

## **Solidarity at Work at Work**

As with so many Faith-based values, Solidarity is primarily an attitude, a way of viewing the world. It is about seeing and *committing* to the unity of life that grows out of Faith, Love of Neighbor, Justice, Humility, Gratitude, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation.

Solidarity couples an appreciation for the fundamental dignity and sanctity of each person with an unwavering commitment to the common good. All the people of the world belong to one family, the human family. We are each connected to and dependent on all humanity, collectively and individually. We are responsible for each other. Like it or not, we are united, we are one with those who suffer. Solidarity with them calls for us to assist the poor from our own resources, to welcome the strangers among us, including immigrants, to stand with those who give comfort to the suffering. As Christ showed us, love serves rather than exploits.

Faith-based Solidarity has both individual and community aspects. As individuals we can development the awareness that we are debtors of the society within which we live. We can repay that debt in part by avoiding gossip, by working to resolve problems that do not directly affect us, by welcoming and getting to know new members, by looking and acting beyond our immediate groups and neighborhoods, perhaps joining a parish mission team to work in a third world community. In all, we repay by seeking to serve rather than to be served.

In our communities, Solidarity requires us to recognize that our responsibilities as a member of society cannot be delegated to the government or social service agencies. It goes beyond our writing a check or getting the government to write a check. Government officials can lead us and, indeed, have a responsibility to lead us to be more in solidarity with those in need, but they cannot love for us.

As part of the human family, we cannot let borders stop our love of neighbor. In solidarity we must be concerned about poverty and lack of human rights in other nations, especially in those nations where the population cannot help itself. Checks can and do help to alleviate an occurring crisis, but it takes action beyond writing the check to alleviate the underlying root causes. In Solidarity and within our capacities, we must work to transform unjust structures and to search for social and economic structures that permit all to share in some just manner.

At the least, those who are blessed can act by praying for the poor, the homeless, the exploited sweatshop employees, by fasting in solidarity with the hungry, and by choosing to live simply, We can choose to use our buying power to support Fair Trade. We can model forgiveness and reconciliation in our lives. We can choose to use our voices by writing letters and emails in support of justice, forgiveness, and reconciliation where we see injustice, intolerance, and prolonged anger.

Even those suffering poverty and oppression can work to improve their lot. They can share with and give support to each other. They can work to make visible the injustice they suffer and to advocate for justice while modeling forgiveness and seeking reconciliation.

Every person is a child of God and due to that a brother or sister to each of us. We must go beyond our differences to the unity, the solidarity that Christ, in his love, modeled for us.

## **SOLIDARITY — A Faith Based Value at Work**

1. What does applying the faith-based value of Solidarity in your workplace mean to you? What do you think it would mean to those with whom you work? How does its meaning change for your different workplaces, for example, home or where you volunteer?
2. Why is it important to gain an understanding of Solidarity in the workplace and how to apply that understanding?
3. How do/could you apply the concept of Solidarity in your workplace(s)?
4. What would happen in your workplace if you took and actively applied the value of faith-based Solidarity in your workplace(s)? How would the workplace sound different? Look different? Feel different?
5. What first step are you willing to take this week?