



Putting faith into action: Building a culture of solidarity

The following three sections can be used individually or together

Reflecting with Pope Francis

“... When we are generous in welcoming people and sharing something with them – some food, a place in our homes, our time – not only do we no longer remain poor: we are enriched.

No one can remain insensitive to the inequalities that persist in the world! Everybody, according to his or her particular opportunities and responsibilities, should be able to make a personal contribution to putting an end to so many social injustices. The culture of selfishness and individualism that often prevails in our society is not, I repeat, not what builds up and leads to a more habitable world: rather, it is the culture of solidarity that does so; the culture of solidarity means seeing others not as rivals or statistics, but brothers and sisters. And we are all brothers and sisters!

We must never, never allow the throwaway culture to enter our hearts! We must never allow the throwaway culture to enter our hearts, because we are brothers and sisters. No one is disposable! Let us always remember this: only when we are able to share do we become truly rich; everything that is shared is multiplied! Think of the multiplication of the loaves by Jesus! The measure of the greatness of a society is found in the way it treats those most in need, those who have nothing apart from their poverty!”

Taken from an address by Pope Francis during his visit to the community of Varginha (a favela) at WYD Rio 2013

Questions for personal reflection

- Who do you find it difficult to welcome?
- What can you do in your neighbourhood and school/college to make sure everyone is treated fairly?
- What urgent needs do you see around you and what can you do to meet these needs?

Working together to build a culture of solidarity

Many Catholics find that working with a charity, such as Youth SVP or CAFOD enables them to live out the call to all Christians to build a culture of solidarity.

Youth SVP – the largest youth Catholic organisation in the UK

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbL-F0oEqMY> – a 9 minute video of young people describing how the ways in which they serve with Youth SVP

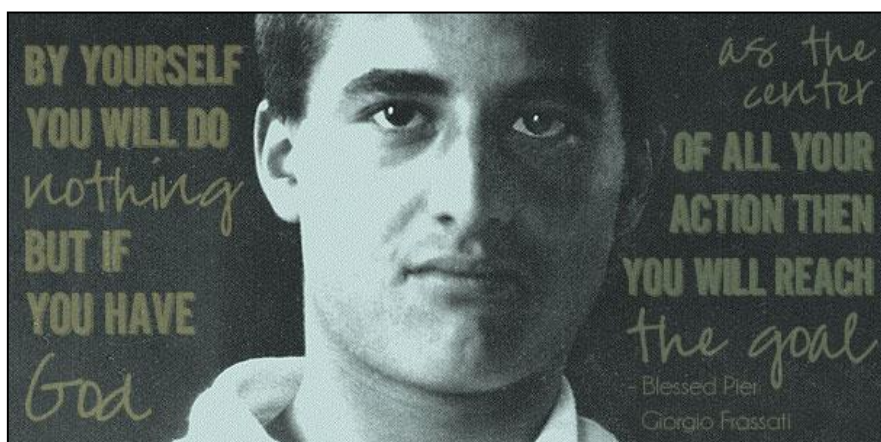
CAFOD

“The heart that serves” – a 4 minute video from CAFOD about different ways Catholics in England and Wales live out their faith by reaching out to people who are in need.

Download from <http://www.cafod.org.uk/Media/Files/Resources/Secondary/resource-pages/Heart-speaks-unto-heart-films>

Learning from the Saints: Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati

Blessed Frassati was a young man who lived in the 20th century, who the Church holds up to young people as an example of how to live out Catholic faith today.



“During his era and life, Pier Giorgio overcame many challenges and contemporary problems. His love of God and his strong sense of solidarity brought him closer to the poor, those in need, the sick, the hungry and those without shelter. Pier Giorgio Frassati had a great respect for human life: for all of life, from the first to the final moments. He constantly defended life where it was diminished or in a state of siege.

At the age of 17, in 1918, he joined the St. Vincent de Paul Society and dedicated much of his spare time to serving the sick and the needy, caring for orphans, and assisting the demobilized servicemen returning from World War I. What little he did have, Pier Giorgio gave to help the poor, even using his bus fare for charity and then running home to be on time for meals. The poor and the suffering were his masters, and he was literally their servant, which he considered a privilege.

He often sacrificed vacations at the Frassati summer home in Pollone because, as he said, "If everybody leaves Turin, who will take care of the poor?"

Pier Giorgio loved the poor. It was not simply a matter of giving something to the lonely, the poor, the sick - but rather, giving his whole self. He saw Jesus in them and to a friend who asked him how he could bear to enter the dirty and smelly places where the poor lived, he answered: "Remember always that it is to Jesus that you go: I see a special light that we do not have around the sick, the poor, and the unfortunate."

A German news reporter who observed Frassati at the Italian Embassy wrote, "One night in Berlin, with the temperature at twelve degrees below zero, he gave his overcoat to a poor old man shivering in the cold. His father, the Ambassador scolded him, and he replied simply and matter-of-factly, 'But you see, Papa, it was cold.'"

Extracts from a homily given by Fr. Thomas Rosica, Chief Executive of "Salt and Light" Television Network