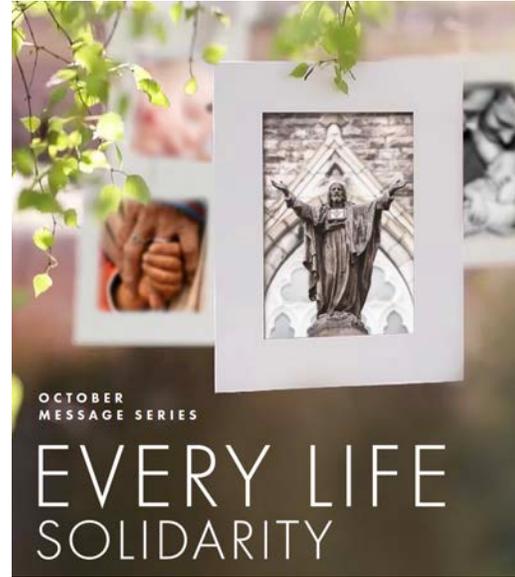


“God has created all human beings equal in rights, duties, and dignity and has called them to live together as brothers and sisters.” – Fratelli tutti (2020).

EVERY LIFE OCTOBER MESSAGE SERIES WEEK 4 – OCTOBER 24, 2021

October is Respect Life Month. We are calling these first four weeks of October, **“Every Life,”** reinforcing that every life is precious in God’s eyes, every life begins with God and hopefully ends with God, every life stands as testimony to that sacred covenant forged between God and His created order – a covenant of dignity, purpose and peace. **This Week:** Solidarity



Jer 31:7-9 • Heb 5:1-6 • Mk 10:46-52

GOSPEL OF MARK

As Jesus was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a sizable crowd, Bartimaeus, a blind man, the son of Timaeus, sat by the roadside begging. On hearing that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, son of David, have pity on me."

And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he kept calling out all the more, "Son of David, have pity on me." Jesus stopped and said, "Call him."

So they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take courage; get up, Jesus is calling you." He threw aside his cloak, sprang up, and came to Jesus. Jesus said to him in reply, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man replied to him, "Master, I want to see." Jesus told him, "Go your way; your faith has saved you." Immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

FIRST READING: In Jeremiah, we read of the great joy of the “remnant”, the small number of people who remain faithful to God during the time of exile. The joy of the exiles, and the blind being cared for, connect this to the Gospel where we meet a man full of joy after Jesus heals him of blindness.

SECOND READING: To assume the role of high priest, one must be (1) called by God, and (2) able to empathize with the fragility of those he serves. Jesus, of course, was called and anointed by God. Because he was fully human, he was able to empathize with the weaknesses and sufferings of others.

GOSPEL: Jesus is on a journey to Jerusalem. As he travels, he acts as teacher, offering lessons on the nature of true discipleship, and he speaks about his own identity and mission, that is the new “Way” that turns on the law of love and service. For the most part, the apostles are blind, uncomprehending. They simply “do not see.” Finally, we encounter one who does see – and who knows Jesus is, Son of David.

In Mark’s Gospel, the story of Bartimaeus who chooses the Way is the opposite of the rich man who declines to follow Jesus. The rich man could not part with his wealth – Bartimaeus tosses his only cloak in pursuit of a new life. These are the stories Mark chose to begin and end Chapter 10.

Likewise, the story of Bartimaeus is the opposite of the disciples who were spiritually blind – they could not see with the eyes of faith. Jesus asks both what they want from him. The disciples seek status and power, Bartimaeus simply wants his basic needs met. And, as a result, he immediately moves from sitting “by the way” to following Jesus “on the way”, from beggar to disciple.

- What would you do if you encountered Jesus on his journey? What would you ask of him?
- What if he asked further (or asked you first): “What do you want me to do for you?”
- What if he answered you as he answered the rich young man? To give up something, to go in a new direction, to go a “new way”? How would you respond?
- Have you ever asked Jesus for status of power? To what larger purpose? What was your end goal?

LIVING OUT THE MESSAGE

We close our Catholic Social Teaching with “solidarity” – which in many ways encompasses all the many ways we live with and love our brothers and sisters – from Respecting the Life and Dignity of Every Person to Care for all God’s Creation. Jesus came to be in solidarity with the blind, the deaf, the poor, the hurt, the lost, the vulnerable...To “see”, as Jesus did, with the eyes of love. Even to the rich man: “*And Jesus, looking at him, loved him....*” - Mark 10:21

- Is there a “blindness” to others you would like to change?
- What is your general response to beggars? To the poor? To the homeless we may encounter walking the streets, talking to no one...even to a person who may have overlooked or not “seen” you...think of encounter with people from varying circumstances of life.
- Can you think of something that your eyes of faith helped you to receive that you previously did not see? What is one of the great ‘eye-opening experiences’ that you have ever had?
- Think of the 7 themes of Catholic Social Teaching – are there areas you feel you live out faithfully, others you would like to work on? Bring to prayer....?

LINK TO CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING:

<https://www.stmarymagdalen.org/Education/AdultSpirituality/MessageSeries/documents/2021EveryLife/catholic-social-teaching-poster-adults-digital.pdf>

Catholic Social Teaching - Solidarity: *We are one human family whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. We are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers, wherever they may be. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions in a shrinking world. At the core of the virtue of solidarity is the pursuit of justice and peace. Pope Paul VI taught that “if you want peace, work for justice.” The Gospel calls us to be peacemakers. Our love for all our sisters and brothers demands that we promote peace.*

Pope John Paul II: *“Solidarity helps us to see the other—whether person, people, or nation—not just as some kind of instrument, with work capacity and physical strength to be exploited at low cost and then discarded when no longer useful, but as our neighbor, a helper (Gn 2:18-20) to be made a sharer on a par with ourselves in the banquet of life to which all are equally invited by God....” #39 SOLLICITUDO REI SOCIALIS*