

# Doctrinal Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA  
The Human Person, Society, and Social Justice

*Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.* (Philippians 2:4)

## Insight

*What groups do you belong to, and what are their rules of operation? Where do those rules come from and why?*

As the condo owners arrived and the room filled up, Marilyn's apprehension grew. She was the board president, and she was not looking forward to this meeting, mostly because it was not a routine gathering. The proposed \$250,000 special assessment was the sole item on the agenda.

Marilyn knew that there would be some angry people at the meeting. How could there not be with a potential price tag of about \$15,000 per unit for this assessment? Thank goodness she had the support of all the other members of the board. It also helped that the lawyer for the association was present. He was really sharp and would help keep the discussion focused on the need for this project and how its different aspects corresponded to the citations from the city building inspectors.

The work really had to be done because of those citations. Work that they had been putting off for a number of years simply caught up with the association. Marilyn took a deep breath and called the meeting to order.

## For Reflection . . .

Society functions best when certain persons are given authority as they work for the common good.

*Who exercises authority in your family? How well do they do that and why?*

*How do you concretely promote respect for others within your family, among your friends, and at work?*

## Additional Background

**Catechism of the Catholic Church:** 1877–1948

**United States Catholic Catechism for Adults:** pages 325–327

**Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church:** 401–414

## Church Teaching

### Network of Relationships

Society consists of a complex network of relationships between various groups and associations. It functions best when some individuals and institutions within it are given a measure of authority to enact rules so that the common good can be preserved.

The common good encompasses the total social conditions that enable individuals or groups to more readily achieve their God-given human potential. It requires prudence, mutual respect, the means for development, and peace.

### Participating in Society

The state and those in authority play special roles in working toward the common good. It is the duty of every individual, however, to be a responsible participant in society. This obligation derives from our human dignity itself.

One assumes personal responsibility in many ways, but especially as a member of a family as we grow, mature, and pursue our education. One also exercises social responsibility through work, by being engaged in public and political life, and through cultural pursuits.

### Social Justice

Responsible participation is directly related to social justice, whereby groups and individuals attain their due, according to their nature and vocation. Social justice cultivates an attitude of respect toward “the other” despite different qualities, physical and intellectual abilities, and differing stations in life.

The Gospel calls for a just human community that mirrors the loving, communal nature of the Holy Trinity. Our common origin in God and our equal dignity as persons challenge us to uphold human solidarity as a guiding principle for a healthy society.