

The background of the cover features a close-up photograph of two hands, one appearing to be of a different skin tone than the other, clasped together in a supportive grip. This image is partially obscured by a semi-transparent green overlay that contains a calendar grid. Large, bold, white sans-serif text is superimposed over the top half of the image.

# EVERYDAY JUSTICE

365 Reflections

ALAN J. TALLEY  
SCOTT HOLZKNECHT

saint mary's press

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The publishing team included Roxane Kadrlik Chlachula, development editor; Lorraine Kilmartin, reviewer; Istock, cover images; prepress and manufacturing coordinated by the production departments of Saint Mary's Press.

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## Dedication

*To my loving wife, Emily, and my two wonderful children, Rachel and Alex, who keep me young and laughing. And to my parents, Ed and Donna, whose example of faith and love has always inspired me.*

—Alan J. Talley

*This hope for justice is dedicated to Dawn Dones and Joe Grant . . . lanterns along the pathway.*

—Scott Holzknecht

## Introduction

You are being called.

In *Everyday Justice*, you will explore the themes of Catholic Social Teaching in the hope of raising awareness and moving to action. We hope that this book, a daily guide for insight, reflection, prayer, and action, may inspire you to live a life of justice.

Begin each day by reading the quotation. Then read through the reflection on that quotation. Spend a few minutes thinking about the reflection and then offer the prayer to God. Finally, consider the action step as a concrete way to put your faith into action.

This book is organized so that each day of the week focuses on a specific theme of Catholic Social Teaching. These themes are life and dignity of the human person; call to family, community, and participation; rights and responsibilities; option for the poor and vulnerable; the dignity of work and the rights of workers; solidarity; and care for God's creation.

The quotations used in *Everyday Justice* are taken from the Scriptures, Church documents, and individuals who inspire us to live a life of justice. It is our hope that *Everyday Justice* will increase your awareness of God's call for justice and your role in fulfilling that call.

**“So God created humankind in his image,  
in the image of God he created them;  
male and female he created them.”**

(Genesis 1:27)

As a new year begins, we often take time to reflect on ourselves both physically and spiritually. We may even make resolutions to improve ourselves during the coming year. But this year ask yourself: What do I notice when I look at myself in the mirror? Do I tend to focus on the hair out of place or the imperfections I see in my face? Or do I see an image of God as the passage in Genesis states? Once we are able to look beyond the imperfections and see God's own image in ourselves, we will be able to begin looking beyond other's imperfections and see God's image in them as well.

*God, help me as I begin this new year to see the beauty of your own image in myself and all those around me.*

Today each time you see your reflection, remind yourself that you were truly made in God's image.

**“Hence the family has the mission to guard, reveal and communicate love, and this is a living reflection of and a real sharing in God’s love for humanity and the love of Christ the Lord for the Church His bride.”**

(Pope John Paul II, *On the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World*)

Do you ever think of your family as having a mission? God does. As Pope John Paul II writes, the family’s mission is centered on love. Our families find their true purpose in the way they reflect God’s love and work toward safeguarding and promoting that love. As members of a family, each one of us is called to work daily toward building up the love among its members. This love is not just about hugs and kisses; it is also about respecting and honoring one another.

*Lord, bless my family so that we may grow in love for one another.*

Offer to do something unexpectedly nice for a family member today.

**“Do not wait for leaders; do it alone,  
person to person.”**

(Blessed Mother Teresa)

Blessed Mother Teresa was a real example of someone who lived this quote. It is hard to imagine her passing by someone lying facedown suffering in the street and saying she would help them once there was an official organization or government program to do so! She was known for simply bending down and offering help. What if we all acted like Blessed Mother Teresa? What would the world look like? We do not have to wait; we can begin today to make that image a reality. It is up to each of us to stop and lend a hand whenever and wherever we see the need.

*God of compassion, open my heart so that I may see the needs around me and lend a hand.*

Go out of your way today to help someone in need.



**“For six years you shall sow your land and gather in its yield; but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, so that the poor of your people may eat.”**

(Exodus 23:10–11)

Can you imagine what the world would be like if everybody shared their food with the poor for an entire year? No child would go to bed hungry. No one would starve to death. The imbalance in the food supply, where some countries are overflowing with food while others are struggling with next to nothing, would be corrected. Everyone would have “food security,” meaning enough food to sustain their health and life. Food security is not simply a good idea—it is a fundamental right of every human being, and we are called to support the food security of every individual.

*Bountiful Lord, you created a world with an abundance of food. Help us to simply share it freely with one another.*

Visit the Catholic Relief Services Web site to learn about food security and ways you can help.

**“Child labour, in its intolerable forms, constitutes a kind of violence that is less obvious than others but it is not for this reason any less terrible.”**

*(Compendium of the Social Doctrine  
of the Church)*

The Church is careful not to say all child labor is “intolerable.” This means cleaning your room and mowing the lawn are still allowed. What the Church is referring to is those instances where children are used and abused as a form of cheap labor. Take, for instance, children in developing countries being forced to work all day long for only a few pennies in horrendous factories called sweatshops. One way we can begin to fight the intolerable forms of child labor is by avoiding products and services provided by businesses that abuse children.

*Lord, when I shop, help me make choices that support the rights of children.*

Search online for a list of companies that use sweatshops to produce their products and choose not to support those companies by boycotting their products.

**“[The Magi] saw and adored the Child, small in size, powerless to help others, incapable of speech, and in naught different to the generality of human children.”**

(Pope Leo the Great)

Today is the traditional date for the Feast of Epiphany, the day we celebrate the Magi coming to visit the newborn Jesus. In one of his homilies from this feast day, Pope Leo reminds us of how Jesus appeared as any other newborn child, helpless and in need of others. Think about how dependent the Son of God was on Mary and Joseph and the heartfelt care they gave to him. This common experience of needing others is one of the things that bind us all together with our Savior as one human family.

*Lord Jesus, on this feast day we celebrate how the Magi came to worship and adore you. Let my prayers always join theirs in adoration of you.*

Take time to read Matthew 2:1–12 and reflect on how the newborn Jesus depended on others to care for him.

**“The earth is the LORD’s and all that is in it,  
the world, and those who live in it.”**

(Psalm 24:1)

How would you feel if you loaned someone your cell phone and he or she ran up the bill and eventually broke the phone? You would surely be disappointed to say the least. We all have been loaned something even greater than a cell phone—the earth. As the Psalmist reminds us, the earth belongs to God. We are only borrowing it to enjoy and sustain our lives. As good borrowers, we are called to take care of this wonderful gift. One way is through recycling. By recycling we give back what we have taken from the earth so that it may be useful once again.

*God, our Creator, thank you for loaning the earth to us.  
Forgive us for the times we have failed to treat it properly,  
and help us do better in the future.*

Make an extra effort today to recycle the items you can recycle.