

Happy Monday to all!

On this date, January 26, 1970, the song (and album) "Bridge Over Troubled Water", by the pop duo Simon & Garfunkel was released and won the Grammy Award Album of the Year. In addition to being a melodic, slow, and comforting song, it not only addressed the secular social issues of the time but also conferred a message supported by Catholic Social Teaching.

The term, "Bridge Over Troubled Water" means offering unconditional support, comfort, and strength to someone in distress, serving as a pathway to overcome difficulties. According to the artists, the words were inspired by a gospel song line from "Mary Don't You Weep" (a song about Mary, Martha and their deceased brother Lazarus), and symbolized a dependable presence during hard times, viewing Jesus as the ultimate bridge.

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) views sacrificial assistance as integral, rooted in Christ's love and our shared humanity. It requires the more fortunate to share resources and to renounce some rights in order to improve the situation of the poor. It embodies Catholic Social Teaching principles like the Preferential Option for the Poor, where helping the vulnerable (e.g. feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless) isn't just charity but justice, transforming society through imitating God's love and fostering solidarity with all people

Begun by Pope Francis in the final months of his life, and promulgated by Pope Leo XIV, the Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi Te* affirms that love for the poor is not optional but a path to holiness and a constitutive dimension of the Church's identity and mission. Rooted in Scripture, the Church Fathers, and the witness of the saints, it emphasizes that the poor reveal Christ's presence.

https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/apost_exhortations/documents/20251004-dilexi-te.html

The document challenges both individuals and institutions to confront the "structures of sin" that perpetuate poverty, inequality, and a "throwaway culture." The poor are not passive recipients of aid but active agents of evangelization and renewal. *Dilexi Te* calls Christians to personal encounter, structural change, and solidarity, urging the Church to be a "poor Church for the poor" whose credibility is measured by concrete love, justice, and action.

Acts of service do not require a large sacrifice. Part of our mission at Catholic Charities is to gather the small sacrifices of those who are able to assist through donations, volunteering some of their time, or promoting the work of Catholic Charities out in the community, and then to use the collective power of the many to assist the poor, marginalized, voiceless and struggling.

During our time as citizens of this planet we call Earth, we are each called to keep the needs of others at the front of our minds in the midst of our everyday activities. By developing a mindset that tends naturally toward an attitude of serving others, we can learn to automatically integrate works of mercy into our daily lives throughout the year.

Let's make a New Year's covenant-- (resolutions don't work out so well for me...too many unused gym memberships)—to live each day according to the opening words of the song...

*When you're weary, feeling small,
When tears are in your eyes, I will dry them all;
I'm on your side. When times get rough
And friends just can't be found,
Like a bridge over troubled water
I will lay me down.*

Amen!!

Blessings,

Deacon Mike