

RE – Nelson Mandela

Last week, we looked at the Parable of the Mustard Seed that showed the Kingdom of God growing from Jesus as the sower into the church we have today. We understand that God nourishes us just as the water from the soil nourishes the tree. In turn, the tree provides shelter and support for the birds and animals. This is like our church looking after us and others through charity, love and kindness.

This week, we are looking at Nelson Mandela as a person of faith who has helped to create God's Kingdom on earth.

This weblink gives some background information.

<http://projectbritain.com/calendar/july/NelsonMandela.html>

We are looking at how faith influenced and informed his whole way of life. We will look at the choices that Mandela made throughout his life and his participation in Church activities - conferences, teaching Sunday school, prayer and reception of Communion in jail and his work for reconciliation of his people. On his death, the Methodist Church said that Mandela 'lived a life of faith in God lived in service to others'.

Here are the three areas of the Catholic church's social teaching:

The Common Good.

The common good is reached when we work together to improve the wellbeing of people in our society and the wider world. The rights of the individual to 'do what they like' to personal possessions and community resources must be balanced with the needs of the disadvantaged and dispossessed, for the greater good.

The Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

Jesus made the poor the centre of his ministry. Christians are called to reach out to those who are poor, marginalised, or the victims of injustice. Serving the poor is matched by working to question situations of injustice and to seek to change the social and economic structures that deny people their dignity and rights.

Solidarity

Solidarity helps us to treat others not as 'others' but as our neighbours. Solidarity is not a vague feeling of concern for others, but a determination to work for the common good. It is the realisation that we all depend on each other. Love of God and love of neighbour are central to the Christian life and in building up the Kingdom of God.

Mandela Quotes

From: http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/12/05/world/africa/the-voice-of-mandela.html?_r=0

During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities.

It is never my custom to use words lightly. If 27 years in prison have done anything to us, it was to use the silence of solitude to make us understand how precious words are and how real speech is in its impact upon the way people live or die.

Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life. While poverty persists, there is no true freedom.

[I stand for] countless human beings, both inside and outside our country, [who] had the nobility of spirit to stand in the path of tyranny and injustice, without seeking selfish gain. They recognized that an injury to one is an injury to all and therefore acted together in defence of justice and a common human decency.

This is what you have to do.

Choose a quote from the ones provided. Explain which elements of the Catholic Social Teachings are being demonstrated and explain how Nelson Mandela helped create God's Kingdom on earth.

These sentence starters might help you.

When Mandela says (words from the quote here) he demonstrates... because

The element of is shown in his words as...

God teaches that we must (take an element of social teaching) Mandela has demonstrated this when ...

Challenge/Extension

In your own words, can you explain an action or idea that you could do which would help to bring the Kingdom of God on Earth? Try to link the Catholic Social Teaching with the actions of Pope Francis and Nelson Mandela to help you do this task.

An example of what you could write:

I will endeavour to apply my understanding of solidarity to show care and respect to all of the people I encounter in class; this would be seen as fair and just treatment for all of my classmates. Nelson Mandela's example of trying to create harmony and balance has inspired this choice. By acting in this way, I will be helping to create God's Kingdom. Once this small goal has been achieved I will continue to treat all people I meet in this way, sharing God's Kingdom at every point I can.