

## Junior Year Personal Reflection Paper

The reflection process is a required part of the Saint Viator Christian Service Experience. A student's Christian Service requirement will not be considered fulfilled until the reflection process is completed. This reflection process will give students an opportunity to relate their Christian Service Experience to the teachings of Jesus and the Catholic Church and apply the lessons learned to their own lives.

Each year students will also be required to complete one Personal Reflection Paper. This can be done any time after the student has completed at least 20 hours of service for that year. The student should choose the experience that had the most profound affect on them personally to use as a basis for the Theological Reflection.

### Format Instructions for the Personal Reflection Paper:

The Personal Reflection must:

- Be 2 pages typed and double spaced
- Be 12 point, Times New Roman Font
- Have 1 inch margins on all sides of the paper
- Not be double spaced between paragraphs
- Be proof read and spell checked
- Have the name of the student and the year of graduation on it

Papers should be turned in to the Service Coordinator in Campus Ministry no later than June 15th

### Content Instructions for the Personal Reflection Paper:

1. List all of locations you completed Christian Service this year. Describe the work you did at each place.  
Where did you do your service work? What kind of work did you do?  
What population did you work with? Was this your first contact with this population?  
Was your work Social Service, Social Action, or both? (see below for definitions)

***Social Service*** is giving direct aid to someone in need. It usually involves performing one or more of the corporal works of mercy. That is, giving alms to the poor, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick or imprisoned, taking care of orphans and widows, visiting the shut-ins etc. Another name for it is charity.

***Social Action*** is correcting the structures that perpetuate the need. Through the lens of social justice, we begin to take a look at the problems and issues facing us in our own communities, the nation and finally the world, and we begin to ask questions such as, "Why is there so much unemployment in our area?" "Why are there so many poor in our community?" "How will the deforestation of our rain forests affect our global climate?" etc. Another name for this is Justice

2. Read and Review the Introduction to and the 7 Basic Themes of Catholic Social Teaching that are on page 2 and 3.
3. Describe what theme or themes of the Catholic Social Teaching your Christian Service is an example of and why. How does your service fulfill the theme(s).
4. Describe where you see other examples of Catholic Social Teaching (from any of the themes) being lived out by others in your world or the world in general. (This should be at least 1 or 2 paragraphs)

**Papers will be reviewed by the Christian Service Coordinator or other Saint Viator High School Faculty. Papers that are not deemed satisfactory may be returned to be rewritten and resubmitted.**

The Saint Viator High School Academic Integrity Policy applies to all Personal Reflection Papers.

## **Basic Themes**

Our catholic social teaching is more than a set of documents. It is a living tradition of thought and action. The Church's social vision has developed and grown over time, responding to changing circumstances and emerging problems-including developments in human work, new economic questions, war and peace in nuclear age, and poverty and development in a shrinking world. While the subjects have changed, some basic principles and themes have emerged within this tradition.

### **A. The Life and Dignity of the Human Person**

In the Catholic social vision, the human person is central, the clearest reflection of God among us. Each person possesses a basic dignity that comes from God, not from any human quality or accomplishment, not from race or gender, age or economic status. The test of every institution or policy is whether it enhances or threatens human life and human dignity. We believe people are more important than things.

### **B. The Rights and Responsibilities of the Human Person**

Flowing from our God-given dignity, each person has basic rights and responsibilities. These include the rights to freedom of conscience and religious liberty, to raise a family, to immigrate, to live free from unfair discrimination, and to have a share of earthly goods sufficient for oneself and ones family. People have a fundamental right to life and to those things that make life truly human: food, clothing, housing, healthcare, education, security, social service, and employment. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities-to one another, to our families, and to the larger society, to respect the rights of others and to work for the common good.

### **C. The Call to Family, Community, and Participation.**

The human person is not only sacred, but social. We realize our dignity and rights in relationships with others, in community. No community is more central than the family, it needs to be supported, not undermined. It is the basic cell of society and the state has an obligation to support the family. The family has major contributions to make in addressing questions of social justice. It is where we learn and act on our values. What happens in the family is at the basis of a truly human social life. We also have the right and responsibility to participate in and contribute to the broader communities in society. The state and other institutions of political and economic life, with both their limitations and obligations, are instruments to protect the life, dignity, and rights of the person; promote the well being of our families and communities, and pursue the common good. Catholic social teaching does offer clear guidance on the role of government. When basic human needs are not being met by private initiative, then people must work through their government, at appropriate levels, to meet those needs. A central test of political, legal, and economic institutions is what they do *to* people, what they do *for* people, and how people *participate* in them.

### **D. The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers**

Work is more than a way to make a living; it is an expression of our dignity and a form of continuing participation in God's creation. People have the right to decent and productive work., to decent and fair wages, to private property and economic initiative. Workers have the strong support of the Church in forming and joining union and worker associations of their choosing in the exercise of their dignity and rights. These values are at the heart of Rerum Novarum and other encyclicals on economic justice. In Catholic teaching, the economy exists to serve people, not the other way around.

### **E. The Option for the Poor and Vulnerable**

Poor and vulnerable people have a special place in Catholic social teaching. A basic moral test of a society is how its most vulnerable members are faring. This is not a new insight; it is the lesson of the parable of the last Judgment (Mt. 25). Our tradition calls us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first. As Christians, we are called to respond to the needs of all our sisters and brothers, but those with the greatest need require the greatest response. We must seek creative ways to expand the emphasis of our nation's founders on individual rights and freedom by extending democratic ideals to economic life and thus ensure that the basic requirements for life with dignity are accessible to all.

### **F. Solidarity**

We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological difference. We are our brothers and sisters keepers (Gn. 4:9). In a linked and limited world, our responsibilities to one another cross national and other boundaries. Violent conflict and the denial of dignity and rights to people anywhere on the globe diminish each of us. This emerging theme of a solidarity, so strongly articulated by Pope John Paul II, expresses the core of the Church's concern for world peace, global development, environment, and international human rights. It is the contemporary expression of the traditional Catholic image of the Mystical Body. "Loving our neighbor" has global dimensions in an interdependent world.

### **G. Care for God's Creation**

"The whole human race suffers as a result of environmental blight, and generations yet unborn will bear the cost for our failure to act today. But...it is the poor and the powerless who must directly bear the burden of current environmental carelessness. Their lands and neighborhoods are more likely to be polluted or to host toxic waste dumps, their water to be undrinkable, their children to be harmed. (USCC). Catholic social teaching challenges all of us to consider the negative environmental impact brought about by some of our public policies and private practices.