

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Office for Human Dignity & Solidarity—Immigration Ministry

SESSION SIX

Joining Hands, Efforts and Hearts

Solidarity



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PART ONE

Introduction

Introduction and Greetings

Today we will reflect on the signs of solidarity that exist around us and the call and responsibility of Christians to build community.

Initial Prayer

God you are One and the Trinity: You are communion and relationship. Your incredibly expansive love can never be limited. Selfishness would be a negation of your image. Let us enter into your life and into your heart in order to become your loving presence for all in the world. Give us your feelings of mercy, allow us to live no longer for ourselves but for you, you who live in us and take on our poverty in order to make us rich with your richness. Amen.

Reading from the Word of God

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.’ 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.’ Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, a stranger and you

gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.' Then they will answer and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?' He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.' And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."—**MATTHEW 25:31–46**

For through faith you are all children of God in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.—**GALATIANS 3:26–28**

I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. A hired man, who is not a shepherd and whose sheep are not his own, sees a wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf catches and scatters them. This is because he works for pay and has no concern for the sheep.

I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I will lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd. This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again. This command I have received from my Father."—**JOHN 10:11–18**

Commentary

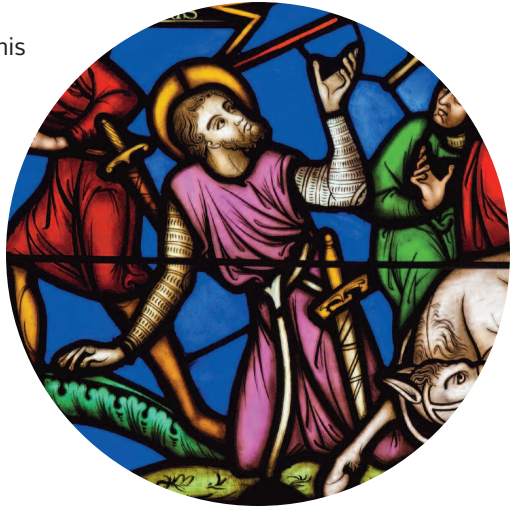
Solidarity is not an option for those who follow Christ; it is a fundamental and integral part of Christian identity. Later on we will return to the readings to enlighten our lives with their message.

PART TWO Listening

From Everyday Life: Things that Happen

- Pedro and Maria have a small business and are able to survive in this country. Maria has all of her documents, but Pedro has been arrested and is about to be deported. For the business to continue they need to have everything in order before he is deported. However, he is at the detention center. Unexpectedly, the authorities show him compassion and allows him to go out for three hours in order to take care of the businesses, eat with his wife and children, and say farewell in the hopes of seeing each other again. The pain of separation and brokenness is very strong, but it is softened a bit by a simple gesture of solidarity.

- John Carlos Frey, a successful movie director of Hollywood, had rejected his culture. But one day his mother, an American citizen of Mexican descent and features, was arrested and risked being deported because while jogging she was not carrying her papers. John Carlos felt for his mother causing him to return to his roots and extend his solidarity to the entire immigrant community. From now on, his work will be directed to raise awareness about the reality of immigrants.



- A large group of people meets every Friday morning in front of Chicago's deportation center to pray for those about to be deported. They pray for their families and offer their support and pastoral care. They are from different backgrounds: some are of European origin, African Americans, Hispanics...they have different professions and different religious beliefs. The group is there because they are convinced it is their duty as human beings to be in solidarity with the suffering of others.

FOR REFLECTION AND CONVERSATION

Do you know cases of people who have risked everything they have trying to provide compassion and justice to others even though they themselves do not need it? In your own life, at what points have you felt called to solidarity with the suffering and need of others? What signs of solidarity do you see around you, in your community or city? Are you surprised when you see there some people from other cultural groups or denominations standing in solidarity?

From Everyday Life: Things that Happen

After the passage of the controversial law SB 1070 of Arizona, many states and municipalities tried to implement similar measures. Yet those efforts gave rise to many protests and acts of solidarity with immigrants:

- In Indiana, many organizations cancelled their conferences and events to protest the efforts to impose a similar law.
- In Nebraska, there were multiple protests against a similar law. Many recognized there would be a surge in legal demands for false arrests and discrimination, which would ultimately cost the taxpayers.

- In Michigan, many religious leaders spoke up against such laws.
- In Arizona, teachers demonstrated against the measures which would make them verify the immigration status of their students. They called such measure “despicable” because it unjustly targeted immigrant children, and of course such procedures would distract teachers from their primary teaching duties. In addition, students staged a protest of their own outside of schools to oppose such measures.
- In Alabama, the Association of County Commissioners said the state would not be able to afford such drastic measures, filling the prisons with undocumented immigrants.
- In Pennsylvania, protesting voices warned not only of negative economic consequences, but the moral ones as well.
- In Utah, a group of Latinos asked for a boycott of stores and banks in protest for similar laws.
- In Illinois, thousands of young students who were undocumented immigrants demonstrated asking for immigration reform. They carried banners saying, “Undocumented: no excuses, no fear.”
- Virginia Mendoza, of the League of Latin American Citizens United said: “The only thing these laws achieved is to sow seeds of fear, paranoia, frustration and anger. They will only legitimize discrimination.”
- Executives of large companies in Arizona signed a petition against the laws that they consider to be unjust.
- Non-government organizations asked President Obama to stop deportations and to push Comprehensive Immigration Reform forward.
- A police chief in San José, California, said police agents should not be involved in enforcing immigration laws because it is not their role.

FOR REFLECTION AND CONVERSATION

Do you know of similar cases or examples of how solidarity is present among many different types of people? What feelings or reactions do you have to this?

PART THREE

Learning

Enlightened by the Word

Let us read the initial Bible passages Matthew 25:31–46; Galatians 3:26–38; and John 10:11–18 again.

FOR REFLECTION AND PRAYER

What phrases or expressions strike you the most? What questions or challenges come from these readings? How do these Scripture passages encourage and challenge your life or that of the community. In what ways do we find the Lord hungry or thirsty, naked or indigent, imprisoned or deported...around us? How will we be judged?

Understanding the Passages

MATTHEW 25:31-46 The scene of the final judgment is the highest point of this discourse. There is a Judge and a King, who is the Son of Man, and all the nations are gathered to listen to the sentence. The throne symbolizes the royal power and the power to judge. The Judge separates some from the others. This is not just a separation, but the final separation. Goodness and evil, generosity and selfishness live together in history, but in the end Christ himself will give the just rewards to those who have welcomed him and to those who have rejected him.

GALATIANS 3:26-28 In the life of faith, no one is inferior or superior to anyone. The formula acquires a greater strength read in the context of the Greek-Roman society which had many social classes, and in the Jewish society where people felt superior because of their Covenant with God. Those freed by the law now have a voice before the law held them captive. Now they are fully human.

JOHN 10:11-18 In the prophecies of the Old Testament the Messiah was designated by the image of the shepherd. The quality of the generosity of the Good Shepherd is contrasted to the attitude of the salaried shepherd. What is underlined here is the communion between Jesus and the Father and between Jesus and his sheep. There is an only one flock and only one shepherd. The most important point is the affirmation of the self-giving, which receives the love of the Father. It is a free self-giving: to the point of giving up one's own life.

Enlightened by the Doctrine of the Church

The word solidarity became fashionable in the eighties, but the concept and the virtues of solidarity have always been rooted in the doctrine of the Church, from the beginning, because they are part of the message and the mandate of Christ. Let us listen to some of the things the Church says about solidarity.

In this world we are one human family. As we realize our dignity, rights and responsibilities toward others, we have the obligation to continue building a community that allows all persons to reach their full human potential. When we work for justice we fulfill the commandment to build the Body of Christ (*Series Faith and Human Development: Biblical Guide*, USCCB, Washington DC, 1998).

No one is a stranger in the Church and the Church is not a stranger to any person in any place. As a sacrament of unity and, therefore, as sign and power of unity of

the whole human race, the Church is the place where undocumented immigrants are recognized and welcomed as brothers and sisters. Every diocese needs to mobilize so that these people, forced to live outside of the safety net of civil society, may find a sense of fraternity in the Catholic community. Solidarity is the assumption of responsibility before those with whom difficulty is found. Therefore, the Church must welcome every person, of any race, culture, and nation, with joy, love and hope, receiving with special care those who are in a situation of poverty, discrimination, marginalization, or exclusion (“Together on the Journey of Hope: No Longer Strangers.” Pastoral letter from the Catholic Bishops of the United States and Mexico on Immigration. Conference of the Mexican Episcopate, and USCCB, Washington DC, 2004).

The social solidarity that today joins all people in a single family, imposes on the nations who enjoy abundant economic richness the obligation of not remaining indifferent before countries whose members who are oppressed by innumerable interior difficulties, are extenuated by misery and hunger and do not enjoy the fundamental rights of humankind. This obligation increases with the fact that, given the progressive interdependence of nations today, it is not possible to have among them a lasting and fruitful peace if social and economic differences are excessive (*Mater et Magistra*, John XXIII).

The integral development of men cannot be given without a common development. The obligations of those who are more privileged have their roots in human and supernatural fraternity and present themselves in three ways: duty of solidarity, help that the nations must give to developing countries; duty of social justice, righting the faulty commercial relationships between strong and weak countries; and duty of universal love, for the promotion of a more human world for all, where all have something to give and receive without the progress of some being an obstacle for the development of the others. The issue is serious, since the future of world civilization depends on it (*Populorum Progression*, Paul VI).

FOR REFLECTION AND CONVERSATION

What part of Catholic Social Teaching do you find most interesting? How can we show more solidarity to others? What aspects of inequality do we see around us, within our families or communities? What should we do to solve these differences?

In the Light of Contemporary Theological Reflection

by Archbishop Oscar Romero, Saint and Theologian

This is the commitment of the Christian: to follow Christ in his incarnation. If Christ, God of majesty, became a humble person, lived with the poor and finally gave his life as a slave on the cross, we must do the same through our Christian faith. A Christian who does not want to live this commitment of solidarity with the poor is not worthy of being called a Christian.

FOR REFLECTION AND CONVERSATION

What does commitment mean? Although Christ is the answer of God to humanity, have we ever given a personal response to God? When? What strength does our personal commitment have?

PART FOUR

Proclaiming

Leadership

A true leader in the style of the Good Shepherd, of Jesus, is not someone who reigns and controls in an authoritarian way and without consulting anyone. A good leader is a servant.

The key elements of a servant leadership, in the style of the Good Shepherd are:

- Listen receptively and welcome what is being said without a judgmental attitude.
- Demonstrate acceptance and empathy toward others.
- Have insight and foresight. That is, a good servant leader needs to anticipate situations which might cause conflict. They have to plan well.
- Practice consciousness and perception.
- Be persuasive and have the capacity to communicate concepts.
- Building community in the workplace.
- Practice the art of contemplation. Be a prayerful person.
- Exercise a healing influence on individuals and institutions.
- Recognize that servant leadership starts with the desire to heal oneself.

Practices of inclusivity that foster valuing differences:

- Diversity training
- Equal opportunity employment
- Guidance, orientation, and mentorship
- Knowing cultures
- Conflict resolution skills
- Understanding different personalities and ways of life

FOR REFLECTION AND CONVERSATION

How do you practice participatory decision making? How do you engage and involve all the members of the group in the process of decision making?

Creating a personal mission statement:

- What do I seek in life?
- What do I value most?
- What are the talents I can place at the service of others?
- At the end of my life, what do I want to have accomplished?

Roles of a collaborative leadership:

- **Shared vision.** This allows for a common direction, common objectives and above personal interests. A common vision is like a magnet that draws people to gather and to focus.
- **Shared information.** Open communication allows for shared meanings. In listening, speaking and creating networks of a common language, the bonds of collaboration are strengthened.
- **Shared values.** Shared values are operating principles that inspire people to give the best of themselves. Groups with shared values advance and govern themselves.
- **Shared commitment.** A decentralized leadership distributes responsibilities. A team focus uses the creation of consensus and joint decision making in order to increase commitment.
- **Collective training and action.** The final result of a collaborative leadership is collective action centered on determined objectives. Having a vision, learning, acting and building community together fosters the sense of belonging to the group.

FOR REFLECTION AND CONVERSATION

How is collaborative leadership a reflection of solidarity? Is it difficult to work collaboratively? What are the most frequent obstacles? How could we overcome them?

PART FIVE

Final Prayer

Jesus, Good Shepherd, you gave your life freely without anyone demanding it from you in order that each one of us would share in your abundant life. Teach us not to cling to our own interests or to what we perceive as our own needs, but to find abundant life in sacrifice and self-giving of ourselves. Show us that by joining our hands together, we can build strength and power for good. Show us that having our heart close to that of our brothers and sisters multiplies our love and strength. Amen.

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