

Implementation Committee April 2020 Update  
Sr. Susan Goal 2

As members read this update, not only will the deadline for applications for the seven, year two working groups have passed, but the implementation committee will have selected those invited to join the journey. I am thrilled as I have anxiously waited in the shadows for the goal I am tasked with, “addressing and supporting Catholic social teaching through advocacy” to begin. Excitement overflows with the prospect of sharing with members the deep connections Christians have always had with social justice, dating back to the origins of their Jewish sisters and brothers. God has continually called Catholics to be just in their actions and words as they work together to incarnate, “Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” This is both the crown and the cross!

The season of Lent is such an appropriate time for members to reflect on the connection between “works of love, fasting and prayer” and turning their lives around—not just for 40 days, but for the rest of their lives as they move forward.

The biblical tradition of fasting insists it is worthwhile only if connected with social justice. Deutero-Isaiah complains about people who fast, but who are oblivious of their neighbour. “Look, you serve your own interest on your fast-day, and oppress all your workers. Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high” (Is. 58:3-4). Instead, Isaiah offers a better kind of fasting, one that unites social justice and compassion—understood as action—towards the suffering ones in society. “Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?” (Is.58:6-7).

Biblical spirituality instructs us to link all acts of self-denial and penance with true works of compassion or works of mercy. A fine way to organize Lent, therefore, would be to take the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, and devote ourselves as a family, community, or as individuals, to focusing on one of them by getting to know persons who are suffering and standing by them in some way.

In the second year of the national theme, *Care for Our Common Home*, members are encouraged to make a direct connection with Pope Francis adding an eighth corporal and spiritual work of mercy, “care for our common home,” and ongoing commitment to integrate the three core values of faith, service and social justice. In the words of St. John Henry Newman, “God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission. I may never know it in this life but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good; I shall do His work.”