**Justice Bulletin Board**

*All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work.*

*—*2 Timothy 3:16-17

I grew up at a time when the Catholic Church discouraged its followers from studying the Bible. I can remember nuns telling students that it would just confuse us. Imagine my surprise many years later, when I opened my Bible one day and the words I read seemed to be talking directly to me in my innermost being. This brings me to another set of writings that has impacted my life, the social teachings of the Church. Catholic social teachings are essential elements of our faith. Its roots are in the Hebrew prophets who announced God's special love for the poor and called God's people to a covenant of love and justice. They are teachings founded on the life and words of Jesus Christ, who came "to bring glad tidings to the poor" (Luke 4:18), Are you familiar with papal documents on social justice going all the way back to 1891? Here are some of their blockbuster titles:

* *-Rerum Novarum* (On the Condition of Labor) 1891, Pope Leo XIII
* -*Quadragesimo Anno* (On the Reconstruction of the Social Order) 1931, Pope Pius XI
* -*Mater et Magistra* (Christianity and Social Progress) 1961, Pope John XXIII
* -*Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth) 1963, Pope John XXIII
* *-Populorum Progressio* (On the Development of Peoples) 1967, Pope Paul VI
* -*Laborem Exercens* (On Human Work) 1981, Pope John Paul II
* -*Caritas in Veritate* (Charity in Truth) 2009, Pope Benedict XVI
* -*Laudato Si’*: On Care for our Common Home 2015, Pope Francis

I can hear you now—I’d rather golf or anything else before I would read these dry texts. But the point is: they are not dry. They are about life, our life in the world and in relationship with others. There is one other writing that all the bishops of the world wrote in 1971 called *Justicia in Mundo* (Justice in the World). If we had enacted even a portion of what they itemized, we would be in a different place now. In their words, “Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.”

Happy reading for a justice-filled life!

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