

Journey of Faith



Caring for God's Community

"I get that it's wrong if you're mean to people," said Tanya, "but how can you hurt or help people you've never even seen?"

"Jesus told a story about that," Mrs. Evans replied. "You can help everyone, even people you've never met, just by the way you live your life."





What do you think Mrs. Evans means?

Lazarus and the Rich Man

Once there was a rich man who wore expensive clothes and ate the best food every day. A beggar named Lazarus came to the rich man's house. Lazarus was so hungry he would have eaten the scraps from the rich man's table and been happy. But Lazarus' body was covered with sores, and he wasn't the kind of guest the rich man liked. So the rich man ignored him.

When Lazarus died, the angels took him to a place of honor next to Abraham in heaven. When the rich man died, he suffered terribly. When he saw Abraham and Lazarus, the rich man begged, "Have pity on me! Send Lazarus to give me just a drop of water! I'm burning up in this fire!"

Abraham answered, "Remember that while you lived, you had everything good and more than what you needed. Lazarus was sick, starving, and alone. You refused to help him. You ignored his pain. Now he is happy with God, and you are in pain."

Adapted from Luke 16:19–25



What can we learn from the story of Lazarus and the rich man?

God Asks Us to Care

The Church remembers that Jesus said, "The Lord has sent me to announce freedom for prisoners, to give sight to the blind, and to end everyone's suffering" (adapted from Luke 4:18).

Like Jesus, the Church cares when people are hungry, cold, or in pain. It cares when people are imprisoned or abused. When Church leaders hear about these injustices, they tell the world that these things are wrong and that it is up to us to stop them.

Jesus has a special love for the poor, needy, and suffering. Through his example and teachings, Jesus helps us understand why we have to care about the poor and suffering.



Here are three ways you can help:

1. Share what you have.

Like the five loaves and two fish discussed in Matthew 14:15–20, Mark 6:34–44, and Luke 9:12–17, God provides more than enough. It is up to us to pass on the extra and make sure people don't go without the things they need. We can share

SHARE

more than just our stuff, too. We can share what we know by telling others

about God or teaching someone something we're really good at. We can share our joy by being nice to everyone.

2. Help others all you can.

When Jesus washed his apostles' feet, he told them to do as he had done. His words and example tell us that our job as Christians is to serve others. He said, "Whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave" (Matthew 20:26–27). When we know someone is in need, Jesus wants us to help.

HELP

3. Stand up for what's right.

Whenever Jesus saw injustice, he stood firmly against it. At the Temple, he chased out the moneychangers who were getting rich by cheating people. He spoke against the teachers and leaders

who were mixing up God's laws. He told people

STAND UP FOR WHAT'S RIGHT

about their sins and helped them live more like him.

The pope and bishops have always spoken out against injustices. These are just some of the injustices we are asked to help make right.

The Economy

Everyone needs, and has the right to have, food, clothing, shelter, rest, medical care, education, and employment. The Church believes every country should make sure no person is denied these rights. Your parents or other adults might vote for laws that help people, and when you are old enough you can, too. But you can still do things now like sharing what you have or donating part of your allowance.

Family Life

The family is God's way of making sure that all children are loved and cared for. The Church believes that every country should support the family's right to grow and live in peace and safety and to pass on the faith and follow God.



Civil Rights

All people deserve to be treated equally. Laws should be written for the common good and enforced fairly. People should not be treated differently because of their appearance, age, gender, ability, or religion.



What are some things you can do to stand up for people who are in need or treated unfairly?



HOW CAN WE HELP?

Match the action to the way it helps people.

Your best friend really wants to get a part in the school play. You spend time helping him or her practice after school.

Sharing what we have

Your friends are talking about lying to their parents and sneaking into a movie and they want you to come. You decline.

Standing up for what's right

You did a lot of extra chores this week so your dad gives you extra allowance! You want to spend it all, but instead you put some of it in the collection basket at church.

Helping others

You know your mom is really busy, so you do dishes after dinner without being asked.

You overhear someone saying something mean and untrue about another person. You tell them that's wrong and they shouldn't spread rumors.

You notice a student in your class never has lunch to eat at lunchtime. You decide to pack a second sandwich to give to them at lunch.

In Short



- The foundations of Church teaching on social justice help all people.
- There are seven themes of Catholic social teaching.
- Christians stand up for the poor and vulnerable.

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