

SOCIAL OUTREACH

DRAFT WHITE PAPER

We are called to deliberate on the pastoral needs of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg as those needs relate to social outreach. We are a community of Disciples established and anointed in the Lord. As disclosed in the listening sessions, we seek to be more conformed to the ministry and person of Jesus Christ. Through social outreach we can achieve that conformity and more fully become a Church of Missionary Disciples.

VISION STATEMENT

That the Archdiocese of Winnipeg, as a community, faithfully honour and respect the dignity, the value, and the equality of all life, by reaching out as Jesus did, to the poor, the marginalized and the lost, regardless of gender, race, colour, and religion.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

“To teach and spread her social doctrine belongs to the Church’s evangelizing mission and is an essential part of the Christian Message, since this doctrine points out the direct consequences of that message in the life of society, and situates daily work and struggles for justice in the context of bearing witness to Christ our Savior. This is not a marginal activity, or one that is tacked on to the Church’s mission, rather it is at the very heart of the Church’s ministry.”

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church no.67

We bear witness to Christ our Savior by heeding his messages and following his way. As Jesus said, “For I have set you an example that you should do as I have done to you” (John 13:15)

Jesus loved. He loved with a love so great that he laid down his life for us. His mission, grounded in that love was “to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind and to let the oppressed go free” (Luke 4:18-19). As Pope Benedict said in his encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* (Charity in Truth): To love someone is to desire that person’s good and to take effective steps to secure it.

Jesus told us that when we give food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothing to the naked, when we welcome the stranger, take care of the sick and visit the prisoner, when we do that to the least of these members of his family we do it to him, Jesus Christ. (Matthew 25:34-46)

Jesus sent forth his disciples to bring the Good News to all. We, too, are called to that special mission which is to be a leaven for society, to be the hands and heart and presence of Christ in our world (Lumen Gentium). We are asked to be good stewards of God's creation and to protect it (Laudato Si, Caritas in Veritate, Sollicitudo Rei Socialis). We are to help the poor both at home and abroad (Popularum Progressio), listen to the oppressed and marginalized in our society and to stand in solidarity with them - not as lesser human beings to be pitied, but as equals to whose voices we add ours.

To be missionary disciples, to be a sign of God's kingdom, to fulfill our call to love one another is to live in mutual respect and care of one another.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that:

- 1.** Parish communities provide opportunities for discernment relating to social issues that impact our communities and the world. Through listening and dialogue we will gain a deeper understanding of our neighbours and their needs so as to become less judgmental and more inclusive and respectful. Such social issues may include:
 - a.** Poverty and the Distribution of Wealth
 - b.** Prostitution and Human trafficking
 - c.** Abortion
 - d.** Addictions
 - e.** Mental Illness
 - f.** Affordable Housing
 - g.** Welcoming of those who feel marginalized by the Church and society. For example those in the LGBT community or those divorced
 - h.** Equality in opportunity to earn a living wage
 - i.** Assisted Suicide, Palliative care
 - j.** Welcoming and resettling refugees and immigrants
 - k.** The prison system and all affected by it including the incarcerated and those attempting reintegration after incarceration
 - l.** Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples

m. Care of the environment

- 2.** In keeping with the social teachings of the Church, we, in our parishes and as an Archdiocese, encourage and promote efforts to organize and support a strong public stand on policies and laws, in order to protect the human dignity of all.
- 3.** We, as a Church, raise awareness of our responsibility to live out our Catholic faith and become more proactive in assisting and advocating for the most vulnerable in our communities and society as a whole.
 - a.** At the Archdiocesan level, organize and create a common source of formation in the pastoral care ministries that addresses the needs of people in the parishes. Some examples would include supporting single parent families, caring for the elderly in personal care facilities or in their homes, palliative care, or in grief ministry.
 - b.** Each parish address the needs of those in their parish and beyond and welcome the stranger, such as refugees or welcome those who have been imprisoned and are now re-entering our communities.
 - c.** All become involved in seeking out and supporting those in need including the poor and the marginalized
 - i.** By making a reality of the image of our Church as a Field Hospital to all.
 - ii.** By strongly supporting Catholic organizations and parishes within the Archdiocese that are presently active in ministries of social outreach. To assist in this endeavor the following could be undertaken:
 - 1.** Develop a comprehensive list of Catholic and other service organizations that includes the type of service provided, the ways to support and/or volunteer, contact information.
 - 2.** Develop a list of the social outreach work of each of the parishes.
 - 3.** Publish the above lists, along with other relevant information on the Archdiocesan website.
 - 4.** Each parish form Social Justice Committee or develop a mechanism for identifying the needs of the community and presenting them to parishioners for response.
 - 5.** Go to the people in need and ask what they need in a manner that respects each person's dignity.

- 4.** We, individually, in our parishes and in our Archdiocese educate, promote and act on our duty to be stewards of God's creation.
 - a.** Understand our responsibility as Catholics to practice positive environmental stewardship in the face of contemporary environmental issues.

- 5.** We affirm the goodness and beauty of our Indigenous brothers and sisters, their language, their spirituality and their culture. We acknowledge the unjust social structures and policies that put Indigenous peoples at a disadvantage, both in the past and in the present. We commit ourselves to creating a more aware and engaging environment within our Church and community with our Indigenous brothers and sisters by working towards
 - a.** Learning about the treaties, the Doctrine of Discovery, the Indian Act, Residential Schools, other colonial policies and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
 - b.** Building respectful relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people
 - c.** Listening to and supporting our Indigenous brothers and sisters in their struggle for justice and equality. In particular, such concerns as Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, youth suicide, lack of running water, inadequately funded education and medical services on reserves, racist treatment, and indigenous children in foster care.

DRAFT WHITE PAPER

FOCUS COMMISSION ON SOCIAL OUTREACH

Focus Commission Members:

Deacon Robert Gate

Patti Fitzmaurice

Ruth Mulligan

Sister Carol Peloquin, S.N.J.M.

Reverend Yolando Gamallo

Larry Stuart

Mary LeMaitre

Deacon Michael Thibert

Tom Kraemer