

PARISH SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTION GROUPS to ZONE HUBS

6. Collaborative Social Justice Action

Some steps to move from Parish-based Social Justice Action Groups (PSJAGs) to
zone hub (regional) social justice action:

“For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve”

Mark 10: 45

Step 1. Focus on the Inherent/God-given Dignity & Worth of Each Person:

- We are guided by Scripture to understand that ‘*God created humankind in His image, in the image of God He created them*’. – Genesis 1: 27
- ‘*Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God*’. - 1 John 4: 7
- With this solid foundation, working as a parish (such as in Parish Social Justice Action Groups) and then broader community of parishes (such as within a regional zone or hub) towards common goals, recognises that each member has unique talents to offer and share. In such gatherings, value and honour that each person is contributing their time, skills, experience, personal gifts and passion(s) to contribute to the collaborative social justice action with good intentions.
- Consider and assess (audit) the various strengths of those present (or willing and ready to be involved) – to share their personal and professional gifts. Identify potential barriers but also, identify and focus on the learnings and opportunities, such as sharing of resources.

- *'The evidence of the Spirit's presence is given to each person for the common good of everyone. The Spirit gives one person the ability to speak with wisdom. The same Spirit gives another person the ability to speak with knowledge'.*
– 1 Corinthians 12: 7-8

*'Let us think about each other and help each other
to show love and do good deeds'*

Hebrews 10: 24

Step 2. Focus on Relationships:

- St Mother Teresa of Calcutta said: *"Love begins at home and it is not how much we do... but how much love we put in that action"*. While Martin Luther King Jr stated: *"But it is not enough for us to talk about love, there is another side called justice; And justice is love in calculation. Justice is love working against anything that stands against love. Standing beside love is always justice"*.
- In his May 2016 Angelus Address on the Feast of the Holy Trinity, Pope Francis said: *"Our being created in the image and likeness of God- communion calls us to understand ourselves as being-in-relation, and to live inter-personal relationships in solidarity and reciprocal love. In this mission, we are sustained by the strength which the Holy Spirit gives us; this cures the flesh of humanity wounded by injustice, oppression, hate and greed"*.
- While in *Laudato Si'* (2015, # 31), Pope Francis stated: *"We need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family"*.
- *"We must love our neighbour as being made in the image of God and as an object of His love"*. – St Vincent de Paul
- *"What you do makes a difference; and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make"*. – Jane Goodall

*“Your identification with Christ and His will involves a commitment
to build with Him that kingdom of love,
justice and universal peace”*

Pope Francis (Gaudete et Exsultate, 2018, # 25)

Step 3. Be Moved from the Head to the Heart and then Hands:

- *“Community is first of all a quality of the heart. It grows from the spiritual knowledge that we are alive not for ourselves but for one another”.*
– Henri Nouwen (Bread for the Journey)
- Pope Francis stated: *“None of us can think we are exempt from concerns for the poor and for social justice”.* In the Church of Mercy he said, *““We need to let ourselves be evangelised by the poor. They have much to teach us”.*
- *“A leader is a planter – a planter of ideas, seeds of change and a vision for justice”.*
– Artiker Tyner
- *“The future enters into us, in order to transform us, long before it happens”.*
– Ranier Maria Rilke
- *“The road to holiness passes through the world of action”* – Dag Hammarskjold (former Secretary-General of the United Nations).

‘As water reflects the face, so one’s life reflects the heart’

Proverbs 27: 19

Step 4. Focus on Collaboration:

- *“...Transform the ‘networks’ of your life – networks of friends, social networks, material and virtual networks – realities that are often divided, into something more meaningful: become a community, mission communities ‘on the move’, communities that are the light and leaven of a more just and fraternal world”.*
 - Pope Francis (July 2017)
- *“A strong community will include people of different ages, ethnic backgrounds, socio-economic statuses, and interests. Community, communication and communion all come from the same word, meaning ‘together’ and ‘next to’. Embedded in the word is the concept of shared place”.* – Mary Pipher
- Collaboration incorporates respectful communications with co-operation, active participation and compromise. Angela Merkel said: *“A good compromise is one where everyone makes a contribution”.*
- *‘How good and pleasant it is when kindred (God’s people) live together in unity!’*
 - Psalm 133: 1
- *“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much”.* – Helen Keller

‘Great is the strength we possess in our unity’

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop

Step 5. Be Welcoming and Inclusive:

- *‘Which commandment is the first of all? Jesus answered... you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul, and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this, you shall love your neighbour as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these’.*
 - Mark 12: 28-31
- *‘Whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes me and who ever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me; for the least among all of you is the greatest’.*
 - Luke 9: 48

- *“If the ‘dream’ of a peaceful world is shared by all, if the refugees’ and migrants’ contribution is properly evaluated, then humanity can become more and more a universal family and our earth a true common home”. – Pope St John Paul 11 (In his 2004 message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees).*
- *“Let’s work together to increase solidarity and sharing. Co-operation helps to build better and more peaceful societies”. – Pope Francis*
- *“There is no true evangelisation if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God are not proclaimed”*
 - Pope St Paul VI (Evangelii Nuntiandi, 1975, # 22)

*‘Be hospitable to one another without complaining.
Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God,
serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received’*
– **1 Peter: 9-10**

Step 6. Prioritise the Marginalised and Vulnerable:

- *“The measure of the greatness of a society is found in the way it treats those most in need; those who have nothing apart from their poverty”.*
 - Pope Francis
- *“When the whole world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful”.*
 - Malala Yousafzai
- *“Those who have the privilege to know, have the duty to act”.*
 - Albert Einstein
- *‘Justice must flow like torrents of water, righteous actions like a stream that never dries up’. - Amos 5: 24*
- In his address to the US Congress in 2015, Pope Francis stated: *“Now is the time for courageous actions and strategies, aimed at implementing a culture of care” and “an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature”.*

‘When you go through deep waters, I will be with you’

Isaiah 43: 2

Step 7. Identify Your Collective/Shared Vision:

- *“Charity will never be true charity unless it takes justice into account... Let no-one attempt with small acts of charity to exempt themselves from the great duties imposed by justice”. – Pope Pius XI (Divini Redemptoris # 49)*
- *“The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little”.
– Franklin D Roosevelt*
- *“Development cannot be limited to mere economic growth alone. In order to be authentic, it must be complete: integral, that is, it has to promote the good of every person and the whole person”

- Pope St Paul VI (Populorum Progressio, 1967)*
- *“It is high time the ideal of success should be replaced with the ideal of service”.
– Albert Einstein*
- *“Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement” – Helen Keller*

‘For we are God’s fellow workers. You are God’s fields, God’s building’

1 Corinthians 3: 9

*“Indeed, living a spiritual life requires a change of heart, a conversion.
Such a conversion may be marked by a sudden inner change,
or it can take place through a long, quiet process of transformation”*

Henri Nouwen (Making all things new)