



**Parish Social Mission Week, Feb. 3-9:**

## **The Call to Justice**

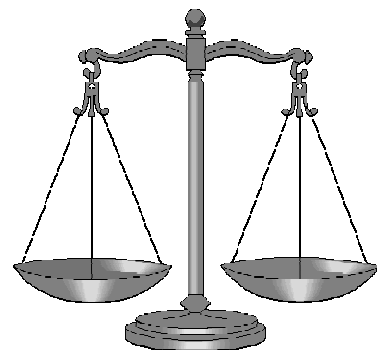
*The way society responds to the needs of the poor through its public policies is the litmus test of its justice or injustice.*

U.S. Catholic Bishops, *Economic Justice for All*

*“The works of mercy call Christians to engage themselves in direct efforts to alleviate the misery of the afflicted. The works of justice require that Christians involve themselves in sustained struggle to correct any unjust social, political, and economic structures and institutions that are the causes of suffering.”*

U.S. Catholic Bishops, *Health and Health Care*

**Commutative justice** calls for fundamental fairness in all agreements and exchanges between individuals or private social groups. It demands respect for the equal human dignity of all persons in economic transactions, contracts, or promises. For example, workers owe their employers diligent work in exchange for their wages. Employers are obligated to treat their employees as persons, paying them fair wages in exchange for the work done and establishing conditions and patterns of work that are truly human.



U.S. Catholic Bishops, *Economic Justice for All*

**Distributive justice** requires that the allocation of income, wealth, and power in society be evaluated in light of its effects on persons whose basic material needs are unmet. The Second Vatican Council stated: "The right to have a share of earthly goods sufficient for oneself and one's family belongs to everyone. The fathers and doctors of the Church held this view, teaching that we are obliged to come to the relief of the poor and to do so not merely out of our superfluous goods." (*Pastoral Constitution, 69.*) Minimum material resources are an absolute necessity for human life. If persons are to be recognized as members of the human community, then the community has an obligation to help fulfill these basic needs unless an absolute scarcity of resources makes this strictly impossible. No such scarcity exists in the United States today.



U.S. Catholic Bishops, *Economic Justice for All*