

# YEAR OF FAITH

## 15th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME | July 13-14, 2013

Almost 46 years ago to this day, the Beatles released “All you need is love” here in America. July 17th, 1967. It was a huge song that many people around the world still enjoy. The message in the song was simple: All you need is love. Beautiful, but maybe not.

If all the Beatles had was love – they would never have been able to play the guitar and none of us would ever know their names. They needed to have more than just love. . in truth they needed to have knowledge of music, of timing, of songwriting and inspiring others.

The word love, unfortunately, has been poured out of all its meaning . . I love chocolate. . .I love Almighty God. I love a hot shower. I love peace. I love my dog. I love (insert your own example)

Love. . .needs something more, and you already know what that is. Many of you will remember from their wedding the reading from St. Paul – “Love is patient. Love is kind. It is not jealous.” St. Paul is describing love and puts it plainly – “Love rejoices with the truth.”

Truth.

This brings us to today’s gospel and our catechetical topic for this Sunday in the year of faith: Catholic Social teaching.

The question that prompted the parable of the Good Samaritan was from a man who wanted answers. He wanted to know the truth – what must I do to go to heaven? Who is my neighbor?

Catholic social teaching reminds us of our commitments and responsibilities as individuals and communities to each other, to nature, and to Almighty God. The entire social teaching is informed by Charity and truth – the Charity and Truth we’ve come to know in Jesus.

See, love alone can spoil into emotionalism, sentimentality. It can become shallow and self-centered. Pope Benedict reminds us, “In a culture without truth, this is the fatal risk facing love. It falls prey to contingent subjective emotions and opinions, the word “love” is abused and distorted, to the point where it comes to mean the opposite.” (Caritas in Veritate 2)

But truth -truth keeps love rightly ordered towards the other as regards as to who they are, in right proportion, and in the real world. It also keeps us – as people of faith – from simply “loving God” and thinking that’s enough. Love in truth – reminds us that we can’t love a God we can’t see if we fail to love the neighbor we do see.

Love and truth flow through the person of the good Samaritan. Who is his neighbor? Truth keeps from letting him define his neighbor as just someone he’s comfortable with or makes him feel good– someone of his own race, gender, political affiliation, someone he finds attractive . . .what if the

wounded person was a Yankee fan. . . surely love wouldn't demand he stop then would it? . . .but love and truth, says yes.. even poor, vulnerable Yankee fans must be cared for.

There are 7 principles of Catholic social teaching. As principles they don't tell us what to do in a specific circumstances for the Church doesn't have all practical wisdom. But what the Church does offer are principles that can help to guide us in finding those practical solutions in ways that respect the truth and dignity of who we are as people, and that's the first principle: Every person is sacred – so sacred, so awesome that even the possibility of life compels us to stand against any and all actions that would attack human dignity. Abortion is the most obvious. Cloning – trying to genetically copy a person or create someone outside of the loving embrace of a mom and dad; embryonic stem cell harvesting – killing a person so you can have their stem cells. The death penalty... intentionally ending a human life when that person could repent and our country is more than capable of securing that individual and society for life. All those are wrong for crossing a line that shouldn't be crossed.

The dignity of every human being – was revealed and ratified in Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father. . . who for us men and our salvation came down from Heaven and by the power of the Holy Spirit was born of the Virgin Mary and became man. One of us.

That man, Jesus Christ, gave us the parable we heard today.

The Good Samaritan disposed his blessings and resources towards the most vulnerable – He had a preferential option toward the poor and wounded man. The Samaritan acted out of solidarity. These are two additional principles of Catholic social teaching. We have a preferential option for the poor. Jesus himself chose to save us from the greatest of poverties – sin and death. But he didn't stop there. He fed the hungry, cured the sick, and gave sight to the blind.

We too are called into solidarity – to love and see each other as brothers and sisters, sons and daughters of God. For He will not ask us if we were good Americans, when we die for example, asking if we only cared for those who were here legally. But rather - how have we treated his little ones? Jesus says, "What you do for the least you do for me."

The principles of Catholic social teaching can be found in the Catechism, online, and operative in every Catholic hospital, school, parish mission, clinic, and agency of the Church around the world. They're also alive in the mind and hearts of Catholic employers and employees, of moms and dads that bring their kids to a soup kitchen, the march for life - or a nursing home to spend time visiting those too easily forgotten.

The love behind the principles - behind the founding of this whole Catholic Church- the love that came to earth and poured out himself on that cross until nothing was left ungiven –is given to us today at this altar in truth so that, strengthened by this love, we can go and do likewise.