anyone in need, whether hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, or in prison.

It's an idea we often hear, but do we truly accept it? How does it affect the way in which we treat one another? Our family, our friends and colleagues, the people we meet on the street, and even those we may never meet but are also our sisters and brothers across the world?

It's about how we share our love with others, which we're all called to do as Christians. We're called to be a Caritas people. The Latin word, *caritas*, means love, charity, justice, and is at the heart of Catholic social teaching. How we live this love in action, inspired by the guideline of human dignity, is our backdrop as we explore the other principles of Catholic social teaching.

In the Diocese of Westminster, a need was seen to help members of the community less able to get out of their homes, to meet up with others and share Sunday afternoon tea once a month. There's a coordinator, a host, a driver, and the guests, all of whom get to know one another, support one another, and share hospitality. It's a chance to socialise and build community. Simple, effective, and having a huge impact on those who attend.



“ Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.’

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:26-27

## REFLECTION

Spend some time in quiet prayer, giving thanks for all people – those whom you know, those whom you have never met.

- People from your local community you may recognise but have never spoken with.
- People you see on TV or in newspapers from around the world.
- Give thanks to God for your sisters and brothers in the global human family.

Using the model from Cardinal Cardijn, reflect on where human dignity is not being upheld locally and globally, what our faith calls us to do about it, and what actions we may be able to take to enable all people to flourish.



Where can you see people unable to live in dignity?

## SEE

As people of faith, how are we called to love our sisters and brothers?

## JUDGE

What concrete action can you take to enable all people to flourish?

## ACT



The guiding principle... of all the Church's social doctrine, is a correct view of the human person and of their unique value.

St John Paul II, One hundred years, 11

The principle of human dignity – that we all have a unique worth not because of anything we do, but because we are made by God – is central to Catholic social teaching.

For more background visit : [catholicsocialteaching.org.uk](http://catholicsocialteaching.org.uk)



## ACTION

Spend 5 minutes noting down any people, individuals and groups of people, locally, nationally, globally, whose dignity is unable to flourish. They may not be able to live lives to the full. How might you enable them to live their lives to the full?



## GET INVOLVED!

Consider being involved in organisations that support those with physical and intellectual disabilities. E.g. St Joseph's Pastoral Centre, Westminster Diocese welcomes volunteers to assist in courses for people with learning difficulties and befriending families [www.stjoseph.org.uk](http://www.stjoseph.org.uk)

Union of Catholic Mothers: diocesan and national association supporting family life, and sanctity in the home [www.ucm.org.uk](http://www.ucm.org.uk)

Volunteering with organisations which support the elderly. E.g. the hospital visiting rota in your parish; Age UK; volunteering to bring someone to Mass, or even parish bingo

Catholic Children's Society – assisting children and families in need

## PARISH PLAN

Think about gathering a few times to look together at how we can respond to the needs of our local community in the light of what we're learning in Love in action.

Resources and ideas are available to help identify the needs of the community and plan how to respond.

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