

# Parish Twinning with Catholic Social Justice Principles

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## **LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON**

*If this IS a priority, then we:*

- Take time to honor and appreciate our twinning partners' insights on spirituality, culture (music, art, literature, food), and their views of politics and economics. We can plan ways to share and learn from each others' faith in Christ. Let us "mission" to each other, seeing Christ in each other.
- Celebrate our twinning partners' religious and special feasts, their patron saints, etc.
- Humility, flexibility, respect and open-mindedness are key.
- Learn from and share with our twinning partners the ways we promote life, "womb to tomb" as individuals and as a parish.



*If this is NOT a priority, then we:*

- May turn twinning into project based on money, rather than building Christian relationships.
- Design and carry projects that do not promote sustainability and consensus.

## **CALL TO FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND PARTICIPATION**

*If this IS a priority, then we:*

- Find ways for families to become involved in twinning efforts: praying for, visiting, writing, e-mailing and connecting to the families of the twinning parish....create relationships!
- Design parish plans to involve members of various parish groups to participate in twinning: Prayer groups, RCIA, St. Vincent DePaul members, scouts, school and religious ed teachers, students and PTA. All can benefit by learning about our twinning partners' lifestyle and issues by inviting parents and students from our twinning partners' culture to speak in our groups.

*If this is NOT a priority, then we:*

- Keep twinning efforts to a small elite group in the parish.

## **RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

*If this IS a priority, then we:*

- Educate the parish about the social injustices and their causes that our twinning partners may be suffering. Seek advice from the archdiocesan Catholic Social Action and Mission Offices.
- As individuals and as a parish join such advocacy Christian/Catholic organizations as African Faith and Justice Network (AFJN.org), Washington Office on Latin America (wola.org) Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns (maryknollogc.org). Supporting these larger advocacy efforts can have a greater impact on the entire region in which our twinning partner is located.
- Write to and visit our government representatives encouraging them to respond to legislation that can help eliminate social injustices.

*If this is NOT a priority, then we:*

- Close our eyes, minds, souls and hearts to the deeper issues that actually create poverty, hunger, sexism, racism, war, etc.

## **OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE**

*If this IS a priority, then we:*

- Put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first into our twinning plans. What input do they have when programs are planned? What may they teach us about faith, community and social justice?
- Choose joint twinning projects that empower people and that do not create dependency while building up the community. Twinning is not about “fixing” the other’s “problems.”

*If this is NOT a priority, then we:*

- Allow the “donors” to do all the planning, implementation and evaluation of projects.

## **THE DIGNITY OF WORK AND THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS**

*If this IS a priority, then we:*

- Educate our parishioners about our twinning partners’ working conditions, the services and products they provide, their availability to form and join farmers’/workers’ organizations/unions.
- Find ways to eliminate causes of unemployment, under-employment or exploitation by working with such organizations as Bread For the World (bread.org), Network (networklobby.org), jubileusa.org, and the U.S. Catholic bishops’ website on many social justice issues at (www.usccb.org/sdwp/index.htm (USCC Department of Social Development & World Peace)

*If this is NOT a priority, then we:*

- May be ignoring important ways to empower people into decent, life-giving jobs.

## **SOLIDARITY**

*If this IS a priority, then we:*

- Carefully listen to and respect the needs and plans of the twinning partner and then implement projects *with* and not for each other. With your partners, develop a covenant and mission statement with a clear purpose, goals, and expectation to be evaluated later on. Dialogue!
- Emphasize forming personal and parish relationships that build equal partnerships and mutuality. Discovering and sharing each others gifts and talents to create an attitude of reciprocity is key.
- Make an effort to reach out to individuals who are originally from our twinning partner’s area that may now be living in our local area. Consult with organizations like our archdiocesan refugee settlement office (513) 421-3131 and Hispanic Services at (513) 761-1588.
- Stand with those who need our solidarity, i.e. immigrants in our area, and by working with such national Catholic organizations like [www.justiceforimmigrants.org](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org)

*If this is NOT a priority, then we:*

- Demean persons and parishes by operating out of paternalism and pity.

## **CARE FOR GOD’S CREATION**

*If this IS a priority, then we:*

- Learn from and share with our partners how we respect our own local environments and the environmental challenges we both face.
- Find ways to improve/protect our own ecology and that of our partners’ at: [conservation.catholic.org](http://conservation.catholic.org) or locally, the archdiocesan Social Action Office (513) 421-3131.

*If this is NOT a priority, then we:*

- May miss out on new ways we can appreciate and care for God’s creation that we could learn from our partners.

