

Justice Jottings – July/August 2008

For: Bulletin inserts, Beginning a meeting, Small Faith Group Reflections, Faith Development, Seeds for sowing the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Topic: Call to Family, Community, and Participation

“[I]t is necessary that all participate, each according to his position and role, in promoting the common good. This obligation is inherent in the dignity of the human person.... As far as possible citizens should take an active part in public life.”

Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1913-1915

In the Catholic Tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue, and participation in the political process is a moral obligation.

Faithful Citizenship, #13

The preservation of freedom calls for the cultivation of virtue, self-discipline, sacrifice for the common good and a sense of responsibility towards the less fortunate. It also demands the courage to engage in civic life and to bring one's deepest beliefs and values to reasoned public debate.

*Pope Benedict XVI
April 16, 2008*

“In this statement, we bishops do not intend to tell Catholics for whom or against whom to vote. Our purpose is to help Catholics form their consciences in accordance with God's truth. We recognize that the responsibility to make choices in political life rests with each individual in light of a properly formed conscience, and that participation goes well beyond casting a vote in a particular election.”

Faithful Citizenship, # 7

Citizens, on the other hand, should remember that it is their right and duty, which is also to be recognized by the civil authority, to contribute to the true progress of their own community according to their ability. Especially in underdeveloped areas, where all resources must urgently be employed, those who hold back their unproductive resources or who deprive their community of the material or spiritual aid that it needs --saving the personal right of migration -- gravely endanger the common good.

The Church in the Modern World, #65

Justice is to be observed not merely in the distribution of wealth, but also in regard to the conditions under which men engage in productive activity. There is, in fact, an innate need of human nature requiring that men engaged in productive activity have an opportunity to assume responsibility and to perfect themselves by their efforts.

Mother and Teacher, #82

The nation's founders took daring steps to create structures of participation, mutual accountability, and widely distributed power to ensure the political rights and freedoms of all. We believe that similar steps are needed today to expand economic participation, broaden the sharing of economic power, and make economic decisions more accountable to the common good.

Economic Justice for All, #297

Individual citizens and intermediate groups are obliged to make their specific contributions to the common welfare. One of the chief consequences of this is that they must bring their own interests into harmony with the needs of the community, and must contribute their goods and their services as civil authorities have prescribed, in accord with the norms of justice and within the limits of their competence.

Peace on Earth, #53

It is in keeping with their dignity as persons that human beings should take an active part in government.

Peace on Earth, #73