



Parish Social Mission Week: April 6—12

The Eucharistic Call to Charity & Justice

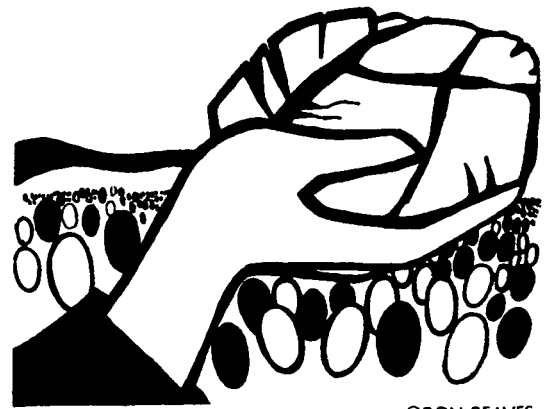
"The Eucharist commits us to the poor. To receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognize Christ in the poorest."

- Catechism of the Catholic Church (no. 1397)

Eucharist: Our Parish Call to Service

The most important setting for the Church's social teaching is not in a food pantry or in a legislative committee room, but in prayer and worship, especially gathered around the altar for the eucharist. It is in the liturgy that we find the fundamental direction, motivation, and strength for social ministry. Social ministry not genuinely rooted in prayer can easily burn itself out. On the other hand, worship that does not reflect the Lord's call to conversion, service, and justice can become pious ritual and empty of the Gospel. We support new efforts to integrate liturgy and justice, to make clear that we are one people united in faith, worship, and works of charity and justice. We need to be a Church that helps believers recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread and those without bread.

- Communities of Salt & Light, U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1993



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The greatest gift that we have received from the Lord Jesus is the Eucharist: "Whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world" (Jn 6:51). This gift is not meant to be hidden or hoarded. As the parish gathers for the celebration of the Eucharist, the needs and rights of the poor and disenfranchised must be placed on the table. The Council Fathers reminded us that "this Eucharistic celebration, to be full and sincere, ought to lead on the one hand to the various works of charity and mutual help, and on the other hand to missionary activity and the various forms of Christian witness." The Word proclaimed in the Eucharist must affirm and celebrate the parish's work for charity, justice, and peace. The Word must inspire social analysis and concerted action, leading the people of God to a renewed commitment to the poor.

In All Things Charity, U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1999

And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread and said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him. Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?" ... Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

- Gospel of Luke: 24:30-33, 35