



International Solidarity Reflection

School Sisters of Notre Dame

Solidarity with the Vulnerable

Shalom

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Introduction

As a principle of the Catholic Social Teaching, solidarity is about recognizing our interconnectedness with all that God created and actively working together and taking action for the common good. It is a moral virtue and a social attitude that emerges from personal and communal ecological conversion in our shared humanity; we strive to build right relationships in a spirit of unity among peoples, nations and organizations. For us as a *Laudato Si'* congregation, solidarity is a question of justice (cf. LS 159): educating, advocating and acting for the dignity of all life. “Called to solidarity with all Creation, we are ready, personally and communally, to risk all we are and all we have for the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ.” (*Call to Solidarity, 22nd General Chapter*)

Call to Prayer

God, bring us to a greater understanding of what being one with our brothers and sisters truly means and looks like in our effort to live our call to solidarity with the vulnerable.

Experience

Often when called to respond to an issue affecting indigenous people’s rights, activists are expected to represent them and fight for justice. Not too long ago our government decided to meet with the U.S. Military and draw up an agreement to build a new hospital on the military property. The military was to lease the land for 50 years to the Government of Guam. To make a long story short, the land in question was taken by the U.S. Government during World War II under the guise of eminent domain. A return of land to indigenous property owners never occurred. The agreement was drafted by the U.S. Military and sent to the Governor of Guam to sign off. From the very beginning, the people were not allowed to attend any of the closed meetings. A group of citizens used the radio stations to let the general population know how they were feeling about this venture. They lamented “How dare the military charge us for the use of our own property? Why are we kept out of the discussion? Where are our elected officials?”

It was not that the people did not come forward to speak up against building a new hospital. Rather, it was due to the lack of respect and forum for people to express their views of how the U.S. military “... have disobeyed the laws, violated the statutes and broken the everlasting covenant.” (Isaiah 24:5) Believe it or not, the people in general, elected lawmakers, elected attorney general, youth, and activists stood up united on the issue and protested against the Governor and the U.S. Military through a simple medium: radio stations. The fundamental lesson for the indigenous people is that you do not have to be an activist to protest. Anyone can respond to the call, stand in solidarity with others and make decisions for the common good. Actively working together and taking action for the common good is solidarity. It is a spirit open to dialogue and nonviolent responses and seeks to build up rather than destroy, to unite rather than divide. Together, we hope that “*you shall hallow the fiftieth year and you shall proclaim*

liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you: you shall return, every one of you, to your property and every one of you to your family.” (Leviticus 25:10)

Reflection

As a virtue, solidarity’s context is freedom and justice. Solidarity in the human family implies a special commitment to the most vulnerable and marginalized in our midst. The natural unity of the human family cannot be fully realized when people suffer the ills of poverty, discrimination, injustice, oppression, forced migration, slavery and social alienation, leading to exclusion from meaningful participation in the larger community.

Perhaps our first experience of solidarity is our families, where we are bound together in love and unity. Every individual family is called to be an expression of love and solidarity and a witness of the same to the world. Our shared humanity immediately and irrevocably links us to the rest of the human family through meaningful participation, consciously chosen and practiced. The willingness to participate while striving for social justice is the social virtue of solidarity. Therefore, solidarity is the acceptance of our social nature and the affirmation of the shared bonds, transcending borders, ideologies, and self-interest and recognizing the inherent dignity of every person.

In a special way, solidarity encourages striving toward equity and justice on the local, national, and international levels. Its surest foundation is faith and dignity of life. A true humanism implies love and respect for each and every individual person. In our fallen world, however, it is only the recognition of the identity of God and oneness in Christ that will ensure the realization of solidarity as the basis for a better future world order. It is a social virtue that bears many fruits and blessings, which come in a variety of forms and affect all of life. It yields a healthy society, a thriving economy, care for those on the margins and structures that protect the family.”
(‘Solidarity: The Fundamental Social Virtue’, by Rev. Robert A. Sirico, July, 2010)

Fratelli Tutti calls for a renewed commitment to social responsibility and for efforts to create a more equitable and just society. It challenges individuals and societies to overcome divisions, promote dialogue, and work towards the common good. It encourages a sense of shared responsibility for one another and advocates for a global culture of solidarity that embraces the principles of compassion, justice, and cooperation.

Action

- Reflect on the “value of solidarity” in [*Fratelli Tutti* #114-117](#). What would your commitment to solidarity with the vulnerable be like?
- How can we remain open, observe, discern, and respond to such deprivations and unjust systems? What is the “more” in our call and response to “suffer with” the vulnerable?
- The situation of Guam is one of the many struggles of the indigenous people in our world. If you are able to do something in solidarity with the indigenous, what would that be? Share it with your community.

Closing Prayer

God, Father of us all, call us to be true brothers and sisters in Jesus. Let our efforts to be in solidarity with all of your creation be rooted in Jesus’ words “...whatever you do to the least of my brothers and sisters, you do it to me.” Amen.

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