

THE PASTOR'S POINTS

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A special thanks to Frank and Anna Baldiga for bringing this to my attention recently. We are all challenged to examine how we are seeking justice in our own lives and in our parish.

Father John

Characteristics of a Justice Seeking Parish

Rev. Bryan Massingale

1. The parish is the place and agent of conversion, believing in the Good News for the poor, seeing the priority of the poor. It explicitly names conversion and social transformation as part of the parish's mission.
2. The parish is a place of compassion (no "us" and "them" but "we"). The parish practices and witnesses the solidarity it teaches.
3. The importance of justice and social outreach is reflected in the parish budget.
(Time & Money = Priority & Commitment).
4. There is an ongoing parish "audit" of the poor - the least among us - and their needs.
5. Catholic Social Teaching is integrated and presented in all of the education efforts of the Parish: day school, religious education, sacramental preparation (including Baptism, Reconciliation, and Eucharist), RCIA, and adult formation.
6. Every Sunday is "Social Justice Sunday" because of the preaching, prayer, and music.
7. The parish is known for welcoming those whom society disdains, dismisses, and despises (e.g., God's Inclusive Love Proclaimed Here).
8. The parish is a vital part of its neighborhood and involved in the civic life of its community.
9. The Human Concerns Committee is "unconditionally pro-life" (John Paul II), embracing a "consistent ethic of life."
10. The Human Concerns Committee does not do all of the parish's "justice work," but is more its conscience, pushing and prodding the parish to express the whole of its faith by acting for justice.
11. The parish engages in public advocacy, speaking on behalf of the least of its community, our country, and our world.
12. The parish cultivates gratitude and thanksgiving, rather than duty and obligation, as motives for caring for the least.

This was initially shared at Fr. Bryan Massingale's presentation at the Catholic Charities USA's Parish Social Ministry Regional Training on September 28, 2007 in Raleigh, NC.