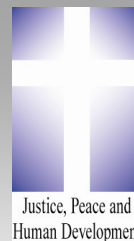




# Caritas in Veritate



## Group Study Session 4: The Unity of the Human Family and Global Solidarity

### PREPARATION

Total Session Time: 75 Minutes

#### Before the meeting

Distribute Pope Benedict XVI's 2009 encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*. You can order copies of the encyclical from [www.usccbpublishing.org](http://www.usccbpublishing.org), or get the text of the encyclical online at [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va).

Copy and distribute the handout included with this session, which provides quotes from *Caritas in Veritate* on global solidarity (pp. 8-9). Encourage participants to become familiar with the entire encyclical prior to the session, and especially, to read those paragraphs from which the quotes on the handout are taken.

Arrange the chairs in a circle and set up a prayer space with an open Bible on a low table in the center of the circle. Decorate the prayer space with a cloth, candles, and flowers (but be sure that these items do not obstruct the view of those around the circle when seated).

Open the Bible to Matthew 5:1-16, and select three persons ahead of time to read, at the appropriate times, 1) the Scripture passage, 2) the bulleted objectives of *Catholics Confront Global Poverty*, and 3) passages from *Caritas in Veritate* on "global solidarity" from the handout. Ask them to read slowly, and for the Scripture reader to return the Bible to its place of honor after the reading.

For additional group study of *Caritas in Veritate*, see the other study sessions at [www.usccb.org/jphd/caritasinveritate](http://www.usccb.org/jphd/caritasinveritate). For additional group study of Catholic social teaching, order *In the Footsteps of Jesus Resource Manual on Catholic Social Teaching* and the USCCB video of the same name from USCCB Publishing at [www.usccbpublishing.org/productdetails.cfm?sku=5-499](http://www.usccbpublishing.org/productdetails.cfm?sku=5-499), and see the educational materials at [www.usccb.org/sdwp/foreducators.shtml](http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/foreducators.shtml).

Remind everyone that the purpose of the gathering is to reflect in faith on Pope Benedict's encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate* (*Charity in Truth*). Explain to participants that an "encyclical" is a letter that is a "teaching document" by the Holy Father. A "social encyclical" applies the consistent, traditional moral teachings of the Church to the social and economic challenges of the current day. The teaching letter *Caritas in Veritate* was written to address the current economic crisis, and deals with moral aspects of economic life, poverty and development, human rights and duties, environmental responsibility, and other moral and economic issues.



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## INTRODUCTIONS

5 minutes

Invite everyone to briefly introduce himself or herself, and to share one word that captures how he or she feels when hearing the title of the session “The Unity of the Human Family and Global Solidarity.” Keep the introductions brief. Invite everyone to place herself or himself in the presence of God.

## OPENING PRAYER

5 minutes

Ask the first reader, selected before the session, to read Matthew 5:1-16.

*Pause* for silent reflection on the Word of God for about 20 seconds.

Next, the Leader should *pray*:

*Father, your truth is made known in your Word.  
Guide us to seek the truth of the human person.  
Teach us the way to love because you are love.*

*Jesus, you embody Love and Truth,  
Help us to recognize your face in the poor.  
Enable us to live out our vocation to bring love and justice to your people.*

*Holy Spirit, you inspire us to transform our world.  
Empower us to seek the common good for all persons.  
Give us a spirit of solidarity and make us one human family.*

*We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Leader: Let us open ourselves to God’s will for our world by praying in the words that Jesus taught us.

All: (recite in unison the Lord’s Prayer)

## INTRODUCTORY DISCUSSION

10 minutes

*If this is your group’s first study session, ask participants to look at the “Social Encyclical Primer” handout (pp. 6-7). Ask them to read it prior to the session. Invite participants to discuss the following three questions:*

- 1. How do the scriptures and the teaching and example of Jesus call us to live our faith in the practice of charity, the pursuit of justice, and the search for peace?*
- 2. Why does the Church speak out on social issues? What can the Church and its teaching offer our society and world?*
- 3. How familiar are you with the Church’s social teachings and the documents listed on the primer? Do any of the topics covered by past encyclicals catch your attention in particular? Why?*



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### ENCYCLICAL EXCERPTS

5 minutes

Explain that participants will now hear some excerpts from *Caritas in Veritate*. First, some excerpts will be read related to the theme of “global solidarity.” After the excerpts are read, participants will be invited to respond to some discussion questions. (See handout at the end of this session.)

After the reader has read the excerpts on global solidarity, provide some guidelines for the discussion. Be sure that everyone has an opportunity to respond to each question. Remind the participants that the purpose of the discussion is to explore our faith, not to debate with one another. Some groups find it helpful to use the “mutual invitation” method to move the sharing along. Each participant shares his or her reflections to a question, and then invites another person who has not shared to do so.

To help create a positive space for faith sharing, ask the participants to observe these simple guidelines:

Listen carefully.

Use “I” statements. (Take responsibility for what you express. Do not speak for “them.”)

Help all to participate. (Do not dominate.)

Stay on the topic and stay focused on the Pope’s message.

Be respectful and charitable at all times.

After sharing these guidelines, use these questions for discussion on global solidarity:

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does Pope Benedict mean when he writes “As society becomes ever more globalized, it makes us neighbors but does not make us brothers”? What does our faith teach us about becoming one human family? What implications does this have for us as Catholics?
2. What general similarities did you notice between the quotations from *Caritas in Veritate* by Pope Benedict XVI and the objectives of *Catholics Confront Global Poverty*?
3. What does Pope Benedict mean when he says “people themselves have the prime responsibility to work from their own development”? What does this have to do with “grass roots” participation?
4. The Holy Father argues that trade can reduce poverty, but sometimes doesn’t? Why is this so? Is anyone familiar with “fair trade” goods that can “guarantee their producers a decent return”?



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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

5. Why does Pope Benedict say that poor countries ought to be involved in “regulating the exploitation” of natural resources? Why does exploitation of natural resources sometimes lead to conflict?
6. How are peacekeeping and peace-building related to reducing poverty?
7. The Holy Father emphasizes the need for international cooperation to address global issues. What are some of these issues? Why can’t each country address these problems on its own?

## FOLLOW-UP ACTION

8 minutes

In response to this brief discussion of the Holy Father’s 2009 encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*, we are called to promote the unity of the human family and global solidarity. Invite members of the group to share ways they can act on what they have learned as family members, workers, owners, consumers, and voters. For example, participants could

Take action on an issue related to **global poverty** through an Action Alert from USCCB’s Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development. Visit current action alerts at [www.usccb.org/sdwp/takeaction.shtml](http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/takeaction.shtml).

Become one of the million Catholics who are invited to be part of the *Catholics Confront Global Poverty* initiative of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services. Visit [www.usccb.org/globalpoverty](http://www.usccb.org/globalpoverty) or [www.crs.org/globalpoverty](http://www.crs.org/globalpoverty).

Learn about fair trade products and hold a sale of fair trade items at your parish or school. By buying fair trade products, you ensure the artisans and farmers who make your food, clothing, and other goods are involved in a commercial exchange that is not exploitive. For information on buying fair trade items, visit Catholic Relief Services at [www.crsfairtrade.org](http://www.crsfairtrade.org).

You can find other ideas for action on the *Caritas in Veritate* Web page of the USCCB Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development at [www.usccb.org/jphd/caritasinveritate](http://www.usccb.org/jphd/caritasinveritate).



## **CLOSING REFLECTION**

*5 minutes*

Invite the participants to listen once again to the reading from Matthew 5:1-16 with this question in mind: What is the Word of God asking of me today?

Re-read Matthew 5:1-16

After reading, pause for silent reflection on the question.

Invite the participants to share a word or a phrase that answers the question: "What is the Word of God asking of me today?"

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

*2 minutes*

Leader: Let us again open ourselves to God's will for our world by praying in the words of Jesus.

All: (recite in unison the Lord's Prayer)

OR

Leader: Let us close by offering intentions based on today's reflections and conversation. In a moment, I will start us off with a couple of examples. I invite you to then add your own. After each intention, we will respond, "Lord, hear our prayer."

For a deepening of our understanding and sense of solidarity with God's human family, we pray to the Lord . . .

For a greater commitment to global mission that enables us to be more committed and effective peacemakers, we pray to the Lord . . .

After participants are done offering intentions, conclude with the Lord's Prayer.

## **DISMISSAL or FELLOWSHIP**

Thank the participants for sharing their reflections and wish them safe travel home. Or, you may wish to invite participants to share in refreshments and fellowship after the session. Some groups may want to close with sharing the sign of peace.



## Social Encyclical Primer



Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* was signed and released in June 2009. This encyclical, or teaching document, is the latest in a series of social encyclicals written by our popes over the last 120 years, as the Church sought to apply its moral principles and social teaching to emerging economic and social problems.

Jesus Christ is both divine and human. In his person, he embodies what it is to live a fully human life. He is the model of how we are called to live. His teaching has both personal and social implications. These social encyclicals shine the light of the Gospel of Christ and the Church's moral teaching on changing social circumstances, to provide guidance and support to Christians as we seek to live our faith in the world. In this way, the teaching is both very traditional and ever new. In the words of Pope Benedict XVI in *Caritas in Veritate*:

The Church's social doctrine illuminates with an unchanging light the new problems that are constantly emerging. This safeguards the permanent and historical character of the doctrinal "patrimony" which, with its specific characteristics, is part and parcel of the Church's ever-living Tradition. Social doctrine is built on the foundation handed on by the Apostles to the Fathers of the Church, and then received and further explored by the great Christian doctors. This doctrine points definitively to the New Man, to the "last Adam [who] became a life-giving spirit" (1 Cor 15:45), the principle of the charity that "never ends" (1 Cor 13:8). It is attested by the saints and by those who gave their lives for Christ our Savior in the field of justice and peace. It is an expression of the prophetic task of the Supreme Pontiffs to give apostolic guidance to the Church of Christ and to discern the new demands of evangelization (12).

Here are highlights from some of the encyclicals that are part of the Church's modern body of social teaching:

[\*Rerum Novarum\*](#) (*On the Condition of Labor*) 1891, Pope Leo XIII – Essentially the beginning of modern Catholic social teaching, truly groundbreaking, and a foundational document for many subsequent encyclicals (see below). This encyclical addresses the plight of workers in the wake of the Industrial Revolution, touching on issues that include socialism, unbridled capitalism, a living wage, workers' rights, support for unions, and a rejection of class struggle. Pope Leo first articulated the principles that underlie the preferential option for the poor.

[\*Quadragesimo Anno\*](#) (*On the Reconstruction of the Social Order*) 1931, Pope Pius XI – Commemorating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, this encyclical offers an update on the state of labor and industrialization, and strong critiques of communism, unrestrained capitalism, class conflict, and inequalities. Pope Pius denounces the concentration of wealth and economic power, and calls for the reconstruction of the social order based on subsidiarity.

[\*Mater et Magistra\*](#) (*Christianity and Social Progress*) 1961, Pope John XXIII – Issued 70 years after *Rerum Novarum*, this encyclical looks to the Church as the "Mother and Teacher," calling the world to salvation and better social relationships. It looks at science and technology, noting their power to improve the human condition, but also to limit human freedoms, and calling on governments to safeguard human rights. Pope John expressed concerns for the growing gap between rich and poor



## Social Encyclical Primer



nations, for the plight of farmers and rural areas, and for the arms race. The encyclical calls on wealthier nations to help poorer ones.

[Pacem in Terris](#) (*Peace on Earth*) 1963, Pope John XXIII – Issued only two months before the pope's death, this encyclical is the first to be directed to "all men of good will," instead of just to Catholics. In a response to the Cold War, the encyclical outlines necessary conditions for lasting world peace, looking at respect for human rights and disarmament. Pope John calls for the development of a world authority to protect the universal common good, condemns the arms race, and supports efforts to build peace.

[Populorum Progressio](#) (*On the Development of Peoples*) 1967, Pope Paul VI – This encyclical, which Pope Benedict's new encyclical commemorates, examines the economy on a global level, and addresses the rights of workers to decent work, just wages, decent working conditions, and to form and join unions. Pope Paul VI calls development the new name for peace, criticizes unjust economic structures that lead to inequality, and supports new international and social relationships.

[Laborem Exercens](#) (*On Human Work*) 1981, Pope John Paul II – Issued to mark the 90th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, this encyclical once again emphasizes the dignity of work and the rights of workers, and the priority of labor over capital. Pope John Paul also addresses disabled workers, emigration, materialism, and the spirituality of work.

[Sollicitudo Rei Socialis](#) (*On Social Concern*) 1987, Pope John Paul II – This encyclical honored *Populorum Progressio* on its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, offering solidarity as a central requirement of our faith and times. Pope John Paul critiques East-West blocs and other "structures of sin" that compromise the progress of poor nations, and calls for solidarity between rich and poor nations.

[Centesimus Annus](#) (*The Hundredth Year*) 1991, Pope John Paul II – On the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, John Paul II reflected on the current state of issues that Leo XIII had addressed in his day. It focuses on the moral dimensions of economic life, the advantages and limitations of the market, the role of business, and the responsibilities and limitations of government.

[Evangelium Vitae](#) (*The Gospel of Life*) 1995, Pope John Paul II – An affirmation of the gift of human life and the need to protect it, this encyclical explored many threats to human life, including the evils of abortion, euthanasia, and the use of the death penalty. It called the Church to be "a people of life and for life."

[Deus Caritas Est](#) (*God is Love*) 2005, Pope Benedict XVI – Benedict's first encyclical emphasized the connections between love of God and love of neighbor. Pope Benedict said the Church could no more neglect charity than it could Scripture or the sacraments. He located love of the poor at the center of Catholic life.

[Caritas In Veritate](#) (*Charity in Truth*) 2009, Pope Benedict XVI – Anticipated since 2007, this encyclical follows up on the themes of Pope Paul VI's *Populorum Progressio*, calling it the *Rerum Novarum* of the present age. It deals with the ethics of contemporary economics; poverty and development; global solidarity; charity, justice, and the common good; rights and duties; and care for creation, among other topics.



# Caritas in Veritate and The Unity of the Human Family and Global Solidarity



In response to the Pope Benedict XVI’s 2009 World Day of Peace Message “to fight poverty to build peace,” the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services launched *Catholics Confront Global Poverty* ([www.usccb.org/globalpoverty/](http://www.usccb.org/globalpoverty/) and [www.crs.org/globalpoverty](http://www.crs.org/globalpoverty)).

The **goal** of *Catholics Confront Global Poverty* is to educate and mobilize one million Catholics in the United States to

- defend the *life and dignity* of people living in poverty throughout the world, and
- urge our nation to act in response to the *many faces of poverty*.

Below are some quotations from *Caritas in Veritate*, including some relevant to objectives of *Catholics Confront Global Poverty* that relate U.S. government policy.

“As society becomes ever more globalized, it makes us neighbors but does not make us brothers. Reason, by itself, is capable of grasping the equality between men and of giving stability to their civic coexistence, but it cannot establish fraternity. This originates in a transcendent vocation from God the Father, who loved us first, teaching us through the Son what fraternal charity is” (19).

**Increase** poverty-focused **foreign assistance** to meet urgent humanitarian needs and invest in long-term development, moving toward 0.7% of national income.

“The peoples themselves have the prime responsibility to work for their own development. But they will not bring this about in isolation”<sup>1</sup> (47).

“Aid programs must increasingly acquire the characteristics of participation and completion from the grass roots. Indeed, the most valuable resources in countries receiving development aid are human resources: herein lies the real capital that needs to accumulate in order to guarantee a truly autonomous future for the poorest countries” (58).

Promote **foreign assistance reform** that makes development a priority and emphasizes poverty reduction, government transparency, and civil society participation.

“In the search for solutions to the current economic crisis, *development aid for poor countries must be considered a valid means of creating wealth for all*. . . . From this perspective, more economically developed nations should do all they can to allocate larger portions of their gross domestic product to development aid, thus respecting the obligations that the international community has undertaken in this regard”(60).

<sup>1</sup> Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio*, 77: *loc. cit.*, 295.





## Caritas in Veritate and The Unity of the Human Family and Global Solidarity



Promote reform of **trade and agriculture policies** to stimulate sustainable development in poorer nations and protect smaller scale farmers in the United States.

“There are those who fear the effects of competition through the importation of products — normally agricultural products — from economically poor countries. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that for such countries, the possibility of marketing their products is very often what guarantees their survival in both the short and long term. Just and equitable international trade in agricultural goods can be beneficial to everyone, both to suppliers and to customers” (58).

Support transparency, participation and consent of local communities in **natural resource development** so that these activities lead to human development.

“Consumers should be continually educated<sup>2</sup> regarding their daily role, which can be exercised with respect for moral principles without diminishing the intrinsic economic rationality of the act of purchasing. ... [I]t can be helpful to promote new ways of marketing products from deprived areas of the world, so as to guarantee their producers a decent return” (66).

“The stockpiling of natural resources, which in many cases are found in the poor countries themselves, gives rise to exploitation and frequent conflicts between and within nations. These conflicts are often fought on the soil of those same countries, with a heavy toll of death, destruction and further decay. The international community has an urgent duty to find institutional means of regulating the exploitation of non-renewable resources, involving poor countries in the process, in order to plan together for the future” (49).

Support U.N. **peacekeeping** operations to reduce violence that impoverishes many nations.

“*Peace-building* requires the constant interplay of diplomatic contacts, economic, technological and cultural exchanges, agreements on common projects, as well as joint strategies to curb the threat of military conflict and to root out the underlying causes of terrorism. Nevertheless, if such efforts are to have lasting effects, they must be based on values rooted in the truth of human life” (72).

Employ significant resources in **peace-building** initiatives and **diplomacy** to address conflicts before they become violent.

“*To manage the global economy; to revive economies hit by the crisis; to avoid any deterioration of the present crisis and the greater imbalances that would result; to bring about integral and timely disarmament, food security and peace; to guarantee the protection of the environment and to regulate migration: for all this, there is urgent need of a true world political authority, as my predecessor Blessed John XXIII indicated some years ago. Such an authority would need to be regulated by law, to observe consistently the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity, to seek to establish the common good<sup>3</sup>, and to make a commitment to securing authentic integral human development inspired by the values of charity in truth” (67).*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, 36: *loc. cit.*, 838-840.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*, *loc. cit.*, 293; Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 441.