

The **Two Feet of Love** *in Action*

Facilitator's Guide



**Based on
Pope Benedict XVI's
recent encyclicals**

Two distinct but complementary
ways we can respond to the
call to put love in action



Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Introduction

In *Deus Caritas Est*, Pope Benedict XVI describes the “unbreakable bond between love of God and love of neighbor” (no. 16). The experience of God’s love, he says, should move us to love our neighbors, in whom God is present. The “extraordinary force” of love, or *caritas*, the Holy Father writes, propels us to action on behalf of our neighbors (*Caritas in Veritate*, no. 1).

But what should this loving action look like? The Catholic tradition recognizes two types of necessary responses that we call the Two Feet of Love in Action.

This facilitator’s guide can help you as you lead a group to learn about and reflect on these two distinct, but complementary, ways of responding in love to the needs of our neighbors.

Materials Needed

- Dry erase board, flipchart, or chalkboard
- Markers or chalk
- Icebreaker quotes, copied and cut apart (p. 7-11)
- One copy per participant of handouts*:
 - Quiz (p. 6)
 - Opening prayer (pp. 12-13)
 - Two Feet text description (p. 14)
 - Large two feet graphic (p.15)
 - Case studies handout (p. 17)
 - Two feet worksheet (p. 18)
 - Chart activity (p. 16)
 - Resources handout (pp. 19-21)
 - Closing Prayer (p. 22)
- Writing utensils
- Scotch tape

**Note: To save paper, consider copying handouts (except for quiz) back to back.*

I. Pre-Session Quiz (optional) (5 minutes)

In order to determine participants’ prior knowledge about the session topic, as participants arrive, ask them to complete the brief quiz, found on page 6, and to return it to the facilitator when finished. If desired, the quiz can be used again at the end of the session to

Session Outline (90 minutes)

- I. **Pre-Session Quiz** - 5 min.
- II. **Icebreaker Activity** – 10 min.
- III. **Opening Prayer** – 8 min.
- IV. **Brainstorm Activity** – 5 min.
- V. **Introduction to the Two Feet of Love in Action** – 15 min.
- VI. **Application** – 25 min.
- VII. **Self-Assessment** – 5 min.
- VIII. **Resources and Next Steps** – 7 min.
- IX. **Closing Prayer** – 5 min.
- X. **Post-Session Quiz** – 5 min.

see what participants have learned as a result of the session.

II. Icebreaker (10 minutes)

Before the session, estimate your expected group size and then copy the quotes on pages 7-8, or pages 9 -11, depending on the size of your group. Cut at the dotted lines so that the parts of the quotes will be on small slips of paper. Mix up or shuffle the pieces of paper to make sure they are not in order.

Give each participant one of the slips of paper. Explain to participants that they have only *part* of a quote and that they need to find the other person or persons in the room who have the other part(s). Participants must introduce themselves to one another as they try to complete their quotes.

Remember, if you have more than 30 participants, you can feel free to repeat quotes. Also, if you are handing out slips of paper as



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people arrive and do not know the exact number of participants who will attend your session, you can avoid having some participants end up with partial quotes by doing the following: make a conservative estimate of the number of participants you expect and cut up quotes for only that number of people. Have a “back-up” batch of additional slips of paper to hand out only after the initial batch is depleted. Hand out the back-up slips for only a few quotes at a time in order to prevent some participants from ending up with partial quotes.

When a group of participants believes it has completed a quote, check to make sure the quote is correct. (You may want to have pages 7-8 or 9-11 handy so you can easily check the quotes.) If the quote is correct, provide scotch tape and ask the participants to tape the quote pieces back together. Ask the groups with the quotes that will be read in the opening prayer (found on pages 12-13) to select one person to read the quote at the appropriate time during the opening prayer.

III. Opening Prayer (8 minutes)

Explain that we will begin reflecting on the topic of Putting Love in Action using some of the quotes we have pieced together in the icebreaker. Pass out the opening prayer handouts, which can be found on pages 12-13. Instruct the readers to read the quotes in a loud, clear, slow voice at the appropriate time during the prayer.

Invite everyone to place herself or himself in the presence of God and then begin the prayer.

IV. Brainstorm Activity (5 minutes)

To help participants begin thinking about the call of our faith to put love in action, ask them to brainstorm issues that face poor or vulnerable persons in their community, or in the world, which they are concerned about (e.g. poverty, abortion, homelessness, discrimination, war, etc.). State that this is *not* the time for participants to debate their positions on various issues, or to defend their views. Instead, participants should simply mention things they

are personally concerned about. As ideas are offered, write each response on the dry erase board, flipchart, or chalkboard. Explain that we will return to these responses later.

Explain that as people of faith, we are called to be concerned about issues that affect poor, vulnerable, and marginalized persons. The quotes we heard from Scripture and Church teaching are evidence of this. Say that in today’s session, we will explore two ways of putting love in action that are distinct from one another, but *both* absolutely necessary.

V. Introduction to the Two Feet of Love in Action (15 minutes)

Hand out the copies of pages 14-17. Referring to the quote at the bottom of page 15, note that as Pope Benedict XVI teaches, “A Eucharist which does not pass over into the concrete practice of love is intrinsically fragmented” (*Deus Caritas Est*, no. 14).

Explain to participants as they view the handouts that there are two different, but complimentary, ways that we can act in response to God’s love. We call these the “Two Feet of Love in Action.” These two feet, “Social Justice” and “Charitable Works,” allow us to walk the path of *caritas*, or love.

“Foot” # 1: Social Justice

Explain that **the first “foot”** is called **Social Justice**. Pope Benedict XVI calls this the “primary way of charity,” or love.

We step with this foot when we work to address the *root causes* of problems facing our communities by advocating for just public policies and helping to change the social structures that contribute to suffering and injustice at home and around the world. We walk with the Social Justice foot when we work to foster peace and justice and work for long-term change in local and global communities. We also step with this foot when we support the efforts of low-income persons to transform their communities.

Call participants' attention to the quote from the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* at the bottom of the two feet handout (p. 15) that describes social justice as concerning "the social, political and economic aspects and, above all, the structural dimension of problems and their respective solutions" (no. 201). Note that sometimes we have to address injustices within systems and structures to ensure that those who are disadvantaged have equal opportunities to succeed.

Mention each of the examples, one by one, that are listed on the "Social Justice" foot on page 15.

If participants have a difficult time understanding why we must address "root causes" and change "unjust structures," provide the following examples:

- On average, it costs \$25,083/year for a low-income family of four in the U.S. to cover basic housing, utilities, transportation, food, health care, and child care. An adult who works 40 hours a week at minimum wage will make only \$15,080 annually.
- Children who have access to full-time pre-school are much more likely to have higher incomes, education levels, and socioeconomic status and are less likely to abuse drugs, be involved in criminal activities, and lack healthcare—25 years later. However, full-time preschool costs an average of \$8,700 per child annually and is unaffordable to many low-income families.
- The Catholic Church has consistently advocated for laws and policies to limit abortion.

Ask participants to read the Social Justice case study on page 17. Ask, "How is Our Lord Christ the King parish living out a commitment to walking with the 'social justice' foot of love in action?"

"Foot" # 2: Charitable Works

Next, introduce **the second "foot"** of love in action, called Charitable Works. Pope Benedict XVI describes this foot when he emphasizes, as part of our loving response to God, action to "attend constantly to man's sufferings and his needs, including material needs" (*Deus Caritas Est*, no. 19). In the same document, Pope Benedict describes our charitable works as "the simple response to immediate needs and specific situations: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for and healing the sick, visiting those in prison, etc." (no. 31) (This quote is at the bottom of the two feet handout.)

We step with the Charitable Works foot when we work to aid or assist others both locally and globally to meet their immediate, short-term needs. Examples include engaging in direct service or providing food, clothing, shelter, or monetary assistance to help those in need.

Mention the examples, one by one, that are listed on the "Charitable Works" foot on page 15.

Ask participants to read the Charitable Works case study on page 17. Ask, "How is St. Mary of the Assumption parish living out a commitment to walking with the 'charitable works' foot of love in action?"

How the Feet Work Together

After participants have had a chance to respond, summarize what they have learned. Note that the two feet are *both* essential, and that they work together to put love in action. (We will further illustrate this idea in the next activity.)

Explain that we step first with the Social Justice foot and second with the Charitable Works foot. Social Justice, or addressing the *root* causes of issues that face poor and vulnerable people, should come first because,

as Pope Benedict XVI explains in *Caritas in Veritate*, "If we love others with charity, then first of all we are just towards them" (no. 6). St. John Chrysostom also captures this idea when he writes, "The demands of justice must be satisfied first of all; that which is already due in justice is not to be offered as a gift of charity" (quoted in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2446).

Emphasize that walking on the path of love is an ongoing, lifelong journey of growth. As our faith leads us to act in love, these loving actions change us and give us new insights, leading to new spiritual growth. Also note that we do not grow and act alone, but together in community. We exist as a body of Christ (represented by the people figures at the end of the path), together with our brothers and sisters who are part of God's family and also with people of good will.

On the path of love, we are walking toward the horizon, which is the kingdom of God. As Catholics, we believe that the kingdom of God is both a future goal *and* in our midst now. During his time on earth, Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God both through his words and his actions to heal the sick, clothe the naked, and free the oppressed (Lk. 4:18). We are called to follow in his footsteps and help make God's kingdom present on earth.

VI. Application (25 minutes)

Part 1: One Foot, or Two?

Ask for two volunteers who are in good physical health to come to the front of the room. Tell the volunteers that they are going race one another to the other side of the room and back. However, there are certain rules each will have to follow. One volunteer will only be allowed to use one foot: he or she must hop to the other side and back. The other volunteer can run or walk, using both feet. (For groups of appropriate age and health, you can alternately have all participants form a circle and hop clockwise

on one foot until they are back to their starting place. Then do the same thing walking, using both feet.)

Ask everyone, based on the illustration, whether it is better to hop on one foot, or to walk on two. Refer back to the issues of concern that participants mentioned at the beginning of the session and explain that in order to effectively address these issues, we must walk with *both* feet, not only one, so we do not have to hop or walk with a limp! Ask participants to read the third case study on page 17. Ask, "How is St. Camillus parish living out a commitment to walking with *both* feet of love in action?"

Part 2: Application to Issues

Ask participants to divide into groups of two to four persons. Then pass out to each group the chart activity handout on page 16. Ask participants to read the examples for homelessness and abortion as a group and consider how the responses in each column are different. After reading the examples, instruct the group to select a different issue of their choice (for ideas, review the issues they brainstormed at the beginning of the session) and complete the last row of the chart. When all groups are finished, have each group present its responses to the issue it chose.

VII. Self-Assessment (5 minutes)

Explain to participants that they will now have a chance to assess how they, personally, are doing at walking with "two feet." Pass out the self-assessment handout (the worksheet with the empty feet) on page 18. Instruct them to write inside of the corresponding foot any activities that they have personally been involved in that are examples of walking with that foot. Allow several minutes for participants to complete this task.

When participants are finished, ask:

- What are examples of activities that you wrote in the Social Justice foot? The Charitable Works foot?
- In which “foot” did you write a greater number of activities?
- Why do you think this is?

Tell participants that it is often the case that people—and the parishes and other organizations to which they belong—find it easiest to engage in charitable works and thus offer more opportunities in this area. But we need to make sure that we don’t walk with a limp, favoring one foot. We must discover ways to walk with both feet!

VIII. Resources and Next Steps (7 minutes)

Pass out copies of the Resources handout on pages 19-21 to provide a list of ideas and resources for participants to strengthen their weaker foot. You may want to choose a few of the resources listed and then create your own customized handout, adding local organizations and resources that are available in your community. Remember to include resources to help strengthen *both* feet of love in action. For example, you may want to include on the list:

- Opportunities for direct service at organizations in your community. Remember, the best service sites will include the opportunity for face-to-face interaction and relationship-building with those need. (Charitable Works)
- Community organizations, such as those that receive funding from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, which empower low-income persons to change unjust laws and policies that affect them. (Social Justice)
- Contact information (address, email, and phone) for public officials at the city, state, and federal levels, who participants can contact about issues of concern. (Social Justice)
- Information about how participants can

donate to local Catholic Charities, St. Vincent DePaul, and other Catholic social service agencies that help persons in your community who live in poverty or are marginalized. (Charitable Works)

- Educational events in your community that participants could attend to learn more about issues that affect poor and vulnerable persons in their community and take action. (Social Justice)

Walk participants through the resources that are available to help them strengthen their “weaker foot.”

Then, ask participants to return to the self-assessment handout from the previous section (p. 18) and to take a few moments to write on the bottom of the page, beneath the feet, one action they could personally take to strengthen their “weaker” foot. Ask for volunteers to share their ideas with the group.

IX. Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Pass out the closing prayer handouts (page 22). Invite participants to place themselves in the presence of God and then begin the closing prayer.

X. Post-Session Quiz (5 minutes)

If you wish to evaluate what participants have learned as a result of the session, you can pass out clean copies of the Quiz and then compare participants’ answers to the questions before and after the session.

Alternately, you can lead participants to self-assess their learning by passing out to each participant the quiz that he or she completed at the start of the session. Participants can then be allowed to change or update their answers based on what they have learned. If you will collect the revised quizzes to see what change has occurred, you can ask participants to use a different color pen to make corrections.

Your Name _____

Quiz

Please define each of the terms below:

Social justice is....

Charitable works are...

In response to poverty, abortion, violence, and other issues facing our communities and world, Catholics are called to.... (check as many as you think apply):

- Volunteer
- Protest
- Donate money
- Learn about the causes of the issue
- Pray
- Contact local policymakers and/or members of Congress
- Raise awareness/educate others
- Vote for candidates likely to support policies that help poor and vulnerable persons
- Sign petitions

Do *Scripture* and/or church teaching (e.g. the Catechism, Pope Benedict XVI, the U.S. Catholic bishops, etc.) call us to take the actions you checked above? Which one(s)?

Name examples of passages from Scripture and/or Church teaching that you think encourage such action(s).

Icebreaker Quotes for Groups of 14 or Less

"Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?'

And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'" (Matthew 25:37-40)

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives

and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord." (Luke 4:18-19)

"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, his brethren." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1397)

"The demands of the common good are dependent on the social conditions of each historical period and are strictly connected to respect for and the integral promotion of the person and his fundamental rights. These demands concern above all the commitment to peace, the organization of the State's powers,

a sound juridical system, the protection of the environment, and the provision of essential services to all, some of which are at the same time human rights: food, housing, work, education and access to culture, transportation, basic health care, the freedom of communication and expression, and the protection of religious freedom." (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 166)

"Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprive them of life. The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs.

The demands of justice must be satisfied first of all; that which is already due in justice is not to be offered as a gift of charity." (St. John Chrysostom, quoted in *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2446)

"The more we strive to secure a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbors, the more effectively we love them. Every Christian is called to practice this charity, in a manner corresponding to his vocation and according to the degree of influence he wields in the *pólis*. This is the institutional path

— we might also call it the political path — of charity, no less excellent and effective than the kind of charity which encounters the neighbor directly, outside the institutional mediation of the *pólis*." (Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, no. 7)

"To love is to give, to offer what is 'mine' to the other; but it never lacks justice, which prompts us to give the other what is 'his', what is due to him by reason of his being or his acting. I cannot 'give' what is mine to the other,

without first giving him what pertains to him in justice.... Not only is justice not extraneous to charity, not only is it not an alternative or parallel path to charity: justice is inseparable from charity, and intrinsic to it." (Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, no. 6)

Icebreaker Quotes for Groups of 15 or More

"Is this the manner of fasting I wish, of keeping a day of penance: That a man bow his head like a reed, and lie in sackcloth and ashes? Do you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?"

This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; Setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke;

Sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; Clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own." (Isaiah 58:5-7)

"Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?'

And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'" (Matthew 25:37-40)

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives

and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord." (Luke 4:18-19)

"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, his brethren." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1397)

"The demands of the common good are dependent on the social conditions of each historical period and are strictly connected to respect for and the integral promotion of the person and his fundamental rights.

These demands concern above all the commitment to peace, the organization of the State's powers, a sound juridical system, the protection of the environment, and the provision of essential services to all, some of which are at the same time human rights:

food, housing, work, education and access to culture, transportation, basic health care, the freedom of communication and expression, and the protection of religious freedom.”
(*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 166)

“Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprive them of life.

The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs. The demands of justice must be satisfied first of all;

that which is already due in justice is not to be offered as a gift of charity.” (St. John Chrysostom, quoted in *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2446)

“The more we strive to secure a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbors, the more effectively we love them. Every Christian is called to

practice this charity, in a manner corresponding to his vocation and according to the degree of influence he wields in the [city]. This is the institutional path — we might also call it

the political path — of charity, no less excellent and effective than the kind of charity which encounters the neighbor directly.” (Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, no. 7)

“To love is to give, to offer what is ‘mine’ to the other; but it never lacks justice, which prompts us to give the other what is ‘his’, what is due to him by reason of his being or his acting.

I cannot ‘give’ what is mine to the other, without first giving him what pertains to him in justice.... Not only is justice not extraneous to charity,

not only is it not an alternative or parallel path to charity: justice is inseparable from charity, and intrinsic to it.” (Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, no. 6)

“The direct duty to work for a just ordering of society. . . is proper to the lay faithful. As citizens of the State,

they are called to take part in public life in a personal capacity. So they cannot relinquish their participation `in

the many different economic, social, legislative, administrative and cultural areas, which are intended to promote organically and institutionally the common good.’.” (Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 29)

“Following the example given in the parable of the Good Samaritan, Christian charity is first of all the simple response

to immediate needs and specific situations: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for and healing the sick, visiting those in prison, etc.” (Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 29 and 31)

“A Eucharist which does not pass over into the concrete practice

of love is intrinsically fragmented.” (Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 14)

“The Church cannot neglect the service of **charity** any more than she can neglect the Sacraments and the Word. . . .

Those who are able make offerings in accordance with their means . . . to support orphans, widows, the sick and those who for other reasons find themselves in need, such as prisoners and foreigners.” (Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, no. 22)

Opening Prayer

Leader: Father, Son, and Spirit, we pray that you will help us to reflect today on how we can put love into action in our lives and in our communities.

Be with us as we listen and reflect on words from Scripture and Tradition on how we are called to put love in action.

Reader 1: "Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?' And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'" (Matthew 25:37-40)

All: Loving God, help us to put love in action.

Reader 2: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord." (Luke 4:18-19)

All: Loving God, help us to put love in action.

Reader 3: "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, his brethren." (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1397)

All: Loving God, help us to put love in action.

Reader 4: "The demands of the common good are dependent on the social conditions of each historical period and are strictly connected to respect for and the integral promotion of the person and his fundamental rights. These demands concern above all the commitment to peace, the organization of the State's powers, a sound juridical system, the protection of the environment, and the provision of essential services to all, some of which are at the same time human rights: food, housing, work, education and access to culture, transportation, basic health care, the freedom of communication and expression, and the protection of religious freedom." (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 166)

All: Loving God, help us to put love in action.



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Reader 5: “Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprive them of life. The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs. The demands of justice must be satisfied first of all; that which is already due in justice is not to be offered as a gift of charity.” (St. John Chrysostom, quoted in *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2446)

All: Loving God, help us to put love in action.

Reader 6: “The more we strive to secure a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbors, the more effectively we love them. Every Christian is called to practice this charity, in a manner corresponding to his vocation and according to the degree of influence he wields in the *pólis*. This is the institutional path — we might also call it the political path — of charity, no less excellent and effective than the kind of charity which encounters the neighbor directly, outside the institutional mediation of the *pólis*.” (Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, no. 7)

All: Loving God, help us to put love in action.

Leader: Loving Father, guide us as we reflect today on how we are called to put love in action. We ask this through Christ, Our Lord.

All: Amen.



There are two different, but complimentary, ways that we can act in response to God's love. We call these the "Two Feet of Love in Action." These two feet, "Social Justice" and "Charitable Works," allow us to walk the path of love, or *caritas*.

This pilgrimage of love is an ongoing, lifelong journey of growth. Just as our faith leads to action, our loving actions lead to new spiritual growth. This action is not taken alone, but together with others. In this way, we work to make God's kingdom present on earth.

The Two Feet of Love in Action

The first "foot" is called Social Justice.

Pope Benedict XVI calls this the "primary way of charity," or love, because: "If we love others with charity, then first of all we are just towards them" (*Caritas in Veritate*, no. 6).

We walk with the Social Justice foot by fostering peace and justice and seeking long-term change in local and global communities. We step with this foot when we work to remove the root causes of problems, when we support the efforts of low-income persons to transform their communities, when we advocate for just public policies, and when we help change the social structures that contribute to suffering and injustice at home and around the world.

The second "foot" is called Charitable Works.

Pope Benedict XVI describes this foot when he emphasizes, as part of our loving response to God, our action to "attend constantly to man's sufferings and his needs, including material needs" (*Deus Caritas Est*, no. 19).

We step with this foot when we work to aid or assist others both locally and globally to meet their immediate, short-term needs. Examples include engaging in direct service or providing food, clothing, shelter, or monetary assistance to help those in need.

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“The conscience is called by this social teaching to recognize and fulfill the obligations of **justice** and **charity** in society.”

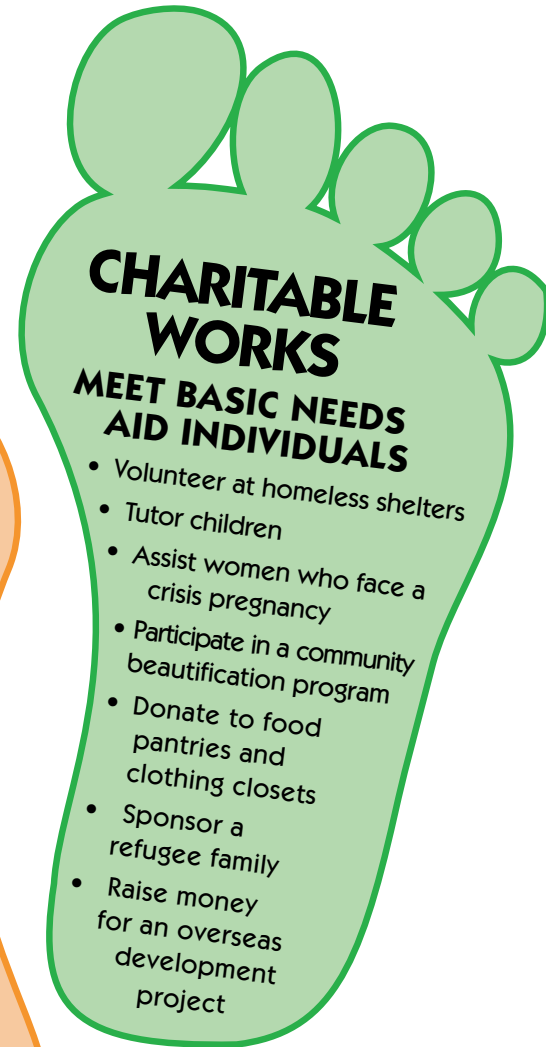
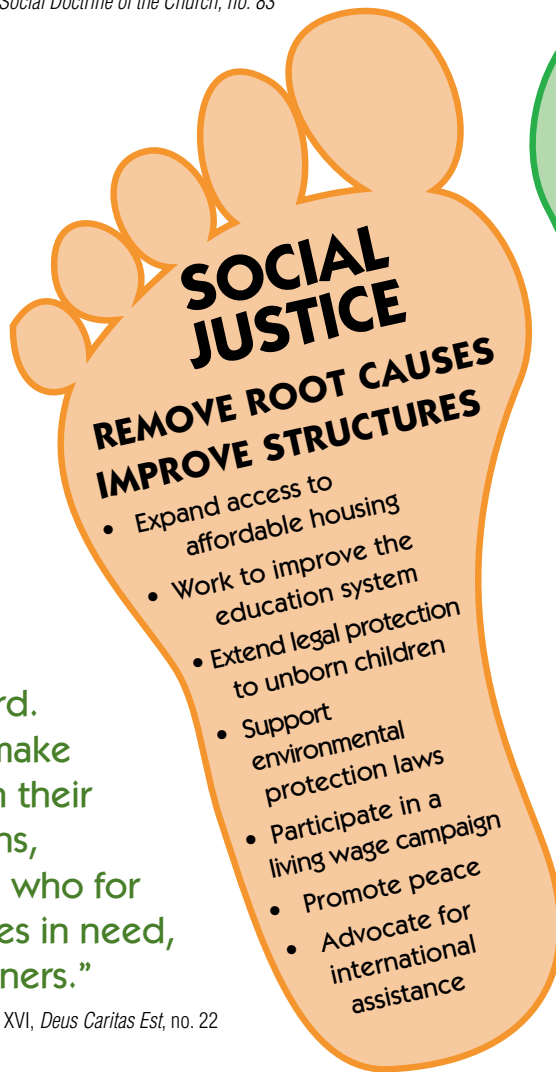
—Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, no. 83

“**Social justice**. . . concerns the social, political, and economic aspects and, above all, the structural dimension of problems and their respective solutions.”

—Compendium, no. 201

“The Church cannot neglect the service of **charity** any more than she can neglect the Sacraments and the Word. . . . Those who are able to make offerings in accordance with their means. . . to support orphans, widows, the sick, and those who for other reasons find themselves in need, such as prisoners and foreigners.”

—Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, no. 22





The Two Feet of Love *in Action*

Love cultivates compassion in our hearts and solidarity with our brothers and sisters in need, and moves us to respond in an ongoing and continuous manner. The “Two Feet of Love in Action” describe how love is concretely expressed in action. In the table below, first reflect on how the Social Justice and Charitable Works responses are different. Why are both types of responses necessary? Second, in the last row, choose an issue you are interested in and then write down some possible ways to respond. In the first column, focus on Social Justice actions that can help address root causes. In the second column, identify Charitable Works that can aid individuals.

	Social Justice	Charitable Works
General Responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focuses on the rights and duties of individuals, families and all creation. - Analyzes social situations and structures. - Works for long-term social change. - Addresses the underlying social causes of individual problems. - Seeks just laws, fair social structures, and peace. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focuses on the basic needs of individuals, families and all creation. - Looks at individual situations of need. - Meets an immediate need. - Addresses painful personal symptoms of social problems. - Relies on the generosity of donors.
Example: Responses to Abortion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extend legal protection to unborn children. - Adopt pro-family public policies that help families with children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide prenatal care and medical services for poor women. - Offer crisis pregnancy services, e.g., counseling and transitional housing support.
Example: Responses to Homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise the minimum wage so workers can afford housing. - Expand affordable housing. - Expand job training opportunities and education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Volunteer at a homeless shelter. - Give fast food certificates to homeless persons who ask for help. - Donate to an organization that does outreach to homeless persons.

Case Studies: What Does Love in Action Look Like?

Social Justice

Our Lord Christ the King parish, in **Cincinnati, OH**, often hosts clergy studying at the nearby diocesan seminary. After a Ghanaian priest came to their parish, some parishioners began learning how U.S. policies affect Ghana. As a result, they were inspired to participate in Bread for the World's Offering of Letters to support increased aid to Africa in the U.S. federal budget. Parishioners wrote to their elected officials and also shared stories and photos of their friends in Ghana. Their senator subsequently co-sponsored legislation that allowed Ghana to receive a \$1.5 billion grant to be used for development. Parishioners were also inspired to reflect on their own attitudes toward the diverse populations in their local community, work to change perceptions, and make their own parish more hospitable.

Charitable Works

St. Mary of the Assumption parish in **Stockton, CA**, participates in a diocesan program of parish-based outreach to agricultural migrants. Teams of parishioners welcome new arrivals for the seasonal harvesting work with clothes, food, and basic hygiene products; booklets about organizations that assist migrants; and catechesis and sacramental programs for adults and children in the migrant camps. Parish priests celebrate Mass at the camps, and the team facilitates transportation and follow-up care for attendees of a diocesan medical clinic. At the end of the agricultural season, the Bishop celebrates a Mass where children and adults receive First Communion and Confirmation and some migrant couples marry. Parish teams provide food and warm clothes for migrants who stay in town during the winter.

Walking with Both Feet

When parishioners at St. Camillus parish in **Silver Spring, MD** became concerned about conflict over control of natural resources in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), they decided to walk with both feet. First, they invited Congolese members of the parish to make presentations about the reality of the situation in their country. Then, they organized an advocacy trip to share their concerns with members of Congress, engaging the **social justice** foot. This advocacy by St. Camillus parishioners and many other Catholics played an important role in passing new legislation in 2010 requiring companies to take steps, including regular audits, to ensure that the minerals used in their products are not financing militia violence in the eastern Congo.

Back at the parish, they stepped with the **charitable works** foot by holding a craft sale to benefit Catholic Relief Services programs that assist victims of war in the DRC.



Above, members of St. Camillus visit their Senator to share their concern about war in the DRC. Below, they sell crafts.



The Two Feet of Love *in Action*





Websites, Ideas and Resources to Help You*

Organizations/Offices

Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) (www.usccb.org/cchd) is the domestic anti-poverty program of the U.S. Catholic bishops. CCHD provides funding to community organizations working to address the causes of poverty and also educates Catholics about poverty in the U.S.

Justice for Immigrants (www.justiceforimmigrants.org) is a campaign of the U.S. Catholic bishops that educates about Church teaching on migration, works to create political will for positive, comprehensive immigration reform, and organizes Catholic networks to assist qualified immigrants.

USCCB Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development (www.usccb.org/jphd) engages Catholics in prayer, reflection and action to protect the lives and dignity of the human family at home and around the world.

USCCB Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church (www.usccb.org/about/cultural-diversity-in-the-church/) pursues the goal of making diversity and its implications more recognized and understood among church leaders—clergy, religious, and laity.

USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities (www.usccb.org/prolife) works to teach respect for all human life from conception to natural death, and organize for its protection through educational materials, campaigns, publications, and public policy.

Catholics Confront Global Poverty (www.usccb.org/globalpoverty or <http://crs.org/globalpoverty>) is an initiative of the U.S. Catholic bishops and Catholic Relief Services which works to educate Catholics about global poverty and involve them in advocacy to end it.

Catholic Charities (www.catholiccharitiesusa.org) agencies provide social services to assist persons in poverty around the United States. Catholic Charities also provides programs and resources for advocacy, networking, training, leadership, and disaster response.

Catholic Coalition on Climate Change (www.catholicsandclimatechange.org/) provides a forum to explore the issues and faith implications of climate change and to help state and diocesan leaders and partners educate about the issues climate change.

Catholic Mobilizing Network to End the Use of the Death Penalty (www.catholicmobilizing.org) seeks to prepare Catholics for informed involvement in campaigns to repeal state death penalty laws and expand or inaugurate restorative justice programs.

Catholic Relief Services (www.crs.org) is the international aid agency of the Catholic bishops in the United States and assists poor and disadvantaged persons in over 100 countries. CRS also engages Catholics in the U.S. in education and advocacy and has five U.S. regional offices.

JustFaith Ministries (www.justfaith.org) offers extended programs that provide opportunities for individuals to study and be formed by the justice tradition articulated by the Scriptures, the Church's historical witness, theological inquiry and Catholic social teaching.



National Catholic Partnership on Disability (www.ncpd.org) works to ensure meaningful participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of the life of the Church and society.

National Catholic Rural Life Conference (www.ncrlc.com/) works to apply the teachings of Jesus Christ for the social, economic, and spiritual development of rural America with responsibility for the care of God's creation.

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul (www.svdpusa.org/) offers tangible assistance to those in need on a person-to-person basis. It also advocates on behalf of those who are defenseless or voiceless.

Directories of long-term volunteer opportunities

Search these databases to identify an organization you can partner with for service opportunities in the United States or internationally lasting anywhere from several weeks to several years.

- **Catholic Volunteer Network** (www.catholicvolunteernetwork.org) – Search the RESPONSE directory of volunteer organizations
- **St. Vincent Pallotti Center** (www.pallotticenter.org) – Search the CONNECTIONS directory of volunteer organizations

Learning Resources

Caritas in Veritate lesson plans and individual study guide (www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/who-we-teach/adults/caritas-in-veritate-resource-material.cfm) can help you learn more about Social Justice and Charitable Works as articulated in Pope Benedict's encyclical. Study resources, cliff notes, and a reflection guide are available to assist you.

Catholic Charities Parish Social Ministry Section

(www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/Page.aspx?pid=1390) is a network of people in parishes, dioceses and Catholic Charities agencies that share resources and ideas to fight poverty in the U.S.

CRS Education (education.crs.org/) is a website with great learning resources about international issues from Catholic Relief Services.

CRS Fair Trade program (www.crsfairtrade.org/) helps Catholics support farmers and artisans and their economic initiatives in developing countries.

Ending Poverty in Community (EPIC) (www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/who-we-teach/youth/ending-poverty-in-community.cfm) is a toolkit to help young people learn about the causes of poverty in the United States. Lessons 5 and 6 include materials to help youth identify an issue of concern in their community and create a plan to get involved in addressing it.

Faithful Citizenship (www.faithfulcitizenship.org and www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/faithful-citizenship/formando-la-conciencia-para-ser-ciudadanos-fieles-indice.cfm) provides materials and resources to prepare Catholics to bring their faith to public life and to live as faithful citizens.

In the Footsteps of Jesus is a resource manual and video to introduce groups of all ages to Catholic social teaching and the Two Feet. Order the English manual and the videos at www.usccbpublishing.org; the Spanish version of the manual is available for download.



Learn How to Visit, Call, or Write to an Elected Official (www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/take-action-now/) Get tips on how to make a phone call, write a letter, or visit your elected officials so that you can make your voice heard!

Multi-Media Youth Arts Contest (www.usccb.org/about/catholic-campaign-for-human-development/2011-12-multi-media-youth-arts-contest.cfm) is a program for young people in grades 7-12 to learn about poverty in the U.S., its causes, and the response of the Church. After learning, youth become educators of others through their artwork.

Our Faith in Action Campus website (www.usccb.org/campus) can help students on campus put faith in action through social justice and charitable works.

Participate in Action Alerts to address issues that face the poor and vulnerable
At <http://capwiz.com/catholicbishops/home/> you can take action with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops on domestic and international policy, pro-life, immigration, and other issues.

PovertyUSA.org is a website sponsored by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development with facts and figures about poverty in the United States and what can be done to address it. The PovertyTour video is an educational tool to help viewers understand the challenges of trying to live at the Poverty Line.

Sacraments and Mission series (www.usccb.org/about/justice-peace-and-human-development/resources-and-tools.cfm) Learn more about how our sacramental practice as Catholics leads us to mission in the world.

** Please note that this is not an exhaustive list. There are many other organizations and resources besides those listed here that can help you walk with the Two Feet of Love in Action.*

A Prayer to Walk with Two Feet

Leader: As we conclude our time today, we reflect on our commitment, in faith, to **social justice and public engagement**. To help us reflect on social justice, we listen to these words from Pope Benedict XVI:

Reader 1: The direct duty to work for a just ordering of society . . . is proper to the lay faithful. As citizens of the State, they are called to take part in public life in a personal capacity.

Reader 2: So they cannot relinquish their participation in the many different economic, social, legislative, administrative and cultural areas, which are intended to promote organically and institutionally the common good of all persons.

Reader 3: The mission of the lay faithful is therefore to configure social life correctly (*Deus Caritas Est*, no. 29).

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Leader: We pray that we will transform economic, social, legislative, administrative and cultural structures to better reflect the common good.

All: *Teach us to walk with two feet.*

Leader: We pray that all will take up our baptismal task of working for a just ordering of society.

All: *Teach us to walk with two feet.*

Leader: We also reflect on our commitment, in faith, to **charitable works** on behalf of the poor and vulnerable. To help us reflect on charitable works, we listen to these words from Pope Benedict XVI:

Reader 1: Love for widows and orphans, prisoners, and the sick and needy of every kind, [are] as essential to [the Church] as the ministry of the sacraments and preaching of the Gospel.

Reader 2: The Church cannot neglect the service of charity any more than she can neglect the Sacraments and the Word. . .

Reader 3: Justin Martyr in speaking of the Christians' celebration of Sunday, also mentions their charitable activity, linked with the Eucharist (*Deus Caritas Est*, no. 22).

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Leader: We pray that our witness of faith will be evident through our love for widows, orphans, prisoners, and the sick.

All: *Teach us to walk with two feet.*

Leader: We pray that the celebration of our Eucharist each Sunday will move us to compassionate concern and action.

All: *Teach us to walk with two feet.*

Leader: We ask all these things through Christ, Our Lord.

All: *Amen.*