



# REDISCOVERING MERCY



**An Invitation to Reconnect Faith and Mercy**



**trócaire**  
Working for a just world.

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Front cover photo (bottom): Bishop William Crean of Trócaire and Cobh parishioners light candles at a vigil held to highlight the plight of refugees in the Middle East.

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# PRAYER FOR EXTRAORDINARY JUBILEE OF MERCY

Lord Jesus Christ,  
you have taught us to be merciful like the  
heavenly Father,  
and have told us that whoever sees you sees  
Him.

Show us your face and we will be saved.

Your loving gaze freed Zacchaeus and Matthew  
from being enslaved by money;

the adulteress and Magdalene from seeking  
happiness only in created things;

made Peter weep after his betrayal,

and assured Paradise to the repentant thief.

Let us hear, as if addressed to each one of us, the words that you spoke to the Samaritan woman:

‘If you knew the gift of God!’

You are the visible face of the invisible Father,

of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy:

let the Church be your visible face in the world, its Lord risen and glorified.

You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness

in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error:

let everyone who approaches them feel sought after, loved, and forgiven by God.

Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing,

so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord,

and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor,

proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed,

and restore sight to the blind.

We ask this through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy,

you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever.

Amen.



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# INTRODUCTION

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**‘A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.’ (Ezekiel 36:26)**

Catholic Social Teaching is based upon the belief that we are all made in the image and likeness of God. This belief inspires us to ‘love one another’ (Jn 13:34), treating our brothers and sisters in Christ with love, respect and dignity. We learn to acknowledge the presence of Christ in every human being. The Gospel relentlessly calls us to care for one another, ensuring that the rights of every human being are respected, ensured and protected.

This resource, entitled *Rediscovering Mercy: An Invitation to Reconnect Faith and Mercy*, has been prepared by Trócaire for use in parishes by social justice groups, prayer groups and schools. Trócaire’s work and vision is inspired by the Gospel and rooted in Catholic Social Teaching, in particular the call to be compassionate and merciful and to share the social justice message of the Church.

Pope Francis reminds us that ‘God shows the poor “his first mercy”’ and that ‘We are called to find Christ in them, to lend our voice to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them and to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them’ (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 198).

Mercy identifies with many types of brokenness in our world today, and brings to that brokenness loving healing and support, which we are afforded time to reflect upon throughout the duration of this programme.

## What is Mercy?

God’s mercy, shown throughout history and to us in our own personal lives today, is something well worth reflecting on. Without a deep and intimate sense of this mercy, a personal relationship with the God of love becomes very difficult. In all of life we can, if we have the ears to listen, hear the quiet pulse of God’s heartbeat willing us to believe that, yes, we are deeply loved by the one who has created us for love.

Pope Francis, upon announcing the Jubilee of Mercy during a Lenten penitential service last year, said ‘I am convinced that the whole Church – that has much need to receive mercy because we are sinners – will find in this jubilee the joy to rediscover and render fruitful the mercy of God, with which we are all called to give consolation to every man and woman of our time.’

Pope Benedict XVI, in his Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* tells us that when we know ourselves to be loved in this deep way, the call to love others is ‘no longer a question of a “commandment” imposed from without and calling for the impossible, but rather of a freely bestowed experience of love from within, a love which by its very nature must then be shared with others. Love grows through love’ (*Deus Caritas Est*, 18).

## A Thiarna Déan Trócaire

In the Irish Catholic Church, Trócaire is one of the many rich expressions of this merciful love. Inspired and nourished by God’s love, we seek to work with those most in need of our love throughout the world.

Since 1973, Trócaire has worked in the developing world as an expression of love and solidarity of the Irish faithful. Overseas, we work in partnership with local organisations and communities, helping families to free themselves from the oppression of poverty. In Ireland, we raise awareness about the causes of global poverty and encourage people to act for global change as a matter of justice.

## The Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy

During a penitential service at St Peter’s Basilica on 12 March 2015, Pope Francis announced this liturgical year as the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, thus inviting all followers of Christ to become ‘Missionaries of Mercy’.





A jubilee year is a special year called by the Church to receive blessing and pardon from God and remission of sins. Since the year 1300, the Catholic Church has called jubilee years every twenty-five or fifty years. From time to time it has also called special jubilee years, known as extraordinary jubilee years.

The last jubilee year was held in 2000 during the papacy of Pope John Paul II and was known as 'The Great Jubilee'. The last extraordinary jubilee year was held in 1983 to celebrate 1,950 years since the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Archbishop Rino Fisichella said the motto for this jubilee, 'Merciful Like the Father', 'serves as an invitation to follow the merciful example of the Father who asks us not to judge or condemn, but to forgive and to give love and forgiveness without measure'. To join in the celebration of the Jubilee of Mercy, you might consider running this *Rediscovering Mercy* programme in your local parish community during Lent.

## About This Resource

The four sessions in this resource focus upon the concept of mercy and its connection with justice. Throughout the New Testament, Christ is shown to be the ultimate model of love (*caritas*) and mercy in his solidarity with those on the margins of his society and with all of humanity. As Christians, it is our relationship with Christ that inspires us to love others and to act when we see them denied justice. 'Love – *caritas* – is an extraordinary force which leads people to opt for courageous and generous engagement in the field of justice and peace' (*Caritas in Veritate*, 1).

Participants will also be encouraged to reflect on the many other charitable and missionary organisations within the Irish Catholic Church, which strive to express the merciful love of Christ.

## Overview

- This course aims to create a space for reflection on how mercy is both experienced and expressed in our lives, in the scriptures, in our Church and in the work of Trócaire.

- The course consists of four sessions over four consecutive weeks. While it may be run at any time in the liturgical year, it is particularly suitable to the seasons of Advent or Lent.
- Each session takes approximately sixty to eighty minutes.
- It is a good idea to allow for an extra half an hour afterwards for a cup of tea and a chat.

*Rediscovering Mercy* is a programme that brings participants into a space to rediscover God's sacrificial love for them and for the world. It is also an opportunity to see how they are being called to love others in their own family, community and indeed the world around them. Prepare to be moved! Prepare to share! Prepare to be surprised! Prepare to grow in your own faith journey!

## Course Goals Include ...

- Building an awareness of peace and justice initiatives and concerns in our world.
- Highlighting the values of Catholic Social Teaching and our relationship with God and others.
- Contemplation on how we weave justice and mercy into our daily lives as followers of Christ.
- An insight into the work of Trócaire, both in Ireland and overseas.

## SESSION 1: Rediscovering a Personal Experience of Mercy

This session will create a personal space for participants to reflect on what 'mercy'/'compassion' means in their daily lives, and to identify mercy as a central quality that underpins all of Catholic Social Teaching.

## SESSION 2: Rediscovering Mercy in Our Local Community

This session will illustrate how we, as Christians, are called to mercy and compassion through our faith. The session will look at mercy in scripture, through the parable of the Good Samaritan. It will explore examples of how mercy is lived out in our local community/parish.

## SESSION 3: Rediscovering Mercy in Our World

This session will provide a brief overview of Catholic Social Teaching and reflect on how this calls us to recognise our shared responsibility, as members of the Body of Christ, in bringing about an end to poverty and injustice. Through the use of case studies, it will illustrate how the work of Trócaire engages with that responsibility and how people can be involved.

## SESSION 4: Rediscovering Mercy through Prayer and Reflection

This session will be prayerful and reflective, drawing together the four-week journey and contemplation of mercy and compassion. It will allow space for participants to interiorise the concept of mercy and learning from previous sessions. It will reaffirm our Christian mission to 'act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God' (Mic 6:8). Practical ways in which the parish community can work with Trócaire and other local charitable organisations to explore the call to live mercy and compassion will also be considered.

### Facilitating the Sessions

Ideally there should be two facilitators for each session, and having seen the materials you may wish to invite a representative from Trócaire to help facilitate Session 3. There is no ideal number of participants, but because of the nature of the sessions, a maximum of fifteen course participants is recommended.

### Preparation

Each session lays out clear objectives and an outline of resources and preparation guidelines. Facilitators should be at the venue to set up at least an hour in advance, and to ensure the room is warm and comfortable. The prayer space will be the focus of the room, with chairs arranged in a circle. If you decide to use the film from the Trócaire website in Session 3, a computer and data projector will be required. Where possible, the room should be spacious enough to allow for movement of chairs for discussion purposes, but also small enough to create a prayerful atmosphere. It is also helpful if lights can be dimmed in the room, particularly for Session 4.

## Methodology

### Facilitated Discussion

The facilitators will help to unpack experiences of and responses to mercy, including the more challenging aspects of mercy, through engagement with images, stories and input from facilitators. Discussion will be in pairs, in small groups and in the wider group at different stages of the course.

### Story

Participants will be invited to engage with stories as a way of reflecting on their own and other people's experiences of mercy. These will include passages from scripture, stories of people who are partners of Trócaire's work at home and overseas, as well as personal stories from within the group.

### Reflection and Prayer

All sessions will include prayer and reflection, during which participants will be invited into a deeper awareness of the unconditional love and mercy of God. It is hoped that participants' personal faith will be renewed and enhanced through their involvement in these sessions.

### Personal Input

You may like to invite a speaker from Trócaire (or another local organisation you have looked at) to be part of Session 3. They might reflect on the reasons they are involved in this work as an outcome of their faith, and provide concrete examples of how mercy is needed and experienced in our world today.

### Film



The use of a computer and data projector are required for the film in Session 3, available on the Trócaire website [trocaire.org/parishes](https://trocaire.org/parishes).

### Handouts



Handouts have been provided as required. When you see this symbol, please refer to the relevant handout for that session in the back of the course booklet.

**‘Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful’ (Lk 6:36)**



Bayee (12) is named after her grandmother Bayee (82), whom she has lived with in Ethiopia since her parents passed away from HIV. Photo credit: Tamiru Legesse



# SESSION 1

## Rediscovering a Personal Experience of Mercy

**‘With what can we compare the kingdom of God ...? It is like a mustard seed which when sown upon the ground is the smallest of all the seeds upon the earth, yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs and puts forth large branches that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.’ (Mk 4:30-32)**

### Objectives

- To create a space for participants to reflect on what ‘mercy’ or ‘compassion’ means for them.
- To identify mercy as a central quality that underpins all of Catholic Social Teaching.

### Outcomes

#### Participants will have ...

- A deeper understanding of the experience of mercy, having reflected upon encounters with it in their own lives.
- An appreciation of mercy as central to the Church’s mission.
- A prayerful and meditative experience on challenges faced in our world and on faith in action in both people’s lives and the Gospels.

#### Resources needed for this session

- For the prayer space: coloured cloth and candle; symbols consisting of seeds, bowl and stones.
- Chairs arranged in a circle around the prayer space.
- Images of mercy/compassion. Images are available to print from the Trócaire parish website ([trocaire.org/parishes](http://trocaire.org/parishes)) but will need to be printed in advance of the meeting.
- Reflective music (based upon the theme of ‘Justice’ or ‘Community’), e.g. ‘Christ Has No Body Now But Yours’ by J. M. Talbot, or ‘The Servant Song’ by Richard Gillard.
- Handout 1 with quotations on compassion/mercy, on pages 25 and 26.
- Handout 2 with ‘The Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy’ poster, on page 27.

### Stage 1: Welcome and General Introduction (10 mins)

Welcome participants and introduce the central concept of the course, e.g. ‘Mercy’ or ‘Compassion’. Give a brief outline of the course content for the next four weeks (see outline of sessions on pages 6 and 7 of introductory section of this booklet). Give participants the opportunity to introduce themselves and to say, if desired, what has brought them here.

### Stage 2: Introduction to ‘Images’ Exercise (10 mins)

The purpose of this exercise is to allow participants to reflect on the concept of mercy through the exploration of images depicting mercy/compassion. Place the images on the floor or on a table. Allow some time for participants to choose and interiorise an image that speaks to them of mercy and compassion. Explain that there will be an opportunity to share later. Appropriate reflective music may be played in the background as participants choose an image. Allow time for everyone to reflect silently on their chosen image.



Images available on the Trócaire website ([trocaire.org/parishes](http://trocaire.org/parishes)). You will need to print these images in advance of the meeting.

### Stage 3: Sharing and Discussion (20 mins)

Invite everyone in pairs to share their thoughts, feelings and reactions to their chosen image.

1. What moved you to choose this image?
2. Where is mercy received in this picture?
3. Is there anything in this image that reminds you of a personal encounter of mercy?

Reconvene the group and open up the discussion.

The facilitator's role is to listen, affirm and collate insights emerging from the group.

### Discussion points

Feel free to use the following points to help guide your group's discussion ...

- Mercy is a deeply human and instinctive reaction to the suffering of another.
- Mercy is a basic response to the distress of another that desires to alleviate that suffering.
- Mercy is about the language of the heart.
- Experiences of mercy, given or received, can transform people.
- Showing mercy may also mean that in standing for something, we are called to stand against something else, and this can be uncomfortable.
- Mercy is sometimes considered a 'soft' response. However, it may be very challenging, e.g. forgiving a friend who has hurt us, or standing alongside someone ostracised from the community.

### Stage 4: Quotes on Mercy (20 mins)

Many people experience and express mercy in a variety of different ways.



For this exercise, distribute **Handout 1**, 'Quotes on Mercy' from well-known public figures. Begin by reading them aloud for the group, then invite members of the group to sit and interiorise these quotations for a few minutes. Encourage group members to comment on any quotation or figure that had a particular meaning for them.

Conclude the session by summarising some of the key points that were shared in the group discussion. Remember to include:

- Mercy speaks in the language of the heart.
- This language of love, or *caritas*, leads us into action for justice and peace.
- Mercy can sometimes be considered a soft response; it can, however, be very challenging.

- Mercy may mean that in standing for someone or something, we are called to stand against something else.

One of the facilitators concludes by stating ...

Through our Baptism we are called into communion with Christ and with one another. Jesus has asked us to 'love one another as I have loved you' (Jn 13:34).

Catholic Social Teaching is based upon this call to action. It challenges us to be aware of the poverty, injustice and suffering in the world around us and to take action for a more just world.

*The Gospel is about the Kingdom of God* (cf. Lk 4:43); *it is about loving God who reigns in our world. To the extent that he reigns within us, the life of society will be a setting for universal fraternity, justice, peace and dignity. Both Christian preaching and life, then, are meant to have an impact on society* (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 180).

The core principles of Catholic Social Teaching remind us of the dignity of every human being and of the values and principles that underpin a fair, just and compassionate society.

### Stage 5: The Corporal Works of Mercy (10 mins)



**Handout 2** is needed for this short exercise, which reflects on the traditional corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

The corporal and spiritual works of mercy are a part of Catholic tradition and, for many of us, they were part of our upbringing. In today's world we are often too busy to give them much thought, yet they are rooted in one of the most beloved Gospels, Matthew 25:31-46, the Last Judgement parable: 'When I was hungry, you gave me something to eat ...'

In this powerful scripture, Jesus gives us our 'marching orders' as Christians. This is what we are to do if we are to become his true followers. His words are not just about how we are to pray or dress or how often we go to Mass. As a matter of fact, his words are not about us at all, but about our neighbours.

What we are called to today – in the midst of our modern and busy lives – is to look beyond our own hectic lives and to pay attention to those around us who are marginalised and in need. Since misfortune can affect both body and soul, there are both corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

Take a moment to reflect on the works of mercy below. As a group, think about ways in which you might begin to include them in your daily lives.

### **The Corporal Works of Mercy**

1. Feed the hungry
2. Give drink to the thirsty
3. Clothe the naked
4. Harbour the harbourless/shelter the homeless
5. Visit the sick
6. Ransom the captive/visit the imprisoned
7. Bury the dead

### **The Spiritual Works of Mercy**

1. Advise the ignorant
2. Instruct the unaware
3. Counsel the doubtful
4. Comfort the sorrowful
5. Bear wrongs patiently
6. Forgive injuries
7. Pray for the living and the dead

### **Stage 6: Closing Reflection (10 mins)**

Begin by playing some quiet, reflective music. Give each of the four symbols for the prayer space (seed, bowl, stones and cross) to four participants, asking them to place each within the prayer space at the appropriate time.

Lead participants into a personal, reflective space.

Draw participants' attention to the symbols in the prayer space, linking them to the concept of mercy:

- *Seeds – symbolising the seeds of compassion in every human being.*
- *Bowl – a symbol of our openness to Christ and one another.*
- *Stones – symbolising the challenges of mercy, the things that get in the way of us responding to the suffering and need of others.*
- *Cross – the symbol of Christ, the model of forgiveness, who died so that our sins would be forgiven. We follow in Christ's footsteps by extending our love and support to the poor and oppressed.*

Invite participants to place the images that they have been given in the prayer space. The following passage is then read aloud:

*A new heart I will give you and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh (Ez 36:26)*

Allow some quiet time before reading the scripture a second time.

Conclude by playing some reflective music or a song based upon the theme of 'Justice' or 'Community'. If you want you could accompany this with images on a PowerPoint presentation.



# **‘Love one another as I have loved you’ (Jn 13:34)**



Brothers Anthony and Amos, Lenten Campaign 2016, Tharaka Nithi, Kenya.  
Photo credit: Jeannie O'Brien



# SESSION 2

## Rediscovering Mercy in Our Local Community

**'And who is my neighbour?'** (Lk 10:29)

### Objectives

- To reflect on mercy in scripture, through exploring the parable of the Good Samaritan.
- Inspired by the example of the Good Samaritan, identify examples of living mercy within the local community.

### Outcomes

**Participants will have ...**

- An understanding of the context of the parable of the Good Samaritan.
- Reflected on how the parable of the Good Samaritan relates to their life experiences.
- Identified local agencies/charities in their community working for a more compassionate world.

### Resources needed for this session

- Prayer space with cloth, candle, stones, seeds and bowl (as in Session 1).
- An open Bible with the parable of the Good Samaritan on display.
- Copies of Handout 1, 'The Parable of the Good Samaritan', on page 28, for each person.
- Handouts 2 and 3, on pages 28 and 29.
- Flip-chart paper, large markers and blu-tack.

### Stage 1: Connecting Back (10 mins)

Welcome everyone back to the second session of the course and invite them to take some time to recall what had been shared in the first session on mercy. Questions to prompt this reflection may include:

- Can you remember a thought or image that struck you from last week's gathering?
- Can you remember the image you chose and why you chose it?

Summarise some of the insights from Session 1. Introduce Session 2, 'Rediscovering Mercy in Our Local Community' (you can refer to the outline of the session on page 6 of the introductory section of the booklet).

### Stage 2: The Parable of the Good Samaritan - Setting the Context (5 mins)

One story that focuses on mercy and compassion will be explored from the scriptures, the familiar story of the Good Samaritan.



**Handout 1** – distribute copies of the Gospel passage and read it aloud once.

**Handout 2** – give some background information about the context of the parable using notes from this handout.

### Stage 3: Personal Reflection and Sharing (20 mins)

Explain to the group that parables are stories that open the mind and touch the heart. Stage 3 will involve reading the parable aloud three times in the style of *Lectio divina*. As the parable is slowly read aloud, invite participants to pay attention to what they are seeing, hearing and feeling as they listen. After the second and third readings, ask participants to reflect on some questions (see next page).

Begin by inviting participants to close their eyes and hear the word of God. It will be read three times by three different voices (choose your readers before you begin).

## Luke 10:25-37

### The Parable of the Good Samaritan

*Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he said, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What do you read there?' He answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.' And he said to him, 'You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.'*

*But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'*

#### Following the second reading of the parable ...

- What struck you in the story, perhaps a word or an image?
- Which character in the story could you most identify with – the victim, the priest, the Levite, the Samaritan himself, the robber or the innkeeper? Why?

#### Following the third reading ...

- Think about a time when you were the Good Samaritan or experienced the help of a Good Samaritan in your own life?

The discussion could be opened up to the wider group, inviting insights from personal and shared reflections on the parable.

Some discussion points on the parable of the Good Samaritan, which you might like to share with the group, include ...

- Who is this man? We know nothing of him except his dire need.
- The man on the road is the main figure within the parable, the one at the centre of the action and storyline. We continually view the action in the story from his perspective.
- Our initial sympathy for him and our concern for his well-being, to a large extent, determine how we see and judge the other characters in the story. It is the perspective of the victim that is key to understanding the meaning of 'neighbour' and the nature of our responsibilities to each other.
- What distinguishes the Samaritan is that he feels 'compassion' (see the quote from Pope Benedict in Handout 1, Session 1, on page 26) – he becomes the hinge to the entire story, transforming a situation of death to life, despair to hope, exclusion to care and inclusion.
- The lawyer's questions allow for a distinction to be made between those who are considered 'neighbours' and those who are not.
- Jesus' question places the responsibility of being neighbour on the inquirer.
- There is no indication of whether the lawyer responds positively or negatively to Christ's invitation. It becomes an invitation to look afresh at our world from the perspective of the needy, realising that only when we learn to look at our world in a new way, new ways of behaving can be made possible.
- Pope Francis reminds us that in this story, the Samaritan allowed God to disrupt his life by hearing the call to compassion and responding to the man he saw in front of him. What does this say to us about how acting with compassion may disrupt our life?
- Was the Good Samaritan himself excluded in the story?

#### Stage 4: Group Activity on 'Living Mercy Locally' (15 mins)

Having reflected on personal experiences of mercy and the parable of the Good Samaritan, the following

activity is an opportunity to recognise where acts of mercy are at work in participants' own local community.

Ask participants to divide into groups of three or four. Distribute large sheets of flip-chart paper and a marker to each group. Ask them to list all the examples of agencies and charities in their local community, parish or diocese that are involved in works of mercy, e.g. SVP, Barnardos, etc. Get each group to discuss how these 'works of mercy' can transform a local community, in particular reflecting on how true transformation differs from a 'sticking plaster' charity response.

Encourage them also to reflect on the common links between the work of these agencies and those of the local charities that they have identified.

Allow a few minutes for this exercise. Take feedback from each group.

Bring participants' attention to their parishes/diocese link with the work of Trócaire, e.g. annual Lent campaign, Church emergency appeals, volunteers, climate justice work, awareness-raising with parish justice and peace groups, and our work in schools.

*... the Church is not a shop, she is not a humanitarian agency, the Church is not an NGO [charity]. The Church is sent to bring Christ and his Gospel to all.*

Pope Francis, General Audience, 23 October 2013

Comment on how the work of Trócaire is an example of how the Irish Catholic Church is living mercifully and transforming the world (this topic will be explored in greater depth in Session 3), and, motivated by caritas or love, is 'that extraordinary force which leads people to opt for courageous and generous engagement in the field of justice and peace' (*Caritas in Veritate*, 1).

### **Stage 5: Closing Reflection (10 mins)**

Drawing points together:

Playing some soft music hymns based upon the theme of 'Justice', 'Service' or 'Calling', draw the

session to a close by leading participants into a quiet place of reflection on 'Who is my neighbour?'

Bring forward the seeds and bowl and remind people of the symbolism.

Read slowly:

*Our neighbour is anyone we encounter. We are all creatures of the Creator and we are called to love all of creation as Jesus has taught us.*

*The parable of the Good Samaritan challenges us to move beyond social, religious and racial boundaries when we consider the question posed to Jesus: 'Who is my neighbour?' This question dares us to look afresh at our world and our response to it. Living mercy indeed crosses all boundaries. While it is central to the teaching of Jesus, it is also at the heart of many of the great traditions of the world.*



**Handout 3** – distribute copies of 'Mercy in the Great Religious Traditions of the World'. Allow a few moments for participants to read over it.

Conclude the session by praying the following prayer, followed by singing a verse of an appropriate hymn ...

**Heavenly Father, Prince of Peace,  
Bless your children gathered here.  
Bless all your children across the world.  
Especially those most vulnerable and in need.  
Bless all peacemakers.  
May we emulate their courage  
and assist them in their search for justice.  
We ask this in your name.  
Amen.**

Finally, invite participants to take a moment of contemplation and think about the following questions:

- What is staying with you from today's session?
- What idea/emotion/image are you taking with you for contemplation in the week ahead?

Ask them to return with their answers at the start of next week's session.





Hong Sar Htaw (26) from Bilugyun island, Myanmar, with Agatha Nu Nu of Trócaire. Hong is a member of a women's group that gives women a voice in local decision-making, as well as offering them loans to start or expand businesses. Through organisations supported by Trócaire, women in Myanmar are taking a more active role in their communities. (Photo: Eoghan Rice/Trócaire)



# SESSION 3

## Rediscovering Mercy in Our World

**‘Compassion includes awareness, attitude and action. A deeper and clearer look at compassion, the central quality of Christ, enables us to accompany the hurting ones of our personal lives and the larger world with loving kindness.’** (Joyce Rupp)

### Objectives

- To provide a brief overview of Catholic Social Teaching and reflect on how it calls us to recognise our shared responsibility, as members of the Body of Christ, in bringing about an end to poverty and injustice.
- To illustrate the social justice dimension of the work of the Church through the exploration of four case studies.
- To look at the world through the eyes of the missionary church, showing mercy in today's world.

### Outcomes

#### Participants will ...

- Become more familiar with the work of Trócaire
- Have reflected on Catholic Social Teaching and how it calls us, as Christians, to work together for a more just and compassionate world.
- Recognise some of the injustices and challenges faced by people around the world, and how the Church is responding to those injustices.

### Resources needed for this session

- Prayer space with a collage of agencies and charities involved in the work of mercy (from last week's group work); a large candle and the seeds and bowl from previous weeks.
- Flip chart and markers.
- Handout 1 with points on Catholic Social Teaching, on page 30.
- Copies of case study for group work (Handouts 2–5, on pages 32–35).
- Handout 6 on page 36.
- Balls of wool/string for web exercise.

- Music sheet/lyrics (own choice) for this week's session. Suggested piece: St Francis of Assisi's Prayer 'Make Me a Channel of Your Peace'.
- Small piece of card for each participant to write their intended 'Act of Solidarity'.

### Stage 1: Introduction (10 mins)

Begin with a brief recap on previous course sessions and summarise some of the insights shared.

- What has stayed with you from last week's session?

This session will look at Catholic Social Teaching, the Church's teaching on social issues. It will reflect on the practical outcome of this teaching in the work of Trócaire and other Catholic charities, and consider how this is a sign of mercy and compassion in our world.

### Stage 2: The Mission Church - Thoughts on Catholic Social Teaching (10 mins)

The presentation begins with a quotation from Joyce Rupp:

*'Compassion includes awareness, attitude and action.'*



#### Handout 1 – 'Introduction to Catholic Social Teaching'

Mercy/compassion is a core value in our Church's mission. The facilitator gives a short input on Catholic Social Teaching based on the handout, and can also use the animated video available at [icatholic.ie/trocaire-cst-3-minutes](http://icatholic.ie/trocaire-cst-3-minutes).

Further resources on Catholic Social Teaching are available on the Trócaire website ([trocaire.org/resources/parishes](http://trocaire.org/resources/parishes)).

Invite participants to chat in small groups about their response to the presentation on Catholic Social Teaching.

- How much did they already know?
- Does anything surprise them?
- Reflecting back on last week's activity, how does the work of Trócaire and other Catholic charities they have reflected upon demonstrate Catholic Social Teaching in action in the world, locally and globally?

Record the group's responses on a flip chart.

Ask the whole group:

- Does it answer any questions about why such organisations engage in the work they do, e.g. HIV and women's rights, gender-based violence, livelihoods, humanitarian response, etc.?
- Are there areas that Catholic Social Teaching highlights that are not being responded to?

**Suggestion:** You may like to invite a speaker from Trócaire or another local organisation to be part of this session.

### Stage 3: Overview of the Work of Trócaire (10 mins)

Brainstorm the word 'Trócaire'.

- What do you think of when you hear the word 'Trócaire'?
- What memories does it stir for you?



Log on to Trócaire's website ([trocaire.org](http://trocaire.org)) or Trócaire's page on iCatholic ([icatholic.ie](http://icatholic.ie)) to see videos about our work.

### Stage 4: Case Studies (20 mins)



**Handouts 2, 3, 4 and 5** – four case studies, each illustrating the work of Trócaire, will be explored in small groups. Invite participants to select one of the handouts; then allow them time to read and interiorise the story.

Then, in small groups, explore the following questions ...

- How did the story make me feel?
- When I hear stories like this, how do I usually respond?
- Have I any role to play in this story? Does my community have a role to play?
- Where is there compassion in this story?
- Highlight the factors that led to the poverty/injustice in this story?
- What is your response to the agency's role in the situation?

Ask one individual to read their story of change (case study) to the wider group, ensuring all four stories are read aloud. Then choose one to focus on. Welcome feedback from the pairs who discussed it, then open the discussion to the wider group.

Use the story to draw out some key points:

- The compassion at the heart of the story: in the neighbours' responses to people in need; in the practical work of the organisations; in the 'unseen' people who contribute to the Church's work through donations/campaigning.
- Being merciful calls us to be open to transformation: of our own lives, that of our communities and of our world.
- The causes of poverty and injustice are multidimensional. In two of these stories, climate change, flooding and drought contribute to poverty, along with destruction of the environment.
- Issues affecting people here in Ireland, north and south, like asylum seekers and refugees, are the consequence of injustice and poverty in other parts of the world.
- Social justice work, the work of mercy, involves addressing the causes of poverty, not just addressing the symptoms.
- Our part of the world contributes to poverty and injustice, e.g. unfair trade, climate change, oppressive governments, etc., but it can also be involved in seeking solutions to poverty and injustice. Social justice involves eco-justice and trade justice.

- We can become involved in the Church's call to work for social justice in a variety of different ways.
- Bringing about a more just and fair world begins with each of us, e.g. being more conscious of choices that affect the environment; of our consumption; of our waste; of choosing fair-trade products and conflict-free goods.

*An interdependent world not only makes us more conscious of the negative effects of certain lifestyles and models of production and consumption which affects us all; more importantly, it motivates us to ensure that solutions are proposed from a global perspective, and not simply to defend the interests of a few countries. Interdependence obliges us to think of one world with a common plan.* (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 164)

### Stage 5: Be the Difference – Get Active and Get Involved (10 mins)

The facilitator should bring out the collage of flip charts from last week, and remind participants of some of the Church's work of mercy. Ask people to look at the collage and reflect on how we can act for transformation, in justice and charity.

If you have a guest speaker you could invite them to share something here. Open a brief discussion, based on the flip charts or the guest speaker's input, on how participants might join with the work of the Church in making our world a more just and peaceful place, through – for example – campaigning, volunteering, educating and fundraising.

Alternatively, you could log on to Trócaire's website for more information on how people might like to join with Trócaire in making our world a more just place, through campaigning, volunteering, educating and fundraising with us. See [trocaire.org/getinvolved/volunteer](http://trocaire.org/getinvolved/volunteer) for more information on volunteering with Trócaire.

Ask participants to write on a small card their commitment to an 'Act of Solidarity' that they will take with them from this week's session.

### Stage 6: Reflection (15 mins)

**The 'web'** – invite all to stand and pass a ball of string/wool back and forth randomly around the group, so as to create a 'web' shape.

(This works best in a group of eight or more. For a smaller group, the facilitator can prepare a web in advance from string/wool, or draw a web on a large sheet of paper and invite participants to note the connections.)

Ask participants to share a word, phrase or image that they feel best reflects the work undertaken by Trócaire and the other Catholic charities that have been reflected on. Once each participant has shared this, they pass the wool to another person within the circle. When the web is fully formed, and everyone has contributed to the exercise, pause to pray and to think of this network and all who are involved in it.

Invite participants to stand. The facilitator reads the following reflection:

*Catholic Social Teaching's vision of a just and peaceful world is dependent on each of us recognising our place in the web of relationships in the world of which we are part. We are all connected to one another. If one part of the web is damaged, it collapses. If our brother or sister in another part of the world is suffering, we join with them in their suffering. If the earth is damaged, then we are all damaged. The compassionate life is community life, locally and globally. Relationship with Christ is relationship with our brothers and sisters.*

Gently place the 'web' in the prayer space and invite participants to pray aloud, in their own words, for people or situations in the world where compassion and mercy are needed.



**Handout 6** – conclude evening with 'A Step Along the Way', the prayer attributed to Archbishop Óscar Romero.

From 1977–80, while El Salvador was on the brink of civil war, Archbishop Óscar Romero was a voice of hope for the poor and victims of human rights abuses. Despite numerous death threats, he continued to speak out on their behalf against injustice and oppression. 'If they kill me, I shall arise in the Salvadoran people,' Romero said. 'If the threats come to be fulfilled, from this moment I offer my blood

to God for the redemption and resurrection of El Salvador. Let my blood be a seed of freedom and the sign that hope will soon be reality.'

He became the voice of the Salvadoran people when repression had crushed all other channels of expression in El Salvador. Today, his perseverance is a symbol of hope for all persecuted Christians across the world.

### Archbishop Romero Prayer: A Step Along the Way

It helps, now and then, to take the long view

The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said. No prayer fully expresses our faith.

No confession brings perfection. No pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No programme accomplishes the Church's mission. No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realising that.

This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.

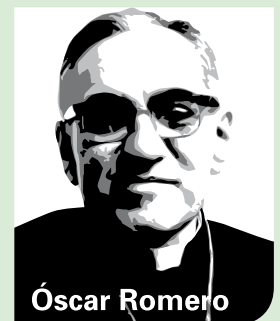
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,  
an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results,

but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own.



Composed by Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw.

(The words of the prayer are attributed to Óscar Romero, but never spoken by him). Reprinted with permission from Little Books of the Diocese of Saginaw, Inc.

Invite participants to take time over the coming week to research more about their chosen act of solidarity, and reflect on the following questions in light of Trócaire's work:

- What are Trócaire's current campaigns and focuses that interest me? (e.g. HIV and gender, livelihoods,

climate justice)

- What groups in my parish might benefit from learning about/engaging with Trócaire?
- What groups have we reflected on that exist in my parish/diocese that I might like to get involved with?



# SESSION 4

## Rediscovering Mercy through Prayer and Reflection

**'It is in giving that we receive.'** (St Francis of Assisi)

### Objectives

- To lead participants in prayer and reflection, allowing space for them to interiorise the concept of mercy and learnings from previous sessions.
- To present practical ways for the participants and their parishes to get actively involved in the work of Trócaire.

### Outcomes

#### Participants will have ...

- Participated in a meditation based on the story of Jesus, the Woman and the Pharisee (Lk 7:36).
- Engaged in prayer and reflection, based upon the concepts of mercy and compassion.
- Learned ways in which they and their parish community can express solidarity and mercy in their local community.

#### Resources needed for this session:

- For the prayer space: cloth, large candle, seeds and bowl from previous weeks, and a pottery jar or vase; oil burner with scented oil; small bowl with essential oil for use during blessing ritual; small candles (unlit), one for each person.
- Jesus, the Woman and the Pharisee (Handout 1), page 37.
- Litany of the Senses prayer cards (Handout 2) on page 37, and pen for each participant.
- A Prayer for Zimbabwe (Handout 3), on page 38.
- Materials from Trócaire (optional), on page 39.
- Evaluation sheets (Handout 4), on page 40.

### Stage 1: Introduction (10 mins)

Welcome the participants back to their fourth and final week of the *Rediscovering Mercy* programme. Give a brief introduction to Session 4 – a prayerful and reflective session.

Recap briefly on previous sessions:

**Session 1:** Mercy, as it is experienced personally, through images; mercy is the human response to the suffering of another; mercy is at the heart of the Catholic Church.

**Session 2:** The parable of the Good Samaritan, 'Who is my neighbour?', challenging us to go beyond our boundaries. Exploring mercy and compassion at work in our own local communities.

**Session 3:** Catholic Social Teaching and the practical outcome of this teaching in the work of Trócaire. How we can support this work ourselves and in our own parish communities?

Take feedback on the research task from Session 3. Invite participants to share their findings after researching their chosen act of solidarity:

- What did you learn about Trócaire that you didn't know before?

This session will be a prayerful and reflective conclusion to our journey of contemplation on the concept of mercy and compassion in light of Catholic Social Teaching and Trócaire's search for justice. It will be an opportunity to reaffirm our Christian mission to *act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God* (Mic 6:8) by drawing on the work of the Church and what we have learned in the previous three sessions, through reflection, prayer and ritual.

As this session begins, invite participants from the group to light a large candle in the prayer space and bring forward (to the prayer space) the seeds and bowl as a reminder of God's compassion and mercy.

## Stage 2: Meditation on Jesus, the Woman and the Pharisee (Luke 7:36-39, 44-47)

(20–25 mins)



### Handout 1 – Gospel of Luke

Invite participants to listen to the Gospel of Luke 7:36-39, 44-47. Extend an invitation to one participant to read the following passage of scripture ...

#### Luke 7:36-39, 44-47: Jesus, the Woman and the Pharisee

*One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table. And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him – that she is a sinner.'*

*Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.'*

Invite all to sit comfortably in their chairs and to prepare to meditate on the word of God. The story is told from the perspective of the woman, inviting participants to engage emotionally with the experience of mercy. This meditation is read slowly, with pauses, to allow participants to imagine the scene.

## Touched by Mercy: A meditation from the perspective of the woman, based on Luke 7:36-39, 44-47

(To be read by course facilitator)

*Close your eyes ... relax your shoulders ... take a moment to notice sounds around you and let them go ... breathe out any tension in your body ... and when you are ready, allow yourself to gently enter the scene from the story ... imagining yourself seeing and feeling the experience of the woman on that day ...*

*'I am still not certain what drew me there ...*

*I had heard people talking ... 'He is here ... in the city ... at the Pharisee's house ...!'*

*'He is here ... he is here ... he is here' ... something about those words wound their way through the emptiness, to my heart ...*

*'He is here' ...*

*Some impulse set me on the path to the house that day ...*

*My hands grasping the alabaster jar ... every step heavy with guilt ... desperation ... doubt ... 'Turn back ... he won't want to see you. You ... with what you have done?'*

*But somehow, there was no going back ...*

*The doorway appeared black ... unseen, I peered inside ... heart pounding ... bones shaking ... Eyes drawn to the light at the centre ... a flickering candle ... spreading its gentle glow ... casting shadows ... the low murmur of conversation ... shapes gradually coming into focus ...*

*... and there he was ...!*

*... as if sensing my presence he lifted his gaze and his eyes met mine ... I looked away ... startled ... embarrassed ...*

*... I held my breath ... nothing had prepared me for that look ...*

*... deep within, I felt the stirrings of grief and shame for all I had been ... for all I had lost ... for all I had seen and felt in my ruined life ...*

*... at that moment, I could have turned away ... I could have run away from here ... but the same impulse which led me to the house that day, led me running to him ... until I found myself beside him ... spilling welled-up tears at his feet ... drying them with my hair as if to wipe away my shame ... kissing them ... blessing them with ointment ...*

*Looking up at him ... I waited for the judgement ... the judgement I had heard so many times before from the holy men of this city ... the harsh words of reproach ... but none came ... not from him ...*

*... not even a question ...*

*... just that look ... seeing through the tears to my broken heart ... to the person I am ... the person I long to be ...*

*... I have no more to give ... no more tears ... the alabaster jar at his feet now empty ... but my heart now full ... wide ... open ... anointed with the healing ointment of mercy and compassion ...'*

**(Allow a few moments of silence)**

When you are ready, slowly withdraw from the scene ...

What about my own story?

***When have I experienced compassion like the woman did? (pause)***

***When have I responded with compassion to another? (pause)***

***Where do I need compassion in my own life? (pause)***

***What prevents me from receiving compassion? (pause)***

***What prevents me from being compassionate? (pause)***

**(Allow a few moments of silence for personal reflection and then lead out of the meditation)**

Notice your breath once more ... become aware of how you feel ... be aware of being back in this room ... when you are ready, open your eyes.

### **Stage 3: Litany of the Senses (20 mins)**



#### **Handout 2 – Prayer Cards**

Based upon the understanding of what they have just heard, invite everyone to select a prayer card template from within the prayer space and to take some time on their own to write a personal litany. They may wish to connect their reflection to something that has stayed with them from previous sessions.

Printed on each of the cards will be the following phrase:

**We have been given eyes to ...**

**We have been given ears to ...**

**We have been given hands to ...**

**We have been given mouths to ...**

**We have been given feet to ...**

**We have been given hearts to ...**

**We have been given Christ to ...**

Give an example to illustrate, e.g. 'We have been given ears to listen to the voices of those who are unheard.' Allow a few minutes for the completion of this exercise.

You might like to play some reflective background music as people complete this task.

#### **Lighting of candles**

Begin by lighting seven candles (one to represent each of the senses). Place each candle in the prayer space and invite everybody to share the line on their prayer card that corresponds with each sense. Repeat this ritual for each of the senses.

### **Stage 4: Blessing of the Hands with Oil (10 mins)**

Following the litany of senses, introduce the blessing of the hands.

As Christ's mission to serve began with his Baptism in the River Jordan, we call to mind our own Baptism and our mission as followers of Christ ...

We have been given hands and hearts to bless one another with the baptismal waters of compassion and mercy. You are now invited to enter into that beautiful image of blessing each other with oil as a symbol of receiving and giving mercy.

Participants pass around the bowl of holy oil and mark each others' hands with a Sign of the Cross, saying ...

### *May your hands be Christ's hands to the poor*

The facilitator should invite a moment of silence and stillness before quietly and gently:

- Reminding participants that this week they end their time together as a group. Their challenge now is to take their action out into their parish and wider world and begin the process of transforming the world with love and mercy.
- Inviting them, during this final part of the prayer, to reflect on what action they will individually commit to at the end of this session, and how they may continue to support each other as a parish.
- Informing them that they will have time to share these reflections at the end of the prayer.

### **Concluding song and prayers**

Listen to/sing the suggested hymn – St Francis of Assisi's 'Make Me a Channel of Your Peace'.



#### **Handout 3** – A Prayer from Zimbabwe

Conclude the session with the 'Prayer from Zimbabwe', inviting participants to read a line each.

Then, say together:

*Loving God, you created us in the image of yourself.*

*Bless our eyes that we may remain awake to see all who suffer in our world.*

*Bless our ears that we may hear the cry of those who seek our help.*

*Bless our hands, that they may be Christ's hands to the poor on earth.*

*Bless our mouths, that they will continue to speak for the voiceless.*

*Bless our feet, that they will guide us along the path of justice and peace.*

*Bless our hearts, that they will love, in equal measure, all of your sons and daughters here on earth.*

*We ask this prayer, through Christ our Lord.*

**Amen.**

After a moment of silence, the facilitator invites the participants to become aware of those around them and to share with each other the Sign of Peace.

Invite them then to move into the final stage of 'Taking Action' together.

### **Stage 5: Taking Action (10 mins)**

At the end of the four sessions, it is important to leave people with a sense that they, as individuals or as a parish community, can become agents for change in our world. Remind them of how they can 'take action' by becoming further involved in the work of Trócaire (and the other local organisations in their parishes) through campaigning, awareness-raising and fundraising, and invite them to share their reflections of what they may commit to.



Distribute **Handout 4** with suggestions of ways to get involved.

Encourage everyone who took part in the programme to fill out an evaluation sheet and return it to the course facilitator.

### **What Next?**

Thank you for facilitating the *Rediscovering Mercy* programme. We hope this has been a fruitful experience for you and would appreciate your thoughts on how it went.

We would be grateful if you could send a summary of the evaluations to Trócaire (contact details on the evaluation sheet). Please include any actions the parish has taken as a result of the programme and what differences it has made.

We would be grateful for any comments on how we could improve this programme, or what further resources would be useful.



# RESOURCES

## Session 1: Handout 1 Quotes on Mercy



- “ ... we must note that Christ, in revealing the love – mercy of God, at the same time demanded from people that they also should be guided in their lives by love and mercy. This requirement forms part of the very essence of the messianic message, and constitutes the heart of the Gospel ethos.

St John Paul II, *Dives in Misericordia*, 3

- “ True mercy, the mercy God gives to us and teaches us, demands justice; it demands that the poor find the way to be poor no longer.

Pope Francis, *The Church of Mercy*

- “ The compassionate heart is in communion with all of life and is willing to enter into suffering with the heart of Christ. Compassion includes awareness, attitude and action. A deeper and clearer look at compassion, the central quality of Christ, enables us to accompany the hurting ones of our personal lives and the larger world with loving kindness. Compassion also teaches us how to live as a person of unbound love.

Joyce Rupp

- “ Remember that even Jesus' most scathing denunciation – a blistering diatribe against the religious leaders of Jerusalem (Mt 23) – ends with Christ weeping over Jerusalem. Compassion coloured everything he did.

John MacArthur

- “ Nothing can make injustice just but mercy.

Robert Frost

- “ If you want others to be happy, practise compassion. If you want to be happy, practise compassion.

Dalai Lama

- “ Compassion is not the same as pity. With compassion, while we are aware of what another is going through, we also honour that other and their path. We are there not to rescue, but understand and to love. Instead of joining the other in his or her pain, we absorb the pain into ourselves and return peace, joy and love.

Sogyal Rinpoche

- “ A new heart I will give you and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

Ezekiel 36:26

- “ Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Matthew 5:7

- “ I have always found that mercy bears richer fruits than strict justice.

Abraham Lincoln

- “ The quality of mercy is not strained; it droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed – it blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.

**William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice***

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- “ Cowardice asks the question: is it safe? Expediency asks the question: is it politic? Vanity asks the question: is it popular? But conscience asks the question: is it right? And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular – but one must take it simply because it is right.

**Martin Luther King Jr**

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- “ God’s mercy can make even the driest land become a garden, can restore life to dry bones (cf. Ez 37:1-14) ... Let us be renewed by God’s mercy, let us be loved by Jesus, let us enable the power of his love to transform our lives too; and let us become agents of this mercy, channels through which God can water the earth, protect all creation and make justice and peace flourish.

**Pope Francis, Easter *Urbi et Orbi* message on 31 March 2013**

- “ Mercy is an action, or more precisely a reaction to someone else’s suffering – now interiorised within oneself – a reaction to a suffering that has come to penetrate one’s own entrails and heart ... Mercy is a basic attitude toward the suffering of another, whereby one reacts to eradicate that suffering for the sole reason that it exists ...

**Jon Sobrino**

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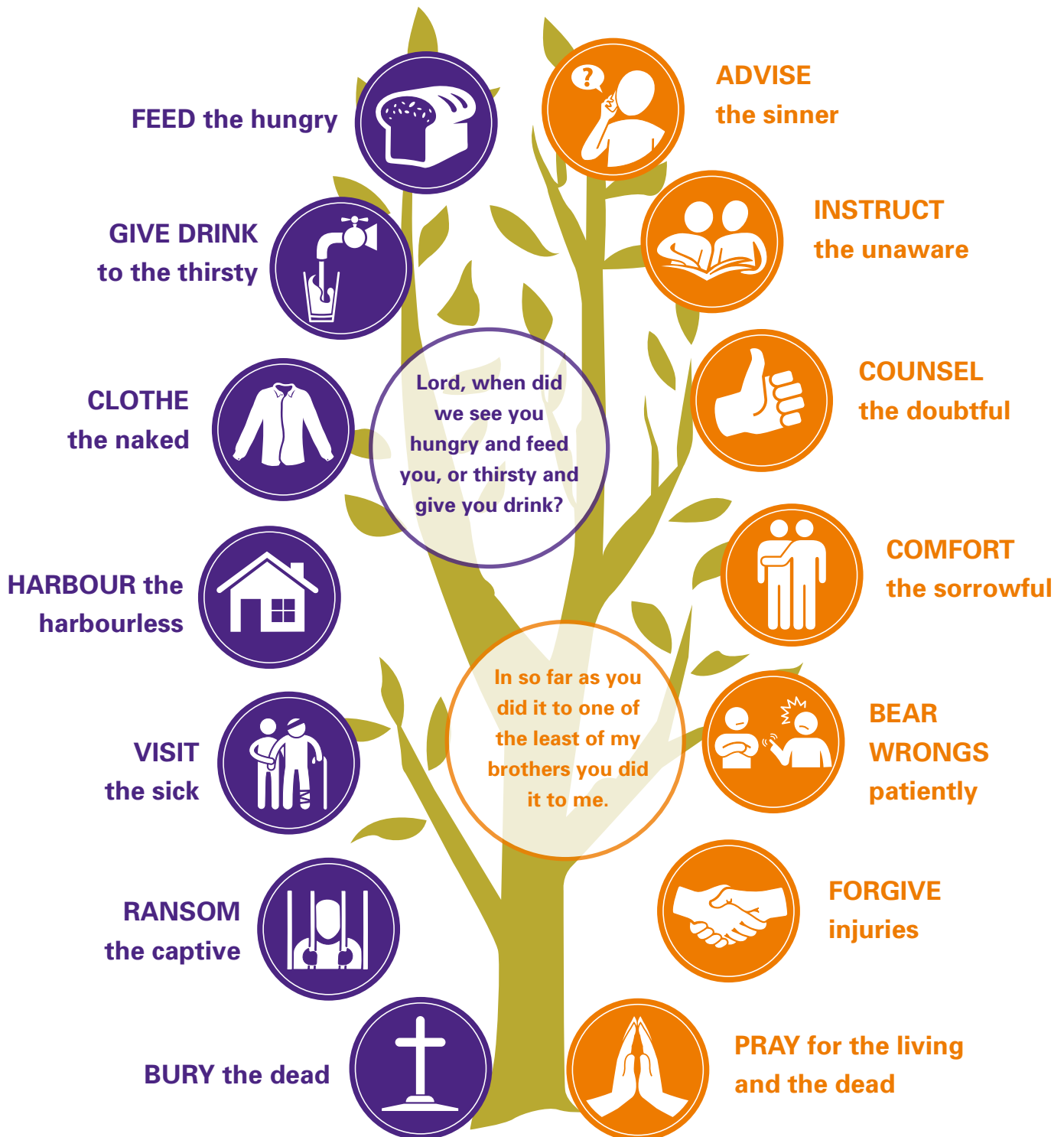
- “ And now the Samaritan enters the stage. What will he do? [ ... ]: His heart is wrenched open. [ ... ]. Seeing this man in such a state is a blow that strikes him ‘viscerally’, touching his soul. [ ... ] Struck in his soul by the lightning flash of mercy, he himself now becomes a neighbour, heedless of any question or danger. The burden of the question thus shifts here. The issue is no longer which other person is a neighbour to me or not. The question is about me. I have to become the neighbour, and when I do, the other person counts for me ‘as myself’.

**Excerpt from Pope Benedict XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth***



## The Corporal Works of Mercy

## The Spiritual Works of Mercy



Matthew 25:31-46

## Session 2: Handout 1

### Luke 10:25-37 The Parable of the Good Samaritan



*Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he said, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What do you read there?' He answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself.' And he said to him, 'You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.'*

*But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbour?' Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now, by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'*

## Session 2: Handout 2

### Notes on Context of the Parable of the Good Samaritan



- This was a parable told by Jesus to a Jewish lawyer in response to the question: 'Who is my neighbour?'
- To feel the full force of the story there is a need to understand something of the bitterly hostile relationship that existed between the Jews and the Samaritans during Jesus' time.
- The Samaritans identified themselves as descendants of the chosen people in the northern kingdom of Israel, but the Jews viewed them as descendants of foreigners who were resettled in the northern kingdom (722 BCE, cf. 2 Kgs 17:24-41).
- The Samaritans only accepted the Torah as sacred scripture, whereas the Jews also accepted the prophets and their writings.
- The Samaritans regarded Mount Gerizim as the true holy place of God, where sacrifice could be offered (Deut 11:29-30; 12:5-14). The Jews insisted it was the Temple in Jerusalem.
- This division was exacerbated by historical conflicts (e.g. King Josiah's destruction of the Samaritan place of worship [2 Kgs 23:19-20]; the exclusion of the Samaritans from reconstituted post-exilic Judah; and Samaritan opposition to the rebuilding of Jerusalem).
- Hostility climaxed when the temple on Mount Gerizim was destroyed in 158 BCE.
- The depth of the hostility is illustrated in Eccles (Sir) 50:25-26, which refers to the Samaritans as 'the foolish people living at Shechem' that 'are not even a people'.



## Session 2: Handout 3

# Mercy in the Great Religious Traditions of the World



- **Islam: Rahmah**

The attribute of Rahmah is regarded as an essential characteristic and quality of Allah. Each chapter of the Qur'an (with the exception of the sixth) begins with the subscription: 'in the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.'

- **Buddhism: Karuna**

In Buddhism, Karuna refers to our ability to relate to one another in so intense a measure that the plight of the other affects us as much as if it had been our own. The term is key to the spiritual path within Buddhism and is identified as one of the four divine states or the four 'Immeasurables' of divine being.

- **Judaism: Tzedakah**

'Tzedakah', literally meaning 'righteousness' or doing the right thing, lies right at the heart of Judaism's understanding of interpersonal relationships. It insists that there is a basic human responsibility to reach out to others. To know God is to act with justice and compassion, to recognise the divine image in other people and to hear the silent cry of those in need.

- **Taoism**

Regard your neighbour's loss or gain as your own loss or gain.

- **Christianity**

*Blessed are the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them. (Mt 5:7)*

*Go and learn the meaning of the words what I want is mercy, not sacrifice. And indeed I did not come to call the virtuous, but sinners. (Mt 9:13)*

*Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You who pay your tithe of mint and dill and cumin and have neglected the weightier matters of the law – justice, mercy, good faith! These you should have practised without neglecting the others. (Mt 23:23)*

*Go home to your people and tell them all what the Lord in his mercy has done for you. (Mk 5:19)*

*But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate. (Lk 15:20-24)*

*Be merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful. (Lk 6:36)*

*'Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?' The expert in the law replied, 'The one who had mercy on him.' Jesus told him, 'Go and do likewise'. (Lk 10:36-37)*

# Session 3: Handout 1

## Introduction to Catholic Social Teaching



### What is Catholic Social Teaching?

The Catholic Church's Social Teaching is a rich treasure of wisdom about building a just society. It is the call to people of faith to be participants amidst the challenges of modern society. Catholic Social Teaching sums up the Church's teaching on issues of social justice and peace.

'The immediate purpose of the Church's social doctrine is to propose the principles and values that can sustain a society worthy of the human person.' (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 580)

### Catholic Social Teaching calls us ...

- to be aware of injustice in the world
- to challenge and change our attitudes
- to take action to bring about a more just world

### What is it based upon?

The Church's teaching on social justice is grounded in scripture and in the knowledge gathered from the Christian community's response to issues of justice throughout history.

Modern Catholic Social Teaching has been articulated through a tradition of **papal documents**. The depth and richness of this tradition can perhaps only be fully understood through a direct reading of these documents.

### Methodology: See, Judge, Act

Following Vatican II, the methodology that has been promoted asks us to read the 'signs of the times' by means of the 'see', 'judge', 'act' method that Joseph Cardijn, a young Belgian priest and founder of the Young Christian Workers movement, made popular amongst student and workers alike. It asks us to approach issues with an open mind, first looking at the issues of social justice as they exist in our communities, before measuring what is happening, and what is at stake in the light of our faith. Finally, we need to decide what action to undertake in response to this injustice.

### Key themes of Catholic Social Teaching

Human Dignity · Solidarity · The Common Good · Participation · Subsidiarity · Peace · Stewardship of Creation

**Human Dignity:** We are made in the image of God. This is the simple starting point of all Catholic Social Teaching. Each member of the human family is equal in dignity and has equal rights because we are all the children of the one God.

**Solidarity:** We are our 'brother's/sister's keeper'. We are responsible for one another in real ways.

**The Common Good:** The conditions that make it possible for each social group and each individual member to achieve their full potential. The rights and responsibilities of individuals and groups must therefore always be kept in balance.

**Participation:** People have both a right and a duty to participate in those decisions that most directly affect them. We are all called to shape our own destinies and have the right and duty to do so.

**Subsidiarity:** The principle of subsidiarity places responsibility as close as possible to the grass roots. The people or groups most directly affected by a decision or policy should have a key decision-making role.

**Promotion of Peace:** Peace is a positive, action-oriented concept. In the words of St John Paul II, 'Peace is not just the absence of war. It involves mutual respect and confidence between peoples and nations.' There is a close relationship in Catholic teaching between peace and justice. Peace is the fruit of justice and is dependent upon right order among human beings.

**Stewardship of Creation:** The goods of the earth are gifts from God and are intended for the benefit of everyone. We have a responsibility to care for these goods as stewards and trustees, not as mere consumers and users. How we treat the environment is a measure of our stewardship.

Fundamentally, Catholic Social Teaching reminds us that our faith is a faith that does justice and commits us to take action.

Adapted from Sandie Gornish for the Loyola Institute Australian Jesuits web.sndden.org/peace4all/cst/TipsCSTDdocuments.pdf and cctwincities.org/CatholicSocialTeaching. See also jedo.perthcatholic.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Four-Key-Principles-of-Catholic-Social-Teaching-Loyola-Institute.pdf for more information on 'Four Key Principles of Catholic Social Teaching'.

### Further resources on Catholic Social Teaching

catholicsocialteaching.org.uk  
usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/  
catholic-social-teaching/seven-themes-of-catholic-  
social-teaching.cfm  
caritas.org.au/learn/catholic-social-teaching

*Option for the Poor and for the Earth*

Donal Dorr

Orbis Books, 2012

ISBN13: 9781570759741

*Catholic Social Teaching: Our Best Kept Secret*

Edward P. DeBerri, James E. Hug with Peter J.

Henriot, Michael J. Schultheis

Orbis Books, 2003

ISBN 1570754853, 9781570754852

*Following Jesus as Pilgrims, Servants and Prophets in  
the 21st Century: Letters to My Grandchildren*

Michael Hornsby-Smith

Fast Print, 2014

ISBN 978 178035 015 7

*Catholic Social Teaching and Movements*

Marvin L. Krier Mich

Twenty-Third Publications, 1998

ISBN 9 780896 229365

*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*

Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace

St Paul's, 2004.

*Gaudium et Spes*

Pope Paul VI

Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1965

www.vatican.va/archive/hist\_councils/ii\_vatican\_

council/documents/vat-ii\_cons\_19651207\_gaudium-et-  
spes\_en.html

*Sollicitudo rei Socialis*

Saint John Paul II

Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1987

w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/  
documents/hf\_jp-ii\_enc\_30121987\_sollicitudo-rei-  
socialis.html

## Session 3: Handout 2

# Water and Women's Rights in Malawi



### Sitelia's Story: Malawi

It's 5 a.m. in the Dedza region in central Malawi and the first thing on everyone's mind is 'water'. Women and girls, young and old, arrive at the Kamboni River, buckets in tow, to queue and wait for water. When their turn comes, they hunker down barefoot on the muddy riverbed and scoop water into their buckets. They then make the long walk home, balancing unwieldy fifteen-litre buckets of water on their heads. The daily hustle for water has begun. Sitelia Chitsonga knows this struggle all too well.

This gathering of water is part of her daily ritual. She is a mother of eight and a widow. 'I do worry about my children. What they eat and what I can give them,' she says. Sitelia's routine is similar to other women in the community. She adds: 'I go and fetch water three times a day. The children go twice a day. The water is used for cooking, drinking and washing. Sometimes I go and bath in the river. The water looks clean but it is not. It is not treated water.'

Sitelia doesn't have breakfast, preferring instead to go straight to her farm after collecting water. Her farm consists of two acres, where she grows nuts, sweet potatoes, maize and cassava. She also has a goat, a pig, three chickens and a duck.

Like others in the village, between January to May Sitelia struggles to provide food for her family. Despite all of her responsibilities, she still manages to find time to be a member of the local water committee, which was set up in her local village by Trócaire's partner CADECOM. Water shortages are a shared burden amongst this community. Together, they are hopeful this issue will be resolved and that their needs will be met. Their needs are immediate – a borehole and irrigation, clean water and food that lasts a year. Until these basic human rights are met, the people of Dedza will continue to worry, continue to walk and continue their wait for water.



To see a video on how Trócaire is helping people in Malawi to gain access to water log on to [vimeo.com/77419642](https://vimeo.com/77419642)



Women in Cikiwawa village in Malawi building a water reservoir in preparation for drought. Chikwawa has been hit by drought and inconsistent rainfall. This community in Nyambio village is being helped by Trócaire partner CADECOM to cope better with drought, growing more drought-resistant crops and conserving water. (Photo: Alan Whelan/Trócaire)



## Session 3: Handout 3

### Safely Delivering New Life in Guatemala



Small hands grab the breezy pink curtain which hangs over the low entrance door to the house of fifty-seven-year-old Mayan midwife Vicenta Cac Jimenez. Curious eyes are eager to see what's going on. Vicenta helps bring life in to the world, and the small children in her village – many of whom she delivered – want to know whether there will be any new arrivals today. She has worked for twenty-seven years as a midwife in this remote village of one hundred and fifty families in the La Benidición community in the Guatemalan highlands. She has delivered in the region of nine hundred children over all those years, giving, as she says, her 'time and knowledge for free'.



Although a midwife for many years, it was not until Vicenta received a 'Trócaire Christmas Gift' that she received formal training. This gift, generously funded by the Irish public, is called 'safe motherhood' and it has transformed Vicenta's way of working, saving lives along the way.

Access to resources in Guatemala is extremely unequal. This is reflected in the high levels of malnutrition among children and the alarming incidence of deaths of mothers during or after birth. Basic maternity services are virtually non-existent in many parts of Guatemala, and midwives often have to work without proper facilities or sanitation. The CERNE clinic, run by Dr Edwin Rojas, was one of the many beneficiary organisations that was able to support hundreds of midwives with equipment and training as a result of the Trócaire Gift of Change. Prior to the training, in the region of twenty-five mothers died each year during childbirth in La Benidición. However, in recent years, not a single woman died as a result of childbirth complications.

Vicenta has a great sense of pride about her work and knows that it carries lots of responsibility. She is the only midwife in the area: 'When one of my patients is unwell, I get nervous. A good midwife is concerned about all her patients.' Vicenta surveys the safe motherhood kit on one of the five beds in the room where expectant women can come during the day for care and attention. 'Before Trócaire helped I worked with my bare hands,' she says.

With this practical gift, Vicenta can now read a baby's heartbeat before birth, and weigh it with a small scales after birth. She has a wide basin for water, packets of sterilised gloves and a pair of scissors. These scissors mean she can cut the umbilical cord in a more hygienic way. Although it sounds like an exaggeration, a machete has been used in the past. 'I could never have bought this equipment,' she says, 'I want to say thanks to the people that help.' In the evening the house becomes Vicenta's home again. She, herself, had thirteen children but five sadly died. Four sons and one daughter currently share the house with her and her husband, coffee picker Pedro Luis Garcia. In the morning Vicenta will get up and extend her welcome once again to any young mother that comes to her door, eager to help and support her and her unborn child.

All in a day's work.

## Session 3: Handout 4

### Family Struggles in Palestine



Waled Abohanya was farming his land when the soldiers came. There were dozens of them, supported by dozens more policemen. They had a simple mission: they were there to take Waled's land. 'They arrived with no warning,' he recalls. 'When they bulldozed my land clear, it was like they were bulldozing my heart. It felt as though the bulldozer was driving over my stomach. I showed them the deeds for the land but they ignored them. I told them that one day I would be able to take my land back and they started laughing at me. That was the worst part.



'There were fifty or sixty soldiers and another fifty policemen, along with government officials and the settlers themselves. One hundred and fifty people with guns against one man in a field.' The soldiers bulldozed his crops and the land was officially handed over to an Israeli settlement. This incident, which took place in 2010, was the second time Waled had lost land to Israeli settlers. In 1995, Israeli officials arrived at his farm and told him that they would return the following year in order to draw an official border between his land and the settler's land. The officials did return the following year, but there were no negotiations. 'They arrived on my farm and told me they were taking my land,' he recalls. 'I asked them could they at least wait until I had harvested but they would not wait. I asked them could they at least give me a few hours to remove the pipes from the ground but while I was talking to them they entered the land and bulldozed everything.'

Waled's farm was once fifteen acres, but today he has just a little over five acres remaining. The rest of his land is now owned by the Israeli settlers, who plan on planting it next summer. When that happens, Waled and his family will be completely surrounded by settler farms. They wonder how long it will be before they come back for his remaining five acres.

'I fear a lot for the future,' he says. 'We are surrounded by confiscated land. They have taken land off me twice, and every day I expect them to come back a third time. There is no justice here. Look at how the settlers live and how we live. The settlers confiscate our land and attack us. It is not safe here for us. It is a huge humiliation and a loss of dignity. To see a settler illegally working on your land is the same as them walking on your body as you lie on the ground. The conditions we face now make life very hard and it will get worse. I am forty years old and for each of those forty years life has got worse for us.'

Waled takes hope from international opposition to the settlements, which are illegal under international law. He hopes that the international community will be able to put pressure on Israel to stop the illegal seizure of Palestinian land in the West Bank. 'People should come here and see what is happening with their own eyes. It is important for people to know what is happening here. I am proud of the relationship between Palestinians and the Irish people. It makes me happy that people in Ireland believe in standing up for our rights. My strength comes from my belief in human rights and in justice. Everybody should have justice. Justice means full equality. It means everybody being equal to everybody else. There is no justice here.'



Trócaire have produced a resource for groups travelling on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. 'Come and See' invites groups to share and pray with those in the Holy Land who are struggling for justice and peace. It is a portal for enquiry rather than a comprehensive guide, and invites pilgrimage groups to explore how the message of the Gospel can be encountered in a lived way during their visit to the Holy Land. This resource is available at [trocaire.org/resources/parishes](https://trocaire.org/resources/parishes).

## Session 3: Handout 5

### The Ebola Crisis in Sierra Leone: Patrick's Story



Patrick Sesay's life began to fall apart in October 2014. Before then, life was difficult but happy. He was a teacher and his wife Aminata sold vegetables at a local market. At the age of sixty Patrick was looking forward to retiring and growing old watching his children raise the next generation.

On 18 October everything changed when his daughter Ammah fell sick, complaining of dizziness and fever. Her health worsened quickly and within days she passed away in their home.

Over the coming weeks, the Ebola virus spread rapidly through the house. In total, twelve members of the extended family caught the virus. In a matter of weeks, seven would die. Patrick lived in the house for the whole time that Ebola ran riot through its walls. He watched in terror and agony as first his daughter died, then his wife, then his son, then another daughter.



He sits outside the house now and can hardly speak of those days and weeks. His plans for a gentle retirement are now gone. Ebola has destroyed everything this family had built over years of hard work. Over the past year, we have all heard about the impacts of Ebola. Over twenty thousand people in West Africa have been infected, over half of whom were in Sierra Leone.

Trócaire responded to the crisis by providing food to families such as Patrick's who were living under quarantine. We also provided new mattresses, pillows, blankets and other items to families who had been affected by Ebola, as well as raising awareness in communities on how to stop the spread of the killer virus.

Our response saved lives and brought hope and comfort to people as they battled this horrific outbreak. Thankfully, Ebola is now under control in Sierra Leone. Infection rates have fallen dramatically and there is confidence that the worst of the crisis is over.

However, our efforts to help those affected are only just beginning. The long-term impacts of this crisis will be huge. Tens of thousands of people were quarantined during the planting season, which means they won't have any crops to harvest over the coming months. Likewise, many people lost their jobs when businesses were forced to close, leaving them with no income.

Hunger is on the rise. Trócaire is working with families to make sure they have enough food – but we need your help. We are providing farmers with seeds and tools as they attempt to rebuild their lives. We are also working with affected communities to provide counselling to people whose lives have been completely destroyed by Ebola.

## Session 3: Handout 6

### Archbishop Romero Prayer: A Step Along the Way



It helps, now and then, to take the long view.

The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said. No prayer fully expresses our faith.

No confession brings perfection. No pastoral visit brings wholeness.

No programme accomplishes the Church's mission.

No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realising that.

This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,

an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results,

but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own.

Composed by Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw.

(The words of the prayer are attributed to Romero, but never spoken by him). Reprinted with permission from Little Books of the Diocese of Saginaw, Inc.



## Session 4: Handout 1

### Luke 7:36-39, 44-47: Jesus, the Woman and the Pharisee



One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table. And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him – that she is a sinner.'

Then turning towards the woman, he said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.'

## Session 4: Handout 2

### Litany of the Senses: Prayer Card



We have been given eyes to ...

We have been given ears to ...

We have been given hands to ...

We have been given mouths to ...

We have been given feet to ...

We have been given hearts to ...

We have been given Christ to ...

## Session 4: Handout 3

### A Prayer from Zimbabwe



We have been given eyes to see and ears to listen  
We have been given tongues ... to speak for the innocent ... and the guilty,  
To praise, encourage and support,  
To proclaim in season and out, the news that is good news.

We have been given hands to reach out and strengthen the fearful,  
To protect the weak and lift up the fallen,  
To embrace the dying,  
To share burdens and wipe away tears ...  
To build up, not to tear down,  
To fan the embers, not to quench the smouldering wick,  
To bless, not to strike,  
To give, not to withhold.

We have been given minds to judge ... ourselves, not others,  
Situations, not motives;  
To seek solutions, not excuses, justice, not expediency;  
To discern the essential from the merely desirable,  
The good from the less good and the less good from the bad ...  
We have been given hearts to feel,  
To interpret the hidden meanings beneath the words spoken,  
To open doors closed by despair,  
To discover the best in others and set it free,  
To understand and to forgive ... or to simply forgive ...  
To comfort the sorrowful, to love and thereby heal the scars.

We have been given all these things so that people around us  
May neither doubt nor forget God's presence among them;  
That in our touch, our words, our actions,  
God may touch and speak and act and others, in turn, may sense the presence of God  
when we pass by, and seeing us, know with little effort  
That they can catch a glimpse of God.

*Just One Year: Prayer and Worship Through the Christian Year,*

Timothy Radcliffe and Jean Harrison, eds., London: Darton, Longman and Todd/CAFOD, Christian Aid, 2006.

## Session 4: Handout 4

# The Next Step: How Your Parish Can Engage More with the Work of the Church for Social Justice



- Find out more about the work of Trócaire and how you can get involved.
- Find out what local organisations working on social justice exist in your parish. Are there any issues that are not being responded to that the parish could take action on?
- **Volunteer with Trócaire.** Trócaire has vibrant volunteer groups in numerous locations across Ireland, north and south. As a volunteer you can get involved in a range of activities including campaigning and activism, school and youth work, parish representation, community fundraising and selling Trócaire gifts during the Christmas season. For more information on volunteering with Trócaire visit [trocaire.org/getinvolved/volunteer](https://trocaire.org/getinvolved/volunteer) or email [volunteering@trocaire.org](mailto:volunteering@trocaire.org).
- **Invite a speaker** from Trócaire to speak in your parish.
- **Have a picnic, barbeque or party** to celebrate the different cultures in your own parish, welcoming, in particular, those who are new to the community.
- **Have a Fairtrade coffee morning** in your community/parish centre. Send a special invitation to those working or volunteering in any organisation that serves others or works for social justice. The money raised could be a contribution to a local organisation working for social justice.
- **Have a night of prayer** in solidarity with a community here in Ireland, north and south, or in another part of the world where Trócaire is working. You could ask them for information to highlight or share.
- **Discuss ways you can live more simply as a community** to reduce your impact on God's creation and his people. Perhaps you could start a car-pooling scheme for those who drive to Mass, or encourage people to come up with their own pledge to reduce their carbon footprint. As a parish who might like to explore the theme of climate justice in more depth, you could run the Trócaire GLAS programme, a pastoral resource to supplement *The Cry of the Earth*. Available online at [www.trocaire.org/resources/parishes](https://www.trocaire.org/resources/parishes).
- **Have a parish mission** on the theme of social justice or the environment, and invite local and national speakers who work for justice to address the congregation.
- **Have an art competition/exhibition** on the theme of 'The Environment', 'Justice' or 'Community' for schools within the parish or between neighbouring parishes.
- **Think about becoming a Fairtrade parish or an eco-congregation.**
- **Have a reflection evening for young people** in the parish on the theme of 'Environmental Justice' (it's a great evangelisation tool with young adults, which has proven its worth on numerous occasions!). See Trócaire's website for youth/schools resource and ideas. Why not contact your diocesan youth coordinator for assistance? Trócaire could also provide you with resources for this. Their GLAS and Justfaith programmes are specifically designed with the 18–35 years age group in mind.
- **Launch, or relaunch, a parish justice and peace group.** As baptised Catholics we are called to act justly and to speak for the marginalised. Having a justice and peace group can add a new dimension to the faith of a community. It ensures that parishes are listening and acting out the demands of the Gospel message. Their aims are to highlight injustices against humanity or creation, to educate their own parish communities about these injustices, to build a local campaign around them, and thus bring about a lasting change in affected areas. Contact Social Justice Ireland for more information at [socialjustice.ie](https://socialjustice.ie) or the Irish Episcopal Council for Justice and Peace at [facebook.com/councilforjusticeandpeaceireland](https://facebook.com/councilforjusticeandpeaceireland).
- Set up or reconnect with your parish outreach group to look at what more your parish and local schools can do to reach out into the community, both locally and globally.

## Session 4: Handout 5

### Course Evaluation Sheet



What has been the best part of participating in this programme?

---

Is there any part of the programme you feel could be improved?

---

How have you been inspired to answer the call to justice?

---

What changes have you seen in your parish as a result of this course?

---

How would you rate the overall content?

Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor

Comments:

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What further information and resources would you like to support your involvement?

---

Please return your completed evaluation sheet to the course facilitator. Thank you!

Facilitator: Please return a summary of comments to [churchofficer@trocaire.ie](mailto:churchofficer@trocaire.ie)





# Trocaire

Working for a just world.

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