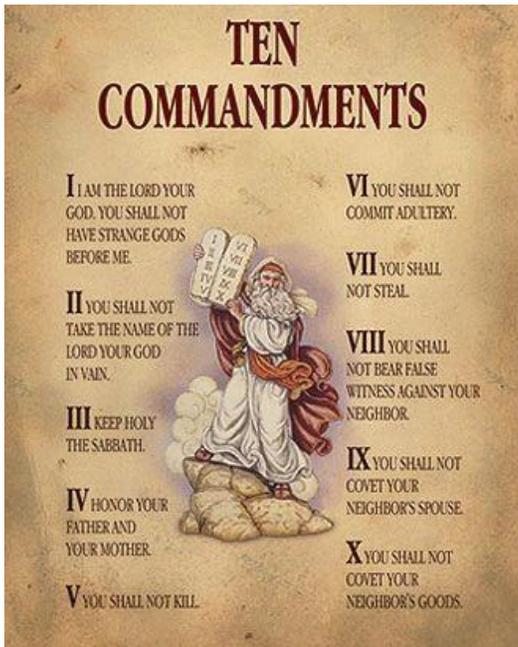


The Ten Commandments 7-10



The Seventh Commandment

DO NOT STEAL – ACT JUSTLY

RESPECT PEOPLE AND THEIR POSSESSIONS

The seventh Commandment forbids theft. Theft is the usurpation of another's goods against the reasonable will of the owner. . . . Every manner of taking and using another's property unjustly is contrary to the seventh commandment. The injustice committed requires reparation. Commutative justice requires the restitution of stolen goods. —CCC, nos. 2453-2454

The Seventh Commandment forbids stealing or theft, which involves taking someone's money or property "against the reasonable will of the owner." Theft includes not only robbery but also actions such as embezzlement, computer theft, counterfeit money, fraud, identity theft, copyright violations (including pirating things such as music or computer software), and mail scams.

To keep this Commandment, we need to acquire the virtues of moderation in our possessions, justice in our treatment of others, respect for their human dignity, and solidarity with all peoples. Moderation curbs our attachment to worldly goods and restrains our appetite for consumerism. Justice helps us respect our neighbor's rights and be interested in their human well-being. Solidarity opens our hearts to identifying with the whole human family, reminding us of our common humanity.

We should not steal from each other, pay unfair salaries, cheat in business, or exploit people's weaknesses to make money. Promises should be kept and contracts honored to the extent that the issues are morally just (cf. CCC, no. 2410). We need to safeguard property rights, pay our debts, and fulfill obligations freely incurred. The government has the right and duty to safeguard legitimate ownership of money and property and to protect people from robbery and injury.

PRACTICE THE CHURCH'S SOCIAL TEACHINGS

Man is himself the author, center, and goal of all economic and social life. The decisive point of the social question is that goods created by God for everyone should in fact reach everyone in accordance with justice and with the help of charity. —CCC, no. 2459

For over a century, the Church, especially through the teaching of the popes, has given special attention to the development of her social doctrine. The Church's social doctrine is related to the understanding of what it means to be a human being, to the origin of human dignity, to the problem of the Fall, and to the promise of Redemption. We are seriously weakened by Original Sin and actual sin but are redeemed by Christ's saving death and Resurrection with its gift of divine life, a source of moral strength (cf. CCC, nos. 355-431).

The Church's social doctrine also relates to an understanding of participation in social life, the role of authority, the importance of the common good, natural law, social justice, and human solidarity (cf. CCC, nos. 1897-1948). Finally, there is the Seventh Commandment, which includes consideration of the relationship between the economy and social justice, the importance of solidarity among nations, and a preferential love for the poor (cf. CCC, nos. 2401-2463).

Catholic social teaching embraces both the Church's perennial concern for people's social needs since New Testament times as well as an explicit social doctrine.

The Church makes a judgment about economic and social matters when the fundamental rights of the person or the salvation of souls requires it. She is concerned with the temporal common good of men because they are ordered to the sovereign Good, their ultimate end. (CCC, no. 2458)

The central focus of the Church's social teaching is justice for all, especially for the helpless and the poor. It involves the removal of the symptoms and causes of poverty and injustice.

The Church's social doctrine addresses a wide range of issues that include the dignity of work, the need of workers to receive a salary that will enable them to care for their families, a safe working environment, and the responsibility of the state for areas such as a stable currency, public services, and protecting personal freedom and private property. Church teaching also speaks to the need of business enterprises to consider the good of the employees, not just the profit motive. Wage earners should be able to represent their needs and grievances when necessary.

As can be seen in the summary that follows, the major themes of Catholic social doctrine build on each other and complement each other. All of the Church's social teaching is rooted in the fundamental principle of the sacredness of human life and the fundamental dignity of every single individual. Out of these truths flows the rest.

Reflections of the Catholic Bishops of the United States on the Church's Social Teaching:

Major Themes The Church's social teaching is a rich treasure of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of a modern society. Modern Catholic social teaching has been articulated through a tradition of papal, conciliar, and episcopal documents. The depth and richness of this tradition can be understood best through a direct reading of these documents. In these brief reflections, we wish to highlight several of the key themes that are at the heart of our Catholic social tradition.

Life and Dignity of the Human Person

The Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. Our belief in the sanctity of human life and the inherent dignity of the human person is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching. In our society, human life is under direct attack from abortion and assisted suicide. The value of human life is being threatened by increasing use of the death penalty. We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.

Call to Family, Community, and Participation

The person is not only sacred, but also social. How we organize our society—in economics and politics, in law and policy—directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. The family is the central social institution that must be supported and strengthened, not undermined. We

believe people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.

Rights and Responsibilities

The Catholic tradition teaches that human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Therefore, every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities—to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. In a society marred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, our tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgment (Mt 25:31-46) and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

The economy must serve people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected—the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to organize and join unions, to private property, and to economic initiative.

Solidarity

We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they live. We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. Learning to practice the virtue of solidarity means learning that "loving our neighbor" has global dimensions in an interdependent world.

Care for the Environment

We show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored. This summary should only be a starting point for those interested in Catholic social teaching. A full understanding can only be achieved by reading the papal, conciliar, and episcopal documents that make up this rich tradition. (USCCB, Excerpts from Catholic Social Teaching [card] [Washington, DC: USCCB, 1999])

The Eighth Commandment

SPEAK THE TRUTH AND LIVE THE TRUTH

Truth or truthfulness is the virtue which consists in showing oneself true in deeds and truthful in words, and guarding against duplicity, dissimulation, and hypocrisy. . . . Respect for the reputation and honor of persons forbids all detraction and calumny in word or attitude. —CCC, nos. 2505 and 2507

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. —Ex 20:16

The Bible teaches that God is the source of truth. Jesus not only taught the truth; he also said, “I am the truth” (cf. Jn 14:6). The Hebrew word for truth, *emeth*, refers both to truth in words and truthfulness in deeds. Jesus both personalized truth and spoke nothing but the truth.

When Christ stood before Pilate, Pilate asked Jesus if he were a king. In his reply, Jesus declared that his Kingdom was not political but spiritual; he had come to bear witness to truth. A spiritual kingdom is based on truth. Pilate could not understand Christ’s reply. Jesus reached out to him and offered him the possibility of change. Pilate could only say, “What is truth?” (Jn 18:38).

In our culture, relativism challenges our ability to tell the truth because it claims there is no objective truth. This attitude undermines the distinction between truth and lies; it leads to an environment of deceit. In such an atmosphere, even Christ’s teachings, based on divine truth, fail to persuade those whose trust in the possibility of objective truth has disappeared. This is the climate in which the Church needs to call people back to the reality of objective truth and to the link between doctrinal truth and everyday life.

SINS AGAINST TRUTH

“Lying is the most direct offense against the truth. . . . By injuring man’s relation to truth and to his neighbor, a lie offends against the fundamental relation of man and of his word to the Lord” (CCC, no. 2483). People sin against the truth when they are guilty of ruining the reputation of another by telling lies, when they practice rash judgment, or when they engage in detraction (the unjust telling of someone’s faults), perjury (lying under oath), or calumny (telling lies about another).

Scripture is clear about the evil of lying. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, “Let your ‘Yes’ mean ‘Yes’ and your ‘No’ mean ‘No.’ Anything more is from the evil one” (Mt 5:37). This reminds us not only that we need to be truthful, but also that hypocrisy—saying one thing while doing the opposite—is a sin against truth. In the Gospel of John, Jesus describes the devil as father of lies (cf. Jn 8:44). St. Paul discouraged lying: “Stop lying to one another” (Col 3:9); “Speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, for we are members one of another” (Eph 4:25).

Happily, history is filled with stories of people who valued the truth so highly that they were willing to die for it. St. John Fisher (1469-1535) and St. Thomas More (1478-1535) surrendered their lives rather than approve of the divorce of King Henry VIII or deny the truth that the pope is Christ’s appointed head of the Church. During World War II, Franz Jagerstatter, an Austrian farmer, refused to accept the lies of the Nazis, and he was martyred for his commitment to Christ’s truth. During the French Revolution, a convent of Carmelite nuns chose to ignore laws that disbanded their monastery and continued to live together as a community. They courageously went to the guillotine rather than abandon the truth for which their vows stood.

We can testify to the truths of our faith in our everyday living, especially when we come in contact with those who do not hold the fullness of faith taught by the Catholic Church. This is done by living out the responsibilities and implications of our faith, as well as by being prepared to dialogue with others on issues of doctrine and morality where differences occur. “Always be ready to give an explanation [of your faith] to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, but do it with gentleness and reverence” (1 Pt 3:15-16).

THE RIGHT TO KNOW THE TRUTH

“No one is bound to reveal the truth to someone who does not have the right to know it” (CCC, no. 2489). The security of others, their right to privacy, and a respect for the common good are reasons for keeping silent or being discreet in our language concerning matters that should not be disclosed. It is also for these reasons that gossiping is a sinful violation of the privacy of others.

Professionals such as politicians, doctors, lawyers, psychologists, and others in positions where confidences are entrusted should preserve confidentiality, unless there is a grave and proportionate

reason for divulging the information. The same is true about ordinary personal relationships in which confidences are shared.

THE MEDIA

In our culture, the communications media hold an influential place in disseminating information, forming attitudes, and motivating behavior. Technological advances are increasing the role of the media and its capacity to shape public opinion. “The information provided by the media is at the service of the common good. Society has a right to information based on truth, freedom, justice, and solidarity” (CCC, no. 2494). In the assembling and publishing of news, the moral law and the lawful rights and human dignity of men and women should be followed.

The requirements of justice and charity must guide communications just as much as other public institutions. Those who undertake to form public opinion need to be governed by these principles. Human solidarity is one of the positive effects of media communications when a commitment to a right-minded policy is followed—one that supports a free circulation of ideas that advances knowledge and people’s respect for each other. Mutually respectful dialogue also aids the quest for truth.

TRUTH AND THE OP-ED PAGE

The more our culture has moved away from acceptance of objective truth, the more it has moved toward the culture of opinions. Each day, newspapers give us a diet of opinions on their op-ed page. Talk shows on television have turned the sharing of opinions into a national pastime. Editors and talk show hosts strive to give us a range of opinions that stretch from one end of the spectrum to another. At the high end of these presentations, experts and scholars are recruited to offer us their best current research. At another level, people are simply enlisted to share their thoughts and feelings publicly on any number of social, moral, and political matters. Sometimes debate degenerates into expressions of hatred.

Though the intuition remains that there is really such a thing as objective truth, it tends to be lost in a marathon of inconclusive discussions. As a result, some spend valuable time sharing only feelings or uninformed opinions. Much of what passes for truth is the effort to justify individual behavior. In its unsettling form, this generates an attitude of skepticism and even suspicion about any truth claims. Thus objective truth is considered unattainable.

In this kind of cultural environment, how can we speak of the invitation of the Eighth Commandment to tell the truth and avoid lying? Speaking the truth is the opposite of lying. The distinction between lying and truth-telling presupposes that there is a truth that can be told. Although a real problem is that some people lie, there is also the related issue of skepticism about the possibility of knowing truth.

The best way to step outside the constriction of these biases is through study, love, and practice grounded in faith. The Church never ceases to urge, “Know the truth. Love the truth. Live the truth.” And the truth is Jesus Christ.

The Ninth Commandment

PRACTICE PURITY OF HEART

THE MORALITY OF THE HEART

The heart is the seat of moral personality: “Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication” (Mt 15:19). The struggle against carnal covetousness entails purifying the heart and practicing temperance. —CCC, no. 2517

We experience tensions between spiritual and physical desires. This struggle belongs to the heritage of sin. This does not mean that we are to despise the body and emotions that, with the soul, constitute our nature. It does make us realize that we will face a daily spiritual struggle to acquire virtues that help us obey the saving action of the Holy Spirit and overcome vices that cause us to resist him.

The grace of Baptism purifies us from sins, but a certain tendency to sin remains. We must struggle against disordered desires by practicing purity of mind, heart, and body with daily vigilance. To do this, we need to examine our motives as well as our deeds, so that we always seek God's will. This will cause us to discipline our feelings and imagination. Finally, since purity is a gift of God, we need to pray for it, as St. Augustine did:

I thought that continence arose from one's own powers, which I did not recognize in myself. I was foolish enough not to know . . . that no one can be continent unless you grant it. For you surely would have granted it if my inner groaning had reached your ears and I with firm faith had cast my cares on you. (The Confessions, bk. 6, chap. 11, no. 20)

MODESTY

Modesty is a virtue necessary for purity. It flows out of the virtues of temperance, chastity, and self-control. A modest person dresses, speaks, and acts in a manner that supports and encourages purity and chastity, and not in a manner that would tempt or encourage sinful sexual behavior. Modesty protects the mystery of the person in order to avoid exploiting the other. This attitude instills in us the patience and reserve we need for avoiding unbecoming behavior. Modest relationships reflect the connection between the marital state and sexual behavior. Modest behavior respects the boundaries of intimacy that are imbedded in our natures by the natural law and the principles of sexual behavior laid out in Divine Revelation. Modesty ensures and supports purity of heart, a gift that enables us to see God's plan for personal relationships, sexuality, and marriage.

Recovering Modesty

Modesty protects the mystery of persons and their love. It encourages patience and moderation in loving relationships. . . . It inspires one's choice of clothing. It keeps silence or reserve where there is evident risk of unhealthy curiosity. It is discreet. —CCC, no. 2522

We need to maintain the concern for chaste living prayerfully in our hearts. Faith is the proper foundation in the quest for a clean heart. Growth in modesty requires loving support from family and friends as well as wise counsel and the practice of virtues.

The attitude of modesty is difficult to maintain in a culture that prizes sexual permissiveness. Countless appeals for erotic satisfaction assail us daily from all the major forms of communication. This environment of indecency challenges all men and women of faith to choose and to witness to modesty as a way of life and as a method for healing a culture that has strayed from God's plan for sexuality and marriage.

Those who have accepted the approach of the permissive culture have been persuaded that freedom is the right to do what we want to do, not what we should do. At the beginning of Christianity, the Apostles preached and witnessed Christ's Gospel to the permissive cultures of Greece and Rome, a fact well-illustrated in St. Paul's Letters to the Corinthians. Difficult as it was, the first preachers prevailed over the allurements of the culture, won numerous converts, and encouraged the virtue of modesty.

The Church calls us to be signs of contradiction in an overly eroticized society. All members of the Church should respond to the immodest aspects of society and culture with a deep and conscious spirituality. The Gospel can renew and purify what is decadent in our culture and gradually can displace the attraction of sin. We must assert Christ's Gospel by word and witness to transform the moral tone of

our culture. This approach fosters virtue in the human heart and its development through the grace of the Holy Spirit.

As we have mentioned, in New Testament times, the Apostles encountered moral challenges every bit as awesome as ours. Faced with his own struggles, St. Paul appeared discouraged when he said, “Miserable one that I am! Who will deliver me from this mortal body?” In the same breath he praised God as he gave the answer: “Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Rom 7:24, 25). The gifts of faith and grace enabled Paul to meet the demands of the Gospel of Jesus. They will do the same for us.

The Tenth Commandment

EMBRACE POVERTY OF THE SPIRIT

WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS, THERE ALSO WILL YOUR HEART BE (MT 6:21)

The tenth commandment unfolds and completes the ninth, which is concerned with concupiscence of the flesh. It forbids coveting the goods of another, as the root of theft, robbery, and fraud, which the seventh commandment forbids. . . . The tenth commandment concerns the intentions of the heart. —CCC, no. 2534

When Jesus began the Sermon on the Mount, he proclaimed the eight Beatitudes as the ways to authentic happiness. The first of these stated that poverty of spirit would enable us to inherit the Kingdom of God. In other words, the first step on the road to joy begins with a healthy detachment from material goods. Later on in the same sermon, Jesus taught that building up wealth for its own sake is foolishness. We should be more interested in spiritual riches.

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroy, and thieves break in and steal. But store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroys, nor thieves break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be. (Mt 6:19-21)

The financial scandals that periodically occur in our culture remind us that greed is a constant threat to moral behavior. It leads many to conclude that money is the root of all evils. But in fact, “the love of money is the root of all evils” (1 Tm 6:10). In the study of the Seventh Commandment, we dealt with the visible acts of stealing and injustice. The Tenth Commandment looks at the interior attitudes of greed and envy that lead us to steal and act unjustly.

On the positive side, the Tenth Commandment calls us to practice poverty of spirit and generosity of heart. These virtues liberate us from being slaves to money and possessions. They enable us to have a preferential love for the poor and to be witnesses of justice and peace in the world. They also enable us to adopt a simplicity of life that frees us from consumerism and helps us preserve God’s creation.

Sinful inclinations move us to envy what others have and lead to an unrestrained drive to acquire all that we can. We do have a reasonable need to acquire the means needed to care for our families. Greed is the distortion of this desire. The greedy person will stop at nothing to get all the money and possessions possible.

We need to remember that envy is the companion of greed; it is an attitude that fills us with sadness at the sight of another’s prosperity. Envious people can be consumed with so much desire for what others have that they will even commit crimes to get what they want.

Baptized people should counter envy with humility, thanksgiving to God for his gifts to oneself and to others, goodwill, and surrender to the providence of God (cf. CCC, no. 2554). “Christ’s faithful ‘have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires’ (Gal 5:24); they are led by the Spirit and follow his desires” (CCC, no. 2555). Poverty of heart is a way to avoid greed and envy. “Abandonment to the providence of the Father in heaven frees us from anxiety about tomorrow. Trust in God is a preparation for the blessedness of the poor. They shall see God” (CCC, no. 2547, citing Mt 6:25-34).

TO BE A CHRISTIAN STEWARD:

A SUMMARY OF THE U.S. BISHOPS' PASTORAL LETTER ON STEWARDSHIP

“As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace” (1 Pt 4:10).

What identifies a steward? Safeguarding material and human resources and using them responsibly are one answer; so is generous giving of time, talent, and treasure. But being a Christian steward means more. As Christian stewards, we receive God’s gifts gratefully, cultivate them responsibly, share them lovingly in justice with others, and return them with increase to the Lord.

Disciples as Stewards

Let us begin with being a disciple—a follower of our Lord Jesus Christ. As members of the Church, Jesus calls us to be disciples. This has astonishing implications:

- Mature disciples make a conscious decision to follow Jesus, no matter what the cost.
- Christian disciples experience conversion—life-shaping changes of mind and heart—and commit themselves to the Lord.
- Christian stewards respond in a particular way to the call to be a disciple. Stewardship has the power to shape and mold our understanding of our lives and the way in which we live. Jesus’ disciples, as Christian stewards, recognize God as the origin of life, the giver of freedom, and the source of all things. We are grateful for the gifts we have received and are eager to use them to show our love for God and for one another. We look to the life and teaching of Jesus for guidance in living as Christian stewards.

Stewards of Creation

The Bible contains a profound message about the stewardship of material creation: God created the world, but entrusts it to human beings. Caring for and cultivating the world involves the following:

- Joyful appreciation for the God-given beauty and wonder of nature;
- Protection and preservation of the environment, which is the stewardship of ecological concern;
- Respect for human life—shielding life from threat and assault and doing everything that can be done to enhance this gift and make life flourish;
- Development of this world through noble human effort— physical labor, the trades and professions, the arts and sciences. We call such effort “work.”

Work is a fulfilling human vocation. The Second Vatican Council points out that, through work, we build up not only our world but also the Kingdom of God, already present among us. Work is a partnership with God—our share in a divine human collaboration in creation. It occupies a central place in our lives as Christian stewards.

Stewards of Vocation

Jesus calls us as his disciples to a new way of life—the Christian way of life—of which stewardship is a part. But Jesus does not call us as nameless people in a faceless crowd. He calls individually, by name. Each one of us—clergy, religious, layperson, married, single, adult, child—has a personal vocation. God intends each one of us to play a unique role in carrying out the divine plan.

The challenge, then, is to understand our role—our vocation—and to respond generously to this call from God. Christian vocation entails the practice of stewardship. In addition, Christ calls each of us to be stewards of our personal vocations, which we receive from God.

Stewards of the Church

Stewards of God's gifts are not passive beneficiaries. We cooperate with God in our own redemption and in the redemption of others.

We are also obliged to be stewards of the Church, collaborators and cooperators in continuing the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, which is the Church's essential mission. This mission—proclaiming and teaching, serving and sanctifying—is our task. It is the personal responsibility of each one of us as stewards of the Church.

All members have their own roles to play in carrying out this mission.

- Parents who nurture their children in the light of faith
- Parishioners who work in concrete ways to make their parishes true communities of faith and vibrant sources of service to the larger community.
- All Catholics, who give generous support—time, money, prayers, and personal service according to their circumstances—to parish and diocesan programs and to the universal Church.

Obstacles to Stewardship

People who want to live as Christian disciples and Christian stewards face serious obstacles. In the United States and other nations, a dominant secular culture often contradicts religious convictions about the meaning of life. This culture frequently encourages us to focus on ourselves and our pleasures. At times, we can find it far too easy to ignore spiritual realities and to deny religion a role in shaping human and social values.

As Catholics who have entered the mainstream of American society and experienced its advantages, many of us also have been adversely influenced by this secular culture. We know what it is to struggle against selfishness and greed, and we realize that it is harder for many today to accept the challenge of being a Christian steward. It is essential, therefore, that we make a special effort to understand the true meaning of stewardship and live accordingly.

A Steward's Way

The life of a Christian steward models the life of Jesus. It is challenging and even difficult in many respects, yet intense joy comes to those who take the risk to live as Christian stewards. Women and men who seek to live as stewards learn that "all things work for good for those who love God" (Rom 8:28).

After Jesus, we look to Mary as the ideal steward. As the Mother of Christ, she lived her ministry in a spirit of fidelity and service; she responded generously to the call.

We must ask ourselves, do we wish to be disciples of Jesus Christ and Christian stewards of our world and our Church?

Central to our human and Christian vocations, as well as to the unique vocation each one of us receives from God, is that we be good stewards of the gifts we possess. God gives us this divine-human workshop, this world and Church of ours. The Spirit shows us the way. Stewardship is part of that journey. (USCCB, "To Be a Christian Steward," in *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response* [Washington, DC: USCCB, 2002], 45ff.)

BLESSED IS THE GENEROUS HEART

Some say that helping the poor involves only making sure that all their physical or material needs are addressed. But is this enough? Should we not also focus on helping people to develop to their utmost potential?

The first step in helping the disadvantaged is to acknowledge the sacred dignity and image of God found in each person. What is also required is a conscience formation from which flow the beliefs, attitudes, and actions that will help the poor. Having more is never enough. Being more is paramount.

Christian discipleship means, among other things, working to ensure that all people have access to what makes them fully human and fosters their human dignity: faith, education, health care, housing, employment, and leisure. Members of the Church are called to build up the resources of the Church herself and of civil society in making possible the sharing of God's blessings and social goods with others. This they do by their own generosity in the use of their time, talents, and treasures with others. Such generosity flows from hearts grateful to God for his generosity in creating and saving us.

The Prayer of a Poor Man (The Canticle of the Sun)

Most high, all powerful, all good Lord!
All praise is yours, all glory, all honor, and all blessing.
To you, alone, Most High, do they belong.
No mortal lips are worthy to pronounce your name.
Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures,
especially through my lord Brother Sun, who brings the day;
and you give light through him.
And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendor!
Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.
Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars;
in the heavens you have made them, precious and beautiful.
Be praised, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air,
and clouds and storms, and all the weather,
through which you give your creatures sustenance.
Be praised, My Lord, through Sister Water;
she is very useful, and humble, and precious, and pure.
Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
through whom you brighten the night.
He is beautiful and cheerful, and powerful and strong.
Be praised, my Lord, through our sister Mother Earth,
who feeds us and rules us, and produces various fruits with colored flowers and herbs.
Be praised, my Lord, through those who forgive for love of you;
through those who endure sickness and trial.
Happy those who endure in peace, for by you, Most High, they will be crowned.
Be praised, my Lord, through our Sister Bodily Death,
from whose embrace no living person can escape.
Woe to those who die in mortal sin!
Happy those she finds doing your most holy will.
The second death can do no harm to them.
Praise and bless my Lord, and give thanks, and serve him with great humility.
—St. Francis of Assisi