

'neighbor,' a 'helper' [cf. Gen 2:18–20], to be made a sharer, on a par with ourselves, in the banquet of life to which all are equally invited by God." He reflected on this principle in the light of reason and in the light of faith. In the light of reason, he taught that solidarity is the path to peace and to global human development. On the global scale, solidarity is interdependence "that in itself demands the abandonment of the politics of blocs, the sacrifice of all forms of economic, military or political imperialism, and the transformation of mutual distrust into collaboration" (*On Social Concern*, 1987, 39). This advocates solidarity among individuals and nations. On the level of faith, the pope goes further. Solidarity takes seriously the gospel command of forgiveness and reconciliation. One's neighbor must be loved, even if an enemy, even to the ultimate sacrifice: "to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13; cf. 3:16). This solidarity is the solidarity of the follower of Jesus that will bring him or her to share in the suffering of his cross.

8. Principle of stewardship. The principle of stewardship, that is, the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to you, is related to the principle of solidarity. Followers of Christ are called to relate respectfully not only to people as their neighbors and to the interdependent world of peoples and nations but also to the shared space of the earth, the air above, and the resources below. Interdependence applies also to the entire ecosystem. Each creature, every being of the planet, is profoundly implicated in the life and existence of every other being. This is because Christians believe that each creature and creation itself taken together as a harmonious whole was spoken by God. Human persons are created in the image of God, but every created being is a manifestation of the glory of God. The beauty of the earth invites awe, reverence, and wonder.

Saint Francis of Assisi expressed this understanding when he called all creatures his "brothers

and sisters." Saint Francis realized he shared life with the earth and all that is of the earth. He believed that he, along with all creatures, whether worms, birds, or stones, came forth from the same origin, the same Father, who created heaven and earth. As the common inheritance of the human race, the earth provides for human needs. It nurtures the body with its nutrients and the soul with its awesome beauty. Thus the earth and its environment must be honored, preserved, and shared. It is not to be dominated or exploited by one group against another, including the current generations now living against the future generations not yet born. Stewardship cares and protects the earth's resources. Stewardship contains, therefore, within it the principle of sustainability. On this point, Gandhi's observation about the sustainability of the resources of the earth bears repeating: "The earth is sufficient for everyone's needs but not for everyone's greed."

SEVEN DEADLY SOCIAL SINS (M. K. GANDHI)

Wealth without work
Pleasure without conscience
Science without humanity
Knowledge without character
Politics without principle
Commerce without morality
Worship without sacrifice

CONCLUSION: SOCIAL JUSTICE AND CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY?

Faith That Acts to Promote Justice

"Follow me" (John 21:19) is the invitation Jesus extends to all. Those who respond to his call