

Good evening, and thank you all for joining. Tonight, I'll be discussing the Church's Seven Principles of Social Teaching. They'll all be viewed in light of my experiences with the poor in Haiti.

In 1998, The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops released a document called "Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions." They claimed that Catholic Social teaching is a central and essential element of our faith. Facing a new millennium, the bishops felt the need to communicate those basic principles upon which Catholic Social Doctrine had blossomed over the course of the past century in numerous encyclicals. They named seven:

First and foremost, that basic principle from which all the others flow,
The Life and Dignity of the Human Person

Following from that first principle are the other six...

A Call to Family, Community, and Participation

Rights and Responsibilities

Solidarity

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

and

Care for God's Creation

Our understanding has been blessed by these basic principles. They are testament to why we see the Church as our Teacher and Guide in an often confusing and messy world.

In 2005, I was blessed to experience that confusing and messy world very really for nine months in Haiti; but more importantly, I experienced Christ in the poor day after day for those nine months, living and working among them. I went down with a missionary order called the Xaverian Brothers, and while there I divided my time working at a clinic of the Missionaries of Charity and an orphanage called Maison Fortune. It was an incredible year of learning and growth. I want to communicate how the Haitian people helped me to understand these seven basic principles of social justice; thus the format of this talk will be as follows. For each principle, Ill share a story which helped me to realize the wisdom inherent in it; as you re-experience each story with me, I hope the meaning of those principles breaks forth to you through those who touched my life so deeply.

The Life and Dignity of the Human Person

It was within the first few days of arriving in Hinche, the town in which I worked, that I decided to go to the Azil. The roads of the town were still pretty unfamiliar to me, and I took a few wrong turns, but eventually I found its high walls, following them around the complex to a steel door above which read, Missionaries of Charity. I knocked and a middle aged Haitian man opened the door slightly, and seeing my face opened the heavy steel door, welcoming me in, and closing it swiftly behind me...apparently I wasn't the first young white kid with khakis and a backpack to show up there...you may as well have written "idealist" on my forehead.

Relative to the dusty streets blackened with charcoal and soot, the courtyard was an oasis, a bright white statue of Jesus prominent at the center. The doorman told me to wait. A few minutes later, a woman draped in the familiar white and blue robes of Mother Teresa came out to greet me. She

introduced herself as Sr. Leah...she was one of the prettiest nuns I've ever seen...a pretty young Indian woman, but it wasn't just that...it was her smile...she literally exuded the joy of the Holy Spirit. And when this pretty young thing told me she was in charge of this complex, you could have scooped my jaw off the floor...not only did she have the joy of the Holy Spirit, but also the strength. She asked me to take a tour of the complex with her, so I followed.

We first went to the Men's section. We passed through two rooms filled with beds...most were occupied. The hospital scrubs that the men wore draped about their skinny frames, and I was struck by the far away look that so many of them had, especially the younger ones. Then Sr. Leah explained to me that the young men to my left were infected with Tuberculosis and AIDS...some of them wouldn't live much longer, and then I knew what that far away look was.

We kept walking, one bed with a man reaching out to me grasping his stomach, another bed, a man with no legs. Then the bathrooms of the ward, the smell hit me like a smack in the face...we exited and I was happy to be in the fresh air of the courtyard, out of that place of sickness and next to the bright white statue of Jesus.

Sr. Leah, said, "there's more we need to see." She brought me up the stairs, away from the safety of the courtyard, and as we went up, I could hear the cry of babies. I wasn't prepared for what I saw next. The sight of old men lying on their deathbeds is one thing, but the sight of malnourished infants in their cribs is another. Little children with twigs for arms and swollen bellies, one with twisted limbs, and another covered with a skin infection. Two rooms full of cribs, each cradling one who could not comprehend their pain. These rooms were senseless. I stayed and took in the sight. Sr. Leah then

showed me the rest of the complex and brought me back to the courtyard and my bright white statue of Jesus. The bright white statue struck me; it seemed out of place amidst death. I thanked her for the tour and promised to come back.

I did come back...the next day. I asked what I could do. Sr. Leah told me to go out to the balcony, take a razor, and begin shaving the old men. I went out to the balcony and saw about thirty scruffy old men sitting complacently in the shade. And so I began shaving them that morning. I finished just before evening, a whole day shaving old men...and I was exhausted. When I finished, Sr. Leah told me it was time for prayer. I went into the chapel and there in the pews, I saw those men looking dapper and clean shaven. The sign of peace came and they all turned to me, with a handshake, a big smile, and thanks...mesi, mesi, blan. And then we sang together.

It took me a few days to go back to the infant room, but I did. And again, it was just as painful to see. I asked what I could do. It was feeding time, so the nursemaid handed me a spoon and a bowl of mashed rice and beans; she told me to begin feeding the children. I went around to the cribs...some cried, some smiled, but they all ate. I could see that as heartbreaking as this room was, these children were being given the gift of life with each spoonful. They weren't dying...they were being brought back to health. We finished feeding and I asked what else I could do. Bad idea...the nursemaid tossed me a diaper. Feed forty five infants and you've just set a time-bomb. As gross as it was, it was a joy. And I saw that these women, these Haitian nursemaids were taking care of each of these children as if they were their own.

I walked back out to the courtyard, back to the fresh air and the bright white statue of Jesus. Remembering the old men singing in the chapel, clean

shaven, smiling...mesi blan, mesi blan...remembering the nursemaids singing their Haitian lullabies to the infants, remembering those little ones in their cribs, some smiling, some crying, but all alive...I realized that this was not a place of death, but a place of life. That statue of Christ had its proper place, in the center of it all.

Think of the context in which the Second Vatican Council convened and issued *Gaudium et Spes*. The world had recently survived two world wars and undergone a depression; it had witnessed the horrors of the holocaust; and it was undergoing the most tense moments of the cold war...a very uncertain time indeed. These events shook the world to its core that it was granted new perspective on the dignity of the human person.

What is a human being? The Council dedicated the first chapter of this important document, *Gaudium et Spes*, to the dignity of the human being. The council claims humans are beings composed of body and soul, both aspects deemed good by the Creator. Mankind has also been endowed with intellect, conscience, and freedom and is thus created in the image of God. Our intellect transcends the material, and participates in the mind of God through Wisdom. Our conscience is that innate desire to do good and avoid evil; it is a drive toward union with God. It calls us to conform our intellect more fully to the mind of God. Our freedom allows us to move toward that goodness. The root reason for human dignity lies in this call to communion with God. All human beings participate in this call because of their intellect, conscience, and freedom, and so all human beings are endowed with this dignity. God sent his Son for us to realize that fullness, which has been marred by sin, once again; Christ died and rose for all that we might realize our full dignity, which is communion with God.

Isn't this wonderful. We all participate in this love story, which is God's passion for us. The more we come to know our own dignity, through Jesus Christ, don't we realize more and more how special we are. We come to know our immense worth. This is the dignity inherent to us as creatures of God. Realize that all men and women, all children, all senior citizens, all of the unborn participate in this love story too. We are all precious in the eyes of the Lord, therefore we should all be precious in the eyes of each other. This means that we should love all, from the time our growth is ordered toward our fullness in the womb to the time that the Lord calls us to full communion with Him after death.

I witnessed those holy women, those Missionaries of Charity, dedicate themselves to others day in and day out. They knew their dignity as daughters of God; they showed others their dignity by treating them with the love of God, from the youngest infant howling in his crib, to the oldest gentleman dying on his bed.

A Call to Family, Community, and Participation

I went to Haiti with two other volunteers, Ryan and Greg. We became pretty close over the nine months we were together. We did a lot of stuff together...worked, ate, hiked, relaxed, comiserated...we shared in the joys and struggles of the volunteer experience. Ryan and I walked the three mile road into town together often. One day we noticed a young boy following us back to our house. We gave him some change and he ran off. Day after day, he would follow us a bit further, we'd give him change, and he'd run off. He told us his name was Chelton. One day I came back to the house to find Chelton in our yard rambling frantically to Ryan in some hybrid of Spanish and Kreyol...and the kicker...no pants. I thought "this ought to be

good,” so I went up to the two with an amused look on my face, and Ryan turns to me and says, “I have no idea what he’s saying.”

Between the two of us, we eventually figured out how the boy had wound up pantless. Chelton and his best friend were playing down by our yard when his friend got his own pants soaking wet. Like a good friend, Chelton offered the other his own dry pants...now Ive heard of giving someone the shirt off your back, but this was true generosity. Chelton, the good friend, was not repaid in kind, and his so-called friend ran off with both pairs of pants. Needless to say, Chelton found a special place in our hearts that day. We eventually learned that he lived on the streets, his mother could not afford to take care of him, so she sent him away to fend for himself. That’s how we met him. When he would follow us home now, however, we knew when he ran off, he would be spending the night on a corner somewhere. We opened our door to him for a week, and let him sleep on a cot we had set up for him.

We talked to Jean Louis, the director of the orphanage, to see if he had a place for Chelton. Jean Louis wanted to speak with him first, so he took him aside. What Jean Louis relayed to us will always stay with me. He was asking him questions to find out where he came from, what his family situation was, all those necessary questions. He asked him who his father was. Jean Louis said Chelton told him he had three fathers. At that point, I got angry, thinking, “the boy doesn’t even know who his father is, how many he’s got...his mother’s probably had guys in and out his whole life...” Jean Louis continued... “Chelton said he had three fathers... “Ryan, Kevin, and Greg.”

What I learned from Chelton is that humans are social beings. We require relationships to function. As Thomas Merton claimed, “No man is an island.” Our decisions will affect others for the good or for the bad; this places a great deal of importance on all choices that we make, a great responsibility. We are called to participate in community that all might advance; this often requires sacrifice.

The most basic unit of community, of society, is the family. God himself, the Trinity in whom we were created, is testament to this. Thus proper understanding of the family as that unit which exists one member for the others...this should be the model by which we live our lives in community. As it becomes a model by which we base our decisions, the life of the family should be promoted and enabled at all times. This includes a just wage by which we might raise a family. If this unit breaks down, then we lose our most basic model of love by which we conduct ourselves in community. Chelton, by calling Greg, Ryan, and I his fathers, showed me that we are to love all because we are one family; after all, we are all children of God.

Rights and Responsibilities

Jean Louis LeFort is one of the most mild mannered, easy going men I've ever met. I always enjoyed sharing a beer with him, sitting in front of a shanty bar a block away from the orphanage after a day's work...nothing had to be said, he just wanted to sit back and enjoy a quiet time at rest. He earned that time, because the rest of the day, he was busy running the orphanage, being a father to eighty five boys.

He shared his story with me. He had been a hard worker in school and earned very good grades in secondary school...high enough that he caught the eye of the Xaverian Brothers, an order dedicated to education and

missionary work. They promised to fund Jean Louis college education if he promised to return to Haiti and help his country pull itself from the mess it was in. He promised and so the Xaverians brought him to the States and sent him to Virginia Tech. There, he studied agriculture thinking that he would help others by helping them to farm their land. As promised, he came back to Haiti. He began using the education he gained as he could, his ability to speak English got him a job as a translator for the UN. Going around with UN officials, he was constantly distracted by the plight of the street boys in Haiti.

A woman approached Jean Louis and told him her sister had died leaving her infant son Claudinel...the woman simply could not afford to care for her own seven children and the infant. It was then that Jean Louis decided to act...he began caring for Claudinel and three of the woman's children. He then knew how he would fulfill his responsibility...he would start an orphanage. Not exactly along the lines of agriculture, but it certainly fulfilled his promise to help those in need. Of course, he didn't only gain an education while in Virginia, but he also built relationships.

In 2000, he began his project with the help of the Richmond diocese. The orphanage started as it could...Jean Louis took in the four boys, and cared for them in a one room house. In eight years, the orphanage has grown from four boys in one room to one hundred boys in multiple dormitory buildings; the orphanage has also become a school to provide even more the best elementary education in the town...construction has also begun on a girl's orphanage which will accommodate a like number of girls.

Rights are those powers we have, to do that which is necessary for achieving the end or purpose for which we are destined as rational and free

persons...that is union with God...this is our dignity. Furthermore, each individual human is truly a person, endowed with intelligence and free will; all have universal and inviolable rights and duties that flow as a direct consequence from their nature as beings created by God.

In 1963, John XIII issued *Pacem in Terris*, listing those rights that all human beings should have.

All have the right to live; to bodily integrity to means for proper development of life (food, clothing, shelter, medical care, *rest*, and necessary social services; we should be looked after in the event of ill-health, disability, widowhood, old age, enforced unemployment or whenever through no fault of our own, we are deprived of the means of livelihood.

All have the right to be respected, to our good name, to freedom of speech and pursuit of our own profession.

All have the right to an education, benefits of a culture; a system should have in place the opportunities for us to receive advanced studies and positions that allow us to use our natural talent and acquired skills

All have the right to worship God in accordance with our own conscience

All have the right to choose our own state of life – marriage or religious (No. 16)

All are afforded the opportunity to work and allowed to exercise personal initiative

All have the right to own property and produce goods with that property, though this entails a social obligation as well.

All have the right to emigrate and immigrate.

All have the right to take action in public life.

It is not only our responsibility to help ensure that these are met for all individuals, but also the state's responsibility to ensure that all of these rights are met without conflicting with the rights of another, to ensure their safeguarding, and to provide those things necessary for the human being to develop as one created by and destined for God.

Jean Louis understands these rights and he understands his responsibility to his fellow human beings, to these children. Because he understands, these faces are smiling and alive.

Solidarity

It always strikes me the lessons that others can teach you just by being there with you. Nothing needs to be said; it's the simple act of relationship that teaches. This is solidarity.

I was at the Azil, that's the complex run by the Missionaries of Charity, and I was working that day in the Men's quarters. One of the men reached out to me from his bed as I passed by; he began grimacing and stroking his torso. He was in pain and he wanted me to give him a massage where it hurt. I sat next to him on the bed and his pain was rather low on his abdomen, above the groin. I began massaging, trying to ease the pain that he was feeling. Flesh on flesh in very intimate regions. Sitting there on the bed with him, I realized that this was as intimate as I had ever been with another person. As I was discerning the priesthood at the time, it dawned on me that should I choose celibacy, this was as intimate as I would be with anyone.

He had his shirt off and as I kneaded, I looked at his wasted frame, his stringy arms, his loose skin, and then my eyes fell upon his ribs, and that's when it hit me...I had seen those protruding ribs on every crucifix that I've looked upon. My eyes moved to his face, and he stared directly into my

eyes and in his gaze, I saw Christ. It was as intimate as I had been with anyone, and it was Christ with whom I was being intimate. Should I choose celibacy, it is Christ who will be my lover; and in that moment, celibacy made sense to me.

Believe me, when the loneliness of celibacy rears its head, it is to that moment that I return. A gift granted to me by one who simply asked me to sit with him and relieve some of his pain. Perhaps that man only received from me a temporary relief of pain, perhaps more; but either way, at that moment, we were Christ to each other. It is never simply about what I have done for another, or what they have done for me, but what we have done for each other and together. That is the grace shared in presence, in relationship, in solidarity.

The Second Vatican Council emphasized the truly universal aspect of our Church. It is not just a European Church, but one that expands the globe. By this heightened awareness, mother Church became truly maternal in her concern for those of her children who were being neglected...and it was in these places, Africa, South America, India, that the Church was growing and finding new life. She knew her responsibility. Pope Paul VI responded by releasing *Populorum Progressio* in 1967, and in this document named solidarity as that virtue necessary for a world divided into first, second, and third world nations.

Ours is a global community and interdependence is a growing reality; that the decisions of one effect the whole. The proper response to interdependence is the virtue of solidarity. Solidarity, as a virtue, is a firm and pervading determination to commit oneself to the common good because ultimately each is responsible for all.

Pope John Paul II emphasized and expanded this idea on the 20th anniversary of *Populorum Progressio*, with *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*. He claimed that this development for which we are all responsible is not simply material, but requires the integral development of the person: the material, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual needs of the individual must be met. In a later document, *Centesimus Annus*, he claimed that in this integral development there are those who are underdeveloped, but also those who are superdeveloped.

We Americans are superdeveloped to the point that our material needs and expectations outweigh our emotional and spiritual needs. It is relationship with the poor, solidarity with them, that will contribute to our own development, that our priorities might be realigned. Thus, we realize the wealth of graces that the poor can contribute to our own development, as we bless them with our own presence and dedication. This is the beauty of solidarity...that we might all grow toward God, toward our dignity, together; I learned this very really one day sitting on a stranger's bed.

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

It was my birthday. Away from the bulk of my family and friends, it was a day that I felt especially lonely in Haiti. After a days work, I was tired and ready to get back to the house. I made the trek back to Pondiassou, my village, and as I was entering the village, one of the local families called my name. Like all of the families, they were scraping together whatever living they could...when you've got seven children that becomes pretty difficult. Bon Fet! Happy Birthday...somehow they had found out. They invited me to sit with them in front of their shack, and we talked. Two of the younger children entertained me, while the youngest observed everything sheepishly

from the corner. Eventually, I was invited in. I was given a place of honor at the table, and the eldest daughter brought me a huge bowl of rice and sauce that the mother had prepared for me. What they gave me to eat was probably more than the seven children had eaten all day. I was their guest and they wanted to show their appreciation for me joining them on my birthday. This is the incredible selfless generosity that I encountered from these people everyday.

It struck me that those who are in grave need, would give to one who is not in want. Yet, those of us who are not in want, would hold back from giving to one in need. When the poor cannot sustain themselves, they have no obligation to us. We in our surplus, however, have an obligation to help those in need. This is what we call “Preferential option for the poor.”

In his document *Centessimus Annus*, John Paul II claims that many goals of prior encyclicals have not yet been achieved in many nations: objectives include a sufficient wage for the support of the family, social insurance for old age and unemployment, and adequate protection for the conditions of employment. More developed nations have the responsibility of helping underdeveloped nations to achieve these goals. This is the “preferential option for the poor.”

He claimed that more and more, ownership is being redefined as not only land and material commodity, but skill and technology as well. Thus the decisive factor in production is becoming less land and capital, and more the person: his knowledge.

On the international level, there is a vast divide in terms of knowledge and technology, to the point that it is impossible for underdeveloped nations to advance themselves.

In such a context, justice calls for more than material aid, but also training on the individual level and sustainable development on the international level.

In such a way, we who have had those material needs met, are not only providing the material needs themselves, but the ability for those who are in need to provide for themselves. This is a fuller dignity that we may help them achieve.

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

The market was one of my favorite places to go. There was always so much activity. The “ti machan,” the women of the market, lined the streets with their produce sprawled out in front of them. Men weaved in and out of the pedestrians carting their wheelbarrows full of fresh-baked bread. Moving from the streets to the canopied section, things became even more chaotic amidst the narrow pathways of the indoor market. To your right, butchered goats and pigs amidst pulsating swarms of flies; to your left, a vender displaying brightly colored materials. All the while, trying to find your way amidst the pathways while ducking to avoid low lying canopies. It was great...I always thought while I was there...This is Haiti.

Everyday, I would walk by the same people, at their same kiosks; the same ti machan at their same corner. Day in and day out, they came and sat, hoping to sell enough to make some kind of profit that day. The average income of the Haitian is \$1 a day. While, its true, the price of goods is cheaper in Haiti...I assure you that this miniscule amount is in no way able to support the *needs* of a family. By needs, I am not speaking only of food and shelter, but also the education of the children, and also the ability to save, that one

might feel secure. Without these, education and security, one can have no hope for the future.

It always amazed me to see these people at the market...I passed the same vendors in the same kiosks, the same “ti machan” on the same corner; they came day in and day out for such a miniscule profit, one dollar. But, when one is forced to live for survival one day to the next, what else can be done. With no hope for the future, I know that I too, would find myself on the same street corner day in and day out.

The plight of workers and the rising threat of Socialism spurred Leo XIII to issue the Church’s first social encyclical in 1891, *Rerum Novarum*.

Response to this plight was the seed that sprouted into the Church’s bountiful Social doctrine that we celebrate today. It is considered the first social doctrine of the Church. In it, Leo claims that there is a necessary aspect of work...work is necessary to support the worker’s life. Because it is *necessary*, he states, “there is always underlying such agreements between workers and employers, an element of natural justice, and one greater and more ancient than the free consent of contracting parties, namely, that the wage shall not be less than enough to support a worker and his family.”

Thus, in this encyclical, the criteria for a just wage first begin to find expression...that it be enough to support the worker and his family. One dollar a day is simply not enough to do that.

Individual contracts between workers and employers is not the major problem we face in Haiti however. It is that atmosphere of hopelessness in which such an unjust wage might become the standard. It is the result of liberal economic theory, capitalism unchecked. On the fortieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, Pius XI issued *Quadregesimo Anno*, addressing this

problem of liberal economic theory. He states: “economic dictatorship which has recently displaced free competition...is a headstrong power and a violent energy that, to benefit people, needs to be strongly curbed and wisely ruled. But it cannot curb and rule itself. Loftier and nobler principles--social justice and social charity--must, therefore, be sought whereby this dictatorship may be governed firmly and fully.”

It could be “strongly curved and wisely ruled” through cooperation of the state, worker organizations, and employers in assuring a just wage.

In *Populorum Progressio*, issued in 1967, Pius VI realized that what applies to individuals also applies to nations, thus all trade decisions and national policies must have the long term goal of just balance, rather than the exploitation or even dismissal of underdeveloped nations. It is our responsibility to help elect leaders who share this same vision.

Care for God’s Creation

To me, Haiti is a fallen garden of Eden. All around one perceives beauty, yet all too quickly, one is reminded of the sins that have been committed against that earth. The first time I flew to Haiti, from above I was struck by the beauty of the imposing mountains, by their rippled surface. As I drove through them the following day however, I was cursing them. The road from Port-au-Prince to Hinche is only about 70 miles; the bumpy ride through those mountains, however, takes all day...and it’s a painful day when your butt isn’t used to that much bouncing. That drive is an experience everyone should have.

There are very few paved roads in Haiti. You get used to it though; before I knew it, I was bounding down the dirt roads crammed in the back of a pick-up truck with 15 Haitians on a pretty regular basis, and that’s no cushy

seat...that's a plank of wood, a steel bar, or if your lucky, the top of the cab you're sitting on...don't tell my mom!

There are few paved roads in Haiti because of the erosion that takes place. The land erodes rapidly because it has been so heavily deforested. This occurred because those who were looking for a quick profit stripped the land bare to produce charcoal. Now, such basic infrastructure as roads cannot be sustained because of the devastating effect that this has had on the land. Agriculture, too, has suffered immensely from the deforestation of Haiti. The land simply cannot support the eight million inhabitants that live upon it. This has made Haiti's economy dependent on the foreign market. Fluctuations in the world market, then, affect Haiti drastically. If you thought the oil crisis has affected us badly, imagine if the price of food, which you couldn't afford to begin with, suddenly doubled. If you're in the market, you'll see little brown cakes. Made out of dirt, they're calcium is typically used to help digestion. Since the price of food has doubled, I've read that many Haitians have turned to these dirt cakes for their sustenance. The soil won't produce, and so many have been forced to eat the soil itself.

The earth was given to human beings for the sustenance of all inhabitants, excluding no one, to satisfy human needs! This is a principle called the universal destination of the earth's goods. The source of all that is good is God, who created man and earth, giving the earth to man so that he might have dominion over it by his works and enjoy its fruits. "The principle of the universal destination of goods is an invitation to develop an economic vision inspired by moral values that permit people not to lose sight of the origin or purpose of these goods, so as to bring about a world of fairness and

solidarity, in which the creation of wealth can take on a positive function." Thus, in an ideal world the bounty which God provides may be had by all. Haiti is an example of what happens when we lose sight of that ideal, when we lose sight of the origin and purpose of creation. We are its stewards. God provided, and we are to ensure that all are provided for.

Conclusion

These are the seven basic principles of Catholic Social teaching...

The Life and Dignity of the Human Person

A Call to Family, Community, and Participation

Rights and Responsibilities

Solidarity

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

and

Care for God's Creation

We may disagree as to the best way to realize these ideals; that's expected...it's a confusing and very complicated world. Yet as Catholics we are all called to hold these ideals. They are *basic* principles that we are to use as guides for right and wrong thought, decision, and action. In our hearts, we know them to be true. As children of God, we know our own dignity before him who calls us precious. As communal beings, we recognize the dignity of others as we recognize our own dignity. This common dignity carries with it particular rights to which we are all entitled; what is more, we all have the responsibility to respect those rights in our fellow human being. It is recognition of our interdependence and the rights

inherent to us which enables the virtue of solidarity to flourish amidst all of humankind. This will express itself when the poor are given priority, when the rights of workers are respected, and when work comes to its full dignity, that all of God's creation might be tended properly and reach those in need.

We know these things to be true; we know them to be right, because by our dignity we participate in the wisdom of God and are called to the goodness inherent in these seven principles. Let us now choose to realize this goodness by making Christ present to the poor in solidarity; let us usher in his kingdom through our actions; in so doing, let us come to the communion with God which is our dignity and our destiny.

Peace to you all and thank you for listening.