

# The ART of Catholic Social Teaching

## Act – Reflect – Transform

*The goal of the ART process is to infuse the values and work of the building God's Reign of justice and peace into our lives and world.*

### Act

**Act in charity** to meet immediate and urgent needs. Act to alleviate the symptoms of social problems, such as feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, resettle refugees, protect victims of domestic violence, collect recyclables. Perform the Corporal Works of Mercy: feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the imprisoned, visit the sick, bury the dead.

#### Charity...

- Focuses on the needs of individuals, families, and creation
- Looks at individual situations of need
- Meets immediate and urgent needs
- Addresses painful individual symptoms of social problems

### Reflect

**Reflect** on the root causes and Catholic social teaching.

- Ask Why? Why are people hungry, homeless, uprooted, battered or discriminated against? Why is our ecosystem deteriorating?
- Listen to those who are most directly affected: the poor and the marginalized.
- Ask deeper questions that challenge the status quo.
- Explore the underlying causes poverty, violence, homelessness, racism, ecological devastation, and other issues.
- What does Scripture and Catholic social teaching say about these social issues and their causes?

### Transform

**Transform in justice** the root social causes and social structures that contribute to suffering and injustice. Social transformation is a different kind of action. Transformation gets at root causes; it does not stop at alleviating symptoms. We can transform our communities and our world through advocating for just laws and public policies, working with organized low-income people, patronizing or boycotting businesses based on social values, living simply and

ecologically, investing in socially responsible ways, creating new social structures (e.g., low-income housing).

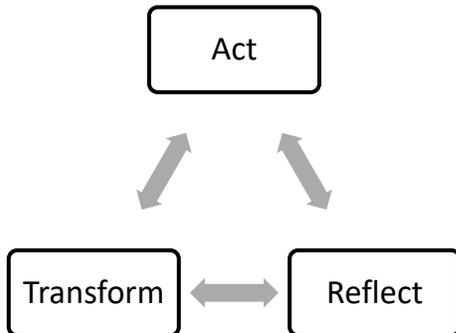
Justice...

- Focuses on the rights of individuals, families, and creation
- Analyzes social situations or social structures
- Works for long-term social change
- Addresses the underlying social causes of problems
- Relies on just laws and fair social structures

(From: *Leader's Guide to Sharing Catholic Social Teaching*. USCCB, 2000)

# Using the ART of Catholic Social Teaching

Social Issue:



ACT	REFLECT	TRANSFORM
... to meet immediate and urgent needs (charity)	... on root causes and Catholic social teaching	... the root social causes (justice)