

Nazareth Social Justice Group
Social Justice Statement
January 2014

Principles

- As a Christian community, we are part of the body of Christ and through baptism become the hands of God in our world.
- As Jesus taught us, and as an outcome of our baptism, we are committed to justice and the support of the vulnerable, marginalized and the oppressed.
- The Social Justice Group identifies, initiates, structures and manages Nazareth Parish social justice activity.
- Any activity will reflect the informed and educated views of Parish people.
- Activity can be international, national or local.

Actions

Implementation of social justice in a Christian community can be both through speaking out as well as doing, will follow the three foundations below and will always be based on the message of Jesus:

1. Education

- The Social Justice Group must educate itself to discern where it can be effective, responsive to the interests and capacities of the community it represents and ensure consistency with the teachings of Jesus.
- The Social Justice Group will contribute to social justice awareness and understanding within the community it represents and with partner-communities¹.

2. Outreach

- Outreach means working with the vulnerable, the oppressed and those seeking justice in our own and other communities. While improvements in life quality may be a result, it is just as important to show that our community empathizes with their struggles.
- The Social Justice Group's role is to investigate, consider and define outreach projects that meet the principles above, that support the informed and educated views of our community and are within the capabilities of the Parish to enact successfully at the time.
- The Social Justice Group is tasked the development of agreed projects and then managing them and reporting on its activities to the parish.
- Developing and managing activities includes fund raising, ensuring that funds are effectively utilized, reporting for education and accountability purposes, and ensuring that there are means for nurturing meaningful understanding and relationships with partner communities and target recipients².

3. Advocacy

- Advocacy is being a voice for those denied justice because they are vulnerable, oppressed, powerless and marginalized. The Social Justice Group will use its talents to give voice to their issues and ensure that cries for help are heard.³
- The Social Justice Group will promote the need for action, choose needs where we as a parish can make a difference, and provide leadership and direction for the parish in the social justice space.

¹ For example in terms of education, REACH Vietnam offers us the opportunity to better understand how ethnic minority people in Vietnam live, and to benefit from aspects of their culture that can enhance our own community and personal lives.

² The Social Justice Group, for example, was responsible for the decision to accept Reach Vietnam as a worthwhile social justice activity for our parish and obtaining broader support for it via the Parish Pastoral Council. In managing the activity, the SJG continues to be responsible for fund raising and the level of commitment. The SJG is responsible for ongoing communications with the community in Kon Tum, via visits of parish people, as well as more regular electronic communication, both to build the relationship as well as to ensure that moneys are safely transferred, spent in accordance with the original agreements and that accountability and impacts are monitored. The SJG will report the the Parish on a regular basis.

³ "When I feed the hungry, they call me a saint. When I ask why they have no food, they call me a Communist." (Archbishop Helder Camara)