

Family Page

Background Reflection

The Option for the Poor and Vulnerable is a principle of Catholic social teaching that reminds us that we must imitate Jesus, who focused on those in need. It encourages us to look for those who might need our help. The Catholic Church, in fact, teaches that by celebrating the Eucharist we commit to helping the poor.

The poor in society are often easy to spot: those in need of food, clothing, or shelter. We are called not only to help these people with their immediate needs but also to work for systemic change so that their situation is not repeated with future generations. The vulnerable are also all around us, but they are sometimes more difficult to see than the materially poor. We are called to pay attention to and help those who are in danger of being mistreated, intimidated, or harassed.

Often, we see troubling situations and think that someone should do something about it. This lesson's Scripture passage and this principle of Catholic social teaching remind us that the someone is us. We are the ones called to put our faith in action because, as James reminds us, faith without works is useless.

Family Activities

- Make ten sack lunches filled with a nutritional sandwich, vegetables, and fruit. With your child, bring them to a local shelter that provides assistance to those who are poor and vulnerable.
- Go through clothing and toys in your home that have not been used in a while. Collect items that are still in good shape, and donate them to a local organization. Along with your donation, include something new, such as socks, toiletries, or a new toy.
- Watch the video "CST 101 | Option for the Poor and Vulnerable" (YouTube, 4:27) together. Talk about ways your family can help the immediate needs of the poor and also work to change the system that created that situation.

People of Faith

Saint Juan Diego (1474-1548)

Juan Diego was a poor native farmer in Mexico. Our Lady of Guadalupe appeared to him and asked him to go to the bishop to have a church built in her honor, where people could encounter Jesus. Our Lady called herself Juan's mother and the mother of all people who love God and ask for Mary's help. We honor Juan Diego for his courage in delivering Mary's message. Saint Juan Diego's feast day is December 9.

Prayer

Pray the Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi each night this week, keeping in mind the needs of the poor and vulnerable. This prayer can be found on page 1995 in The Catholic Children's Bible.

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