

## A SOCIAL JUSTICE REFLECTION: GOOD THINGS COME IN THREES



Christian life has three interrelated features: faith, hope, and love (and “the greatest of these is love”).

God is three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Woody Hayes, a football coach at The Ohio State University, was quoted as saying “only three things can happen when you pass and two of them are bad.”

In today’s First Reading Elisha takes twenty loaves and feeds a hundred. In today’s Gospel reading Jesus takes five barley loaves and two fish, gives thanks and feeds a crowd of five thousand people who had followed him and were now hungry. This story is about feeding food to the hungry but it’s also a metaphor for feeding the souls of the spiritually hungry.

With only his words Jesus evangelizes to a crowd of 5000. Jesus begins building a church with only 12 apostles. With only this small community of apostles and disciples, who Jesus sends forth into the world (“Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature”), the word of God is proclaimed to the ends of the earth.

In *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict XVI wrote that “the Church’s deepest nature is expressed in her three-fold responsibility: of proclaiming the word of God, celebrating the sacraments, and exercising the ministry of charity. These duties presuppose each other and are inseparable.” (Pope Benedict explains that “Justice is the primary way of charity or, in Paul VI’s words, “the minimum measure” of it.”)

The Office of Life, Justice and Peace is charged with promoting the social ministry of the Catholic Church throughout the archdiocese. The filter for this evangelization is Catholic social teaching. That is, the focus of the Office is the evangelization of “justice”, one of the three constitutive, inseparable responsibilities for being Catholic.

The Mission of the Office of Life, Justice and Peace embodies this responsibility: **To inspire and form Catholic disciples, who are grounded in Catholic social teaching, equipped with Christ’s words and action to be salt and light and empowered by the many gifts of the Holy Spirit, to be strong builders of God’s kingdom of justice and faithful witnesses of His love.**

Flowing from this mission statement, the Office of Life, Justice and Peace has three aspirational goals:

One, that every archdiocesan parishioner knows that the Office exists. I am well aware of the challenge this presents; I was a parishioner in this archdiocese for twenty-two years before I heard of the Office of Justice and Peace (as it was known then).

Two, that all parishioners are aware of “Catholic social teaching”; that it is no longer “the best kept secret of the Catholic Church” (at least within the archdiocese).

Three, that every pastor and their parishioners knows what information and activities the Office provides in support of Catholic social teaching and life, justice and peace (social justice).

There are three elements to being Catholic and the third one – social justice – needs every opportunity of evangelization: bulletin information, sharing JustPeace with every parishioner, [subscribing](#) to the electronic JustPeace, people creating a Respect Life or Peace and Justice ministry, etc.

When, with the power of the Holy Spirit and out of love, we feed the Catholic imperative of working for justice to the spiritually hungry, many things can happen, and none of them are bad.

(Sunday Readings for July 29, 2012)



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Office of Life, Justice, and Peace