



The Church's social teaching helps every Catholic to live a fully just life. The teaching involves a set of principles which are based on the Gospels, and which have been developed mainly over the last hundred years. This set of fact sheets will outline the basic principles and will give examples of how they can guide our lives and our action in the world.

### SOME USEFUL WEBSITES

Australian Catholic Social Justice Council  
[www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au)

Faith Doing Justice  
[www.faithdoingjustice.com.au](http://www.faithdoingjustice.com.au)

Office for Social Justice, Archdiocese of  
St Paul and Minneapolis  
[www.osjspm.org](http://www.osjspm.org)

\*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church  
[www.hobart.catholic.org.au](http://www.hobart.catholic.org.au)  
See link on left hand side under "Universal Church"

### CONTACT THE COMMISSION

Catholic Diocesan Centre  
35 Tower Road  
New Town  
GPO Box 62, Hobart, Tasmania, 7001  
phone (03) 6208 6271  
fax (03) 6208 6299  
email [tcjpc@aohtas.org](mailto:tcjpc@aohtas.org)  
visit [www.tasjustice.org.au](http://www.tasjustice.org.au)

We have a **small library of resource** material on Catholic Social Teaching and social justice issues. You are welcome to borrow from us.

We have a collection of brochures and flyers on various social justice issues for you to take away.

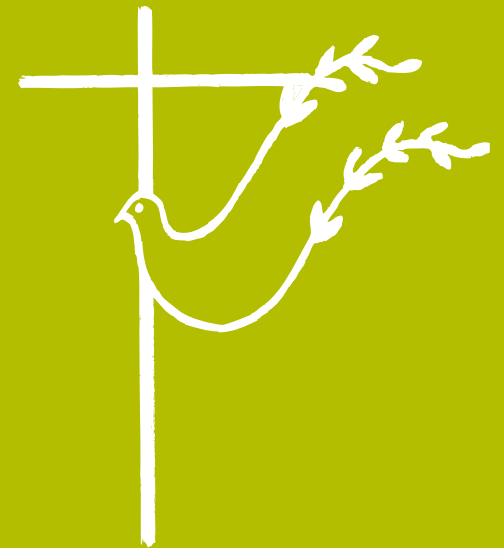
Ask us for information about web resources or personal contacts on particular issues.



TASMANIAN CATHOLIC  
JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION

4 principles that can  
change the world

## Solidarity



THE TASMANIAN CATHOLIC  
JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION

FACT SHEET 3

# Solidarity



Solidarity can be understood as a “firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good.” (John Paul II. Sollicitudo Rei Socialis) God shows us this in Jesus: “For God so loved the world, that He gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

When we think of solidarity, we think of God becoming human and dying on the Cross in solidarity with each and every member of the human race.

**“Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself, and became obedient to the point of death - even death on a cross.” (Philippians 2)**

Solidarity has both social and spiritual aspects which are essentially interlinked:

## SOCIAL

Because human beings are essentially social and live in relationship, it follows that our salvation is bound up with that of each other. John Paul II explains that solidarity is an authentic moral virtue, “not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress.” He goes on: “Solidarity helps us to see the ‘other’ – whether a person, people or nation – not just as some kind of instrument, with a work capacity and physical strength to be exploited at low cost and then discarded when no longer useful, but as our neighbour, a helper (cf Gn 2:18-20), to be a sharer, on a par with ourselves, in the banquet of life to which all are equally invited by God.”

**“Solidarity helps us to see the other”** Interdependence must be transformed into solidarity, grounded on the principle that the goods of creation are meant for all. Avoiding every type of imperialism,

the stronger nations must feel responsible for the other nations, based on the equality of all peoples and with respect for the differences.

(Sollicitudo Rei Socialis 39)

There is a clear relationship between the principles of solidarity and the common good, solidarity and equality between people and nations, between solidarity and peace in the world. (cf Compendium 194)

## SPIRITUAL

In Jesus we have our model of solidarity. “In Him it is always possible to recognise the living sign of that measureless and transcendent love of God-with-us, who takes on the infirmities of his people, walks with them, saves them and makes them one.” (Gaudium et Spes 32)



God’s triune intimate life” (Sollicitudo Rei Socialis 40)

At Vatican II, the bishops chose to begin their document on The Church in the Modern World with a description of the Church community that reflects the same kind of response:

Pope John Paul II said that “Solidarity is a Christian virtue. It seeks to go beyond itself to total gratuity, forgiveness, and reconciliation. It leads to a new vision of the unity of humankind, a reflection of

“The joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted, are the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well....That is why they cherish a feeling of deep solidarity with the human race and its history” (Gaudium et Spes, 1)

Like the Good Samaritan, we exercise solidarity in compassion, and also by forming community with those who are suffering or are different from us. It implies also a mutuality of respect in relationship and elimination of inequality.



## QUESTIONS



What does this mean for us in our daily lives?

- The Faith Doing Justice website has a story about solidarity with East Timor. Check out their questions and discussion starters. Look at the website of the Friends and Partners of East Timor [www.fpet.org.au](http://www.fpet.org.au)
- Following the Asian Tsunami, Pope John Paul II said: “In assuring my prayer for the victims of the catastrophe and for their families, I note favourably the solidarity efforts which are developing in every part of the world,” Can you think of other occasions when solidarity was shown in times of natural disaster or conflict? When have we failed?
- Does your parish or diocese have justice and peace groups?
- How do we live out solidarity in our own community – with Indigenous people, other faith groups and marginalised people?
- To find out more about refugees and the problems they face, visit the website of the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office [www.acmro.catholic.org.au](http://www.acmro.catholic.org.au)

