

# SOCIAL PERSONS CALLED <sup>TO</sup> JUSTICE



# EACH LIFE MATTERS

The Guadalupe Clinic, founded by the Diocese of Wichita, Kansas, has the mission to “provide access to necessary health care for those in need, work for social justice in health care, and call upon the entire Church and other people of goodwill to join in these efforts.”

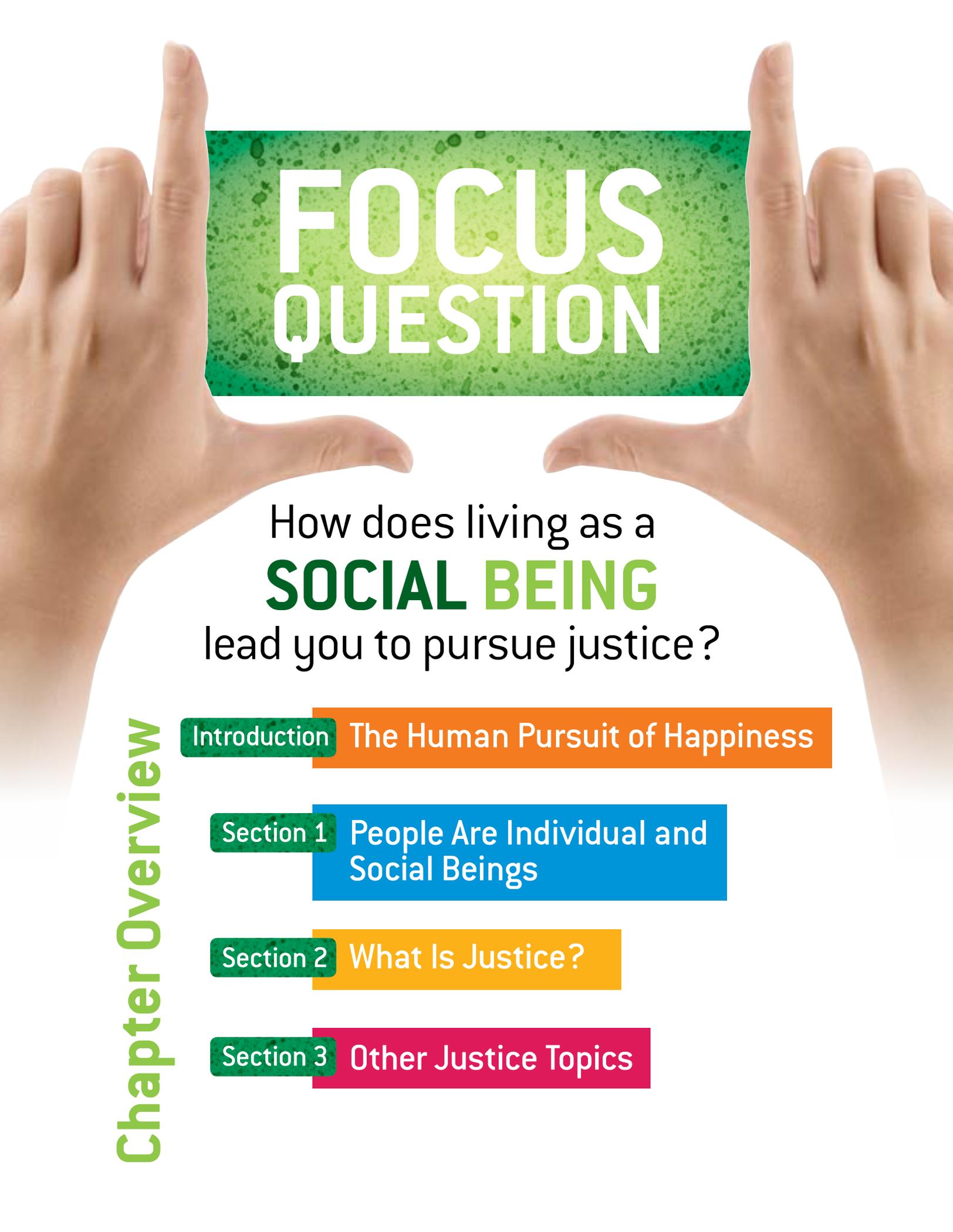
A woman named Vicki experienced the charitable justice of this organization. Although she had a full-time job, her \$7.15 per hour pay was not enough for health insurance. Meanwhile, she had not been feeling well; she could hardly walk up stairs without struggling to breathe.

Her son heard about the Guadalupe Clinic and urged her to go there. Regarding her experience when she walked into the clinic, she said, “They only asked for five dollars, but treated me like a million dollars!”

After some tests, the doctor informed Vicki she needed surgery. She said that she could not afford surgery. The doctor replied, “It’s not an option, it’s your life.” Once again, she reiterated that she couldn’t afford surgery. The doctor insisted, “It is taken care of.”

Vicki received the surgery and made a full recovery. She said she couldn’t have asked for better treatment than she received at the clinic. “The Guadalupe Clinic gave me my life back, and with dignity!” she said.

Vicki didn’t want a handout, but she realized she needed help. Now she extends that help to others in need. She has returned to the clinic as a regular volunteer.<sup>1</sup>



# FOCUS QUESTION

How does living as a  
**SOCIAL BEING**  
lead you to pursue justice?

## Chapter Overview

Introduction The Human Pursuit of Happiness

Section 1 People Are Individual and Social Beings

Section 2 What Is Justice?

Section 3 Other Justice Topics

## INTRODUCTION

# The Human Pursuit of Happiness

### MAIN IDEA

Only God can ultimately satisfy you. By looking to Christ and uniting your life to him, you can discover the fuller meaning of your existence.



Have you ever looked forward to the weekend and the enjoyment it promises, only to be left disappointed in the end? Have you ever been excited about seeing an upcoming movie that ended up being not nearly as

good as you expected? Has a close friend ever let you down?

Has anything for which you had high hopes left you dissatisfied or unhappy? And then you tried to find something else to fill the void, only to be disappointed again?

Everyone wants to be happy. In fact, almost every action people take is aimed at finding happiness. Even the simple act you took today of getting up and going to school is somehow linked with a desire for happiness—whether just for the short-term happiness (or absence of unhappiness) that comes with not getting in trouble for skipping class, or for the anticipated future happiness connected with receiving good grades, getting into college, and earning a degree to establish a secure career and income.

Everyone spends a whole lot of energy on what they *think* will make them happy. Almost every marketing campaign is somehow built upon this reality. Think about all the advertisements you saw the last time you watched TV or were online: you were promised better hair, a faster car, delicious food—all things that are intended to increase your “happiness” in some way.

The ache for happiness is bottomless. Just as humanity will always be pursuing more money, the faster-speed computer, or the “smarter” phone, so too,



## NOTE TAKING

**Naming and Classifying Attributes.** Make a table like the one below. In the first column, list several human attributes described in this section. In the second column, write a description of each attribute.

Human Attributes	Description
Made in God's image	Humans are persons, modeling the Blessed Trinity, who is Three Persons in One God.
A union of body and soul	

# GOD'S ATTRIBUTES

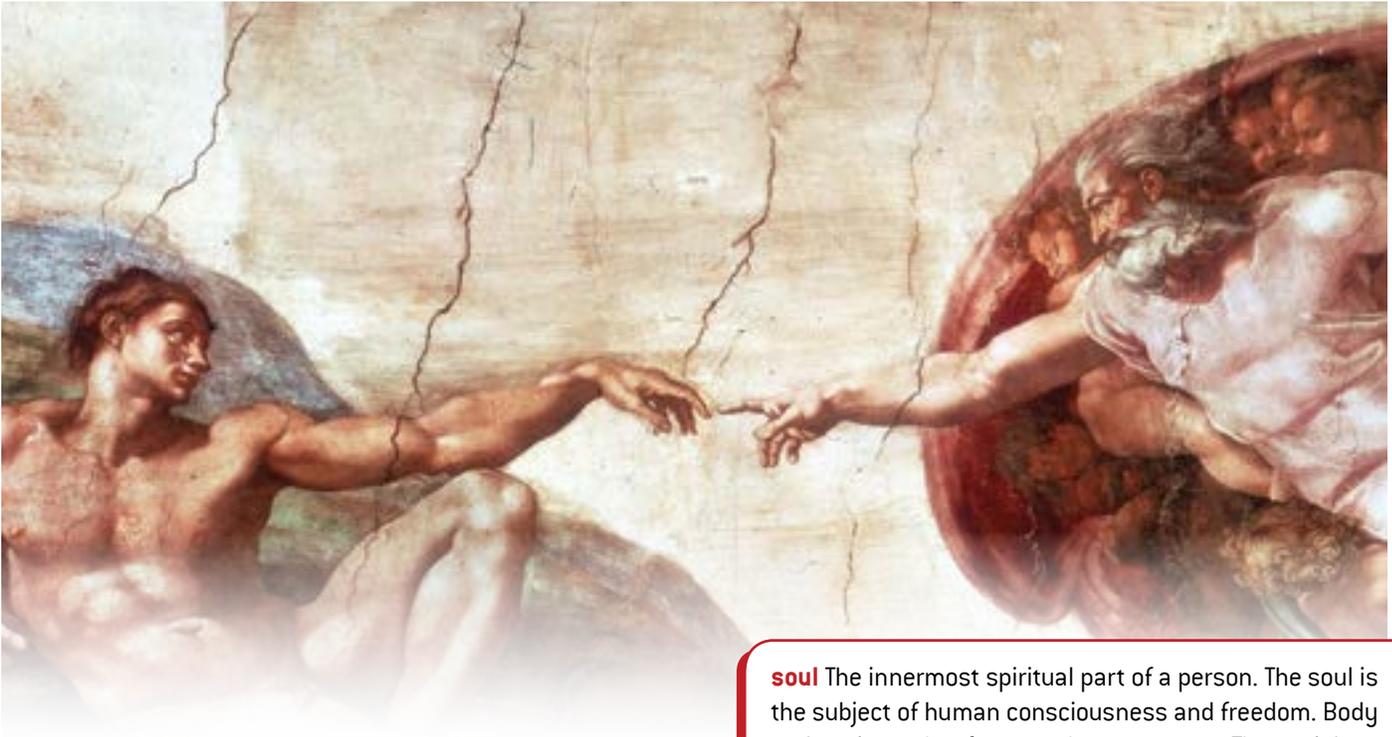
List five qualities that you have learned are essential characteristics or attributes of God. Some examples would be loving, compassionate, creative, just, beautiful, intelligent, understanding, and so forth. For each of these qualities, provide a real-life example of a person with the quality, knowing that all good human qualities come from God.



no one here on earth could honestly think, “Now I am as happy as I could ever be.” It seems that even a moment that seems to provide the ultimate happiness could always be improved upon. For example, why be happy to win a hundred dollars when it’s possible to win a thousand or a million or mega millions?

You can see where this is going. If the thirst for happiness is never-ending, only a source of infinite goodness—that is, God—can satisfy it. St. Augustine of Hippo, one of the Church’s great theologians, knew this. He said, “We all want to live happily; in the whole human race there is no one who does not assent to this proposition, even before it is fully articulated.”

St. Augustine had spent his early life looking for happiness in all the wrong places. He embraced many false philosophies. He lived with a woman outside of marriage. Nevertheless, he remained unsatisfied and continued to look for happiness. Finally, inspired by Scripture, St. Augustine came to know God. He discovered that only in God was his desire for happiness quenched. He was baptized and became a Christian. He was later ordained a priest, and became a bishop. St. Augustine famously offered this prayer in thankfulness to God: “You have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.”



**soul** The innermost spiritual part of a person. The soul is the subject of human consciousness and freedom. Body and soul together form one human nature. The soul does not die with the body. It is eternal and will be reunited with the body in the final resurrection.

## Achieving Lasting Happiness

How is true, everlasting happiness achieved? Everything in this world works better when it acts in accordance with its nature. The nature of the physical makeup of a fish means that it will function better when it is in water. A fish is free to jump onto land, but because this type of environment goes against its nature, it will not thrive there, and will probably die. A tree needs sunlight to grow. Deprived of sunlight, the tree will gradually wither and die.

And so, to understand how humanity is happiest, you have to understand the nature of the human person. Consider these attributes of human persons:

- Humans are made in the image of God. Each person is not just something, but truly *someone*. Humans are rightly called “persons,” because they are made in the image of the one God in the Blessed Trinity.
- Humans are a union of body and **soul**. Humans are not purely spiritual beings like the angels, or purely corporal like the matter of the earth. Humans are physical beings who have an inner life called the soul. The soul is not “trapped” in the body, but rather united with it. The reality of a person’s soul is expressed through the body.
- Humans possess free will. Humans can make choices based on more than just instinct or impulse. Through this self-determination, they are able to weigh options and foresee consequences.
- Humans possess a rational intellect. Humans can think in a way that animals cannot. They can engage in self-reflection and perform abstract, conceptual reasoning.
- Humans are able to enter into communion with others and, ultimately, with God. Humans are capable of going outside of themselves to enter into relationships.

This isn't all, of course. You also know that humanity is in a fallen state because of **Original Sin**. Humans have a darkened intellect and a weakened will. All personal sin after man's first sin has been disobedience toward God and a lack of trust in his goodness. Because of this, not only is it difficult for people to *see* the good, it is often challenging to *choose* good over evil as well. Surely, everyone can relate to this.

However, humanity is not overcome by its fallen nature. While Original Sin wounded the human soul and a person's faculties of intellect and will, it did not destroy them or leave them in complete darkness.

Through Christ's Passion, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension, humanity was redeemed and transformed. The **Paschal Mystery** accomplished even more. In Jesus, you have a glimpse of what it means to be human, for Christ "fully reveals man to himself."<sup>2</sup> God has given you the Holy Spirit and his many graces to combat **concupiscence** and the temptation to commit personal sins in your own life. Disciples of Christ

have the divine image "restored, renewed, and brought to perfection in them," said St. John Paul II. Indeed, only in being conformed to the image of Christ "can man be freed from the slavery of idolatry, rebuild lost fellowship and rediscover his true identity."<sup>3</sup>

Take a few moments to let that sink in: *only in Christ can you find your true identity*. This reality of being made in the image of God—an image restored by Christ—drives the pursuit of happiness. In other words, the more you are like God, the happier you will be.

**Original Sin** The sin of the first human parents, by which they lost their original holiness. Original Sin is transmitted to every person born into the world, except Jesus and Mary.

**Paschal Mystery** Christ's work of Redemption, accomplished principally by his Passion, Death, Resurrection, and glorious Ascension. This mystery is commemorated and made present through the sacraments, especially the Eucharist.

**concupiscence** The human inclination toward sin, caused by Original Sin. More specifically, it means "the rebellion of the 'flesh' against the spirit" (CCC, 2515).

## SECTION ASSESSMENT

### NOTE TAKING



Use the chart you completed to answer the following questions.

1. Name and describe five attributes of the human person named in this section.
2. How do these attributes differentiate human beings from any other living creature?

### COMPREHENSION



3. What did St. Augustine mean when he said, "You have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you"?
4. What does it mean to say that Christ "fully reveals man to himself"?

### APPLICATION



6. Explain why it makes sense to say that the more a person is like God the happier he or she is.

## SECTION 1

# People Are Individual and Social Beings

### MAIN IDEA

Each person is a unique individual, and yet, being made in the image of a Trinitarian God gives one a naturally social nature as well.



Although human beings share one nature, each person has a unique individuality. Each person is not something, but someone. There is no other *you* in the entire universe, and there never will be. Even if you were to

discover an identical twin you never knew you had, this person would not be you. St. John Paul II said:

A human being is an object to be counted, something considered under the aspect of quantity, one of many millions. Yet at the same time he is a single being, unique and unrepeatable . . . somebody thought of and chosen from eternity, some called and identified by his own name. (*Urbi et Orbi*, Christmas Message, 1978)

This individuality is absolutely essential; however, it is also important to note that each person is also a social being. Now, this does not mean “social” in the conventional understanding of the word—that is, outgoing and eager to interact with peers and other people. Instead, being social beings means that you are called to *be with others*. Just by being born, you have a connection with other beings—most fundamentally, your family.

Your social nature is absolutely vital to your quest for happiness. Adam realized this. Looking at all the animals, he recognized that none of them were like him. God said in regard to Adam’s dilemma: “It is not good for the man to be alone” (Gn 2:18). God took care of Adam’s loneliness by giving him Eve; together, they formed the first human society.



## NOTE TAKING

**Fill In the Blanks.** As you read the text section, fill in the words that best complete the sentences below.

1. A human person is made in the image of \_\_\_\_\_. Therefore, he is an individual, but also a \_\_\_\_\_ being.
2. Denying this image leads to \_\_\_\_\_.

# The Importance of Society

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines *society* as a group of persons bound together organically by a principle of unity that goes beyond each one of them (see CCC, 1880). This definition is deliberately general. Applying it to your life, you can see that you are a part



of many societies. Foremost, you have the society of your family. You are also part of a school society and the larger societies of your city, state, and nation. Ultimately, you are a member of the society made up of the entire world, bound together by the fact of a shared humanity of all people.

Living in society is essential to being a human person. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches: “Through the exchange with others, mutual service and dialogue with his brethren, man develops his potential; he thus responds to his vocation” (CCC, 1879). Although each person is an individual, no one is truly isolated; the call to communion is inherent to human nature. Pope Benedict XVI put it this way:

Our lives are involved with one another, through innumerable interactions they are linked together. No one lives alone. No one sins alone. No one is saved alone. The lives of others continually spill over into mine: in what I think, say, do and achieve. And conversely, my life spills over into that of others: for better and for worse. (*Spe Salvi*, 40)

Your social nature is rooted in the Trinity. It’s not irrelevant that the Trinity is a **communion of Persons**. You learned in the Introduction that the more you are like God, the happier you will be. Because “God is love” (1 Jn 4:8), he is an eternal exchange of Persons. The Father loves the Son; the Son loves the Father; and the Holy Spirit *is* that love. Just as the Trinity is an eternal self-gift, you too are called to give of yourself to others. The exchange of the gift of yourself to God and others is at the heart of what it means to be human.

**communion of Persons** A complete giving-of-self, shown perfectly in the life of the Trinity. The Trinity, as a communion of divine Persons, is a model for human relationships.

The Second Vatican Council taught that

The Lord Jesus, when praying to the Father, “that they may all be one . . . even as we are one” (Jn 17:21–22) has opened up new horizons closed to human reason by implying that there is a certain parallel between the union existing among the divine persons and the union of the sons of God in truth and love. It follows, then, that if man is the only creature on earth that God has wanted for its own sake, man can fully discover his true self only in a sincere giving of himself. (*Gaudium et Spes*, 24)

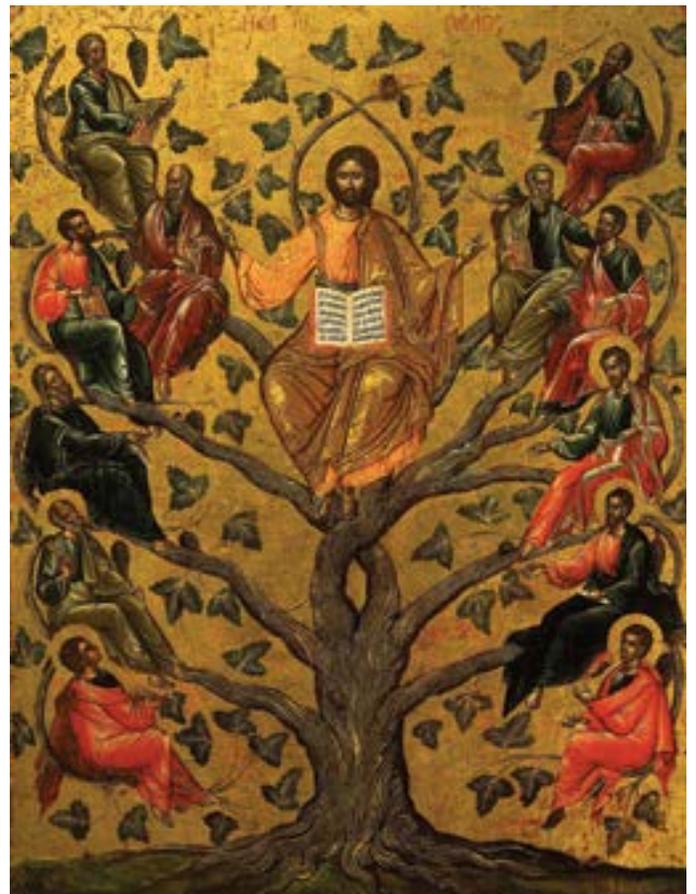
Everyone is created for communion with others; ultimately, each person’s destiny is communion with God, who himself is the perfect communion of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Only in relationship with God can man and woman fully discover “the authentic and complete meaning of their personal and social lives.”<sup>4</sup> Since being made in God’s image marks the life of every human, the more one is like him, the greater is one’s happiness.

## The Church Goes Beyond Human Society

As part of Christ’s plan to draw everyone to himself (see Jn 12:32), he assembled the People of God from the ends of the earth and gave her the name Church. “The Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race.”<sup>5</sup> The Church draws her life from Christ himself and becomes his Body. Essentially, the Church shows the way to unity with God, and therefore communion with other humans. The Church is thus a guide and a sign of the unity to which our human societies must aspire. The Church is the source of Salvation and truth.

This unity of the Church is expressed in many ways:

- *The Church is the Mystical Body of Christ.* Christ intimately identified himself with his people: “Abide in me, and I in you. . . . I am the vine, you are the branches” (Jn 15:4–5). And St. Paul boldly proclaimed, “Now you are Christ’s body, and individually parts of it” (1 Cor 12:27). And so, it is Christ himself who is the source of unity. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reiterates this: “Not only is [the Church] gathered *around him*; she is united *in him*, in his body” (CCC, 789). And, “in the unity of this Body, there is a diversity of members and functions. All members are linked to one another, especially to those who are suffering, to the poor and persecuted” (CCC, 806).
- *The Church is the Family of God.* This expression of the Church is modeled when you pray the Our Father. Those reborn by water and the Spirit in Baptism are united as brothers and sisters, with God as their loving Father.



Icon of Christ the True Vine (Athens, sixteenth century)

- *The Church is the Community of Sanctified Believers.* What this means is that through the Church’s union with Christ, Catholics also have a common activity: that is, sanctification (to make holy). “All the activities of the Church are directed, as toward their end, to the sanctification of humanity and the glorification of God.”<sup>6</sup> Those in the Church are not only united in who they are, but also in what they are moving toward.
  - *The Church is Teacher.* St. John XXIII said, “To [the Church] was entrusted by her holy Founder the twofold task of giving life to her children and of teaching them and guiding them—both as individuals and as nations—with maternal care.”<sup>7</sup>
  - *The Church is Listener.* Through a true spirit of ecumenism with other faith communities, she always seeks a common bond rooted in what is authentically human.
- In all of these expressions, the Church helps both individuals and societies to reach their full potential.

## SECTION ASSESSMENT



### NOTE TAKING

Use the fill-in-the-blank notes you made as a reading guide to answer the following questions.

1. What are the implications of being made in God’s image?
2. When a person denies this image, what are the consequences?



### COMPREHENSION

3. Why is being a part of society essential to your humanity?
4. Why is the Church a guide and sign of unity to which all other societies must aspire?
5. Name five ways the Church expresses her unity.



### APPLICATION

6. Explain how the following statement provides a guide to full human living: “There is a certain resemblance between the unity of divine persons and the fraternity that men are to establish among themselves in truth and love” (CCC, 1878).



### JOURNAL

7. St. Francis de Sales famously said, “Be who you are, and be it well.” What does this statement mean?
8. In what “societies” of your life are you most fully yourself? Why?

## SECTION 2

# What Is Justice?

### MAIN IDEA

Justice means “giving others their due.” The three main types of justice are commutative, distributive, and legal. Social justice is the overarching justice that ensures the other three.



Human societies are not perfect. Consider three examples from the society made up by the United States of America:

- More than 1.5 million babies are legally killed from abortion every year in the United States alone.
- Every year in the United States, some 700,000 children are victims of abuse or neglect.
- Fifteen percent of US citizens live below the poverty level.

Failings such as these point to the need for **justice**. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines justice as, “the moral virtue that consists in the constant and firm will to give their due to God and neighbor” (CCC, 1807). Simply put, justice is “giving others their due.”

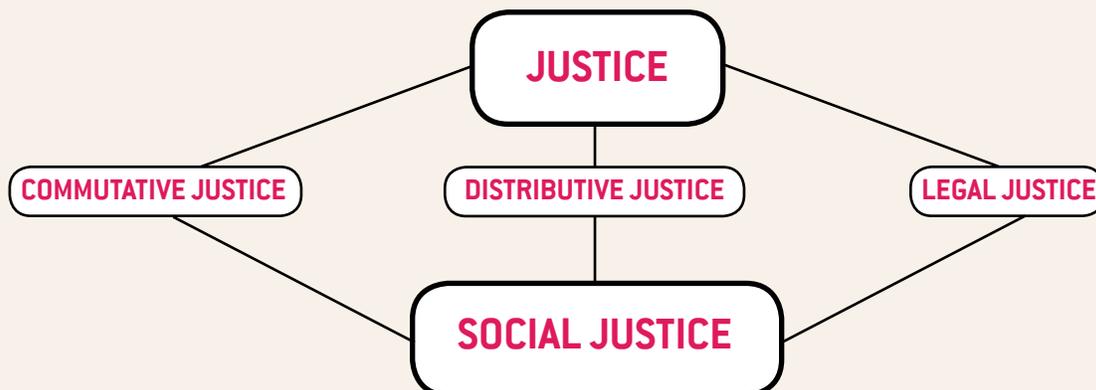
This need for justice is common to the human experience. From a young age, a child is sensitive to inequalities, and that sense of justice grows into adulthood. A mature sense of justice wants to see

**justice** The cardinal or moral virtue that consists in the constant and firm will to give God and neighbor their due; the actions that flow from that virtue.



## NOTE TAKING

**Summarizing Information.** Create a diagram like the one below to help you outline the main content of this section. Record the definitions of each type of justice in the appropriate rectangle.





*“A way has to be found to enable everyone to benefit from the fruits of the earth, and not simply to close the gap between the affluent and those who must be satisfied with the crumbs falling from the table, but above all to satisfy the demands of justice, fairness, and respect for every human being” (Pope Francis, Address to the Food and Agricultural Organization, June 2013).*

the criminal punished, the good rewarded, and the deprived satisfied. St. John Paul II spoke about the need for justice:

How can it be that even today there are still people dying of hunger? Condemned to illiteracy? Lacking the most basic medical care? Without a roof over their heads? . . . And how can we remain indifferent to the prospect of an ecological crisis which is making vast areas of our planet uninhabitable and hostile to humanity? Or by the problems of peace, so often threatened by the specter of catastrophic wars? Or by contempt for the fundamental human rights of so many people, especially children? Countless are the emergencies to which every Christian heart must be sensitive. (*Novo Millennio*, 50–51)

The human need for justice does not go unacknowledged by God. In God is perfect justice, which gives hope amid experiences of profound injustice. Indeed, God’s justice is clearly revealed throughout Scripture. “The Lord does righteous deeds, brings justice to all the oppressed” (Ps 103:6). Also, Christ

promises to satisfy this “hunger and thirst for righteousness” (Mt 5:6).

## Three Types of Justice

Society can participate in bringing justice to the oppressed and satisfying the thirst for righteousness through different forms of justice. The three types named in this section are commutative justice, distributive justice, and legal justice. A fourth definition is also included: social justice, which is the overarching type of justice that ensures the other types.

### Commutative Justice

**Commutative justice** is the type of justice that deals with relationships between persons and private social groups (*commutative* means “reciprocal”). It involves the justice within families, friendships, and work relationships. It includes paying back debts (big or small), making restitution for damaging others’ goods, and

**commutative justice** The type of justice that governs exchanges between individuals and private groups.



*A fender bender requires the parties involved to agree to and complete a fair resolution.*

fulfilling contracts or promises. It calls for fairness in agreements and exchanges between individuals or private social groups. Commutative justice requires that you get what you pay for. It also obliges you to give others what is rightly theirs and to earn what you are given.

For example, if you're hired as a cashier at a retail store, you have an obligation to give a fair amount of work and not stand around and talk to coworkers while customers are left unattended. Conversely, your employer must pay you a just wage for your work. Or if a mother hires you as a babysitter to watch her toddler, then in justice you should do a good job of caring for the child and not spend the time distracted with texting your friends. Similarly, the mother should pay you the agreed-upon wage and not renege on her part of the agreement.

Commutative justice requires that both sides respect the dignity of the other and responsibly fulfill their obligations. Without commutative justice, a society could not function. It would be riddled with theft, fraud, and disregard for others and their property. The fundamental principles of commutative justice lead to other forms of justice.

## Distributive Justice

**Distributive justice** regulates what a society owes its members in proportion to what they need and what they contribute. It sees to the just distribution of created goods that God intends for all to use and share. The Second Vatican Council taught:

God intended the earth with everything contained in it for the use of all human beings and peoples. . . . Thus, . . . attention must always be paid to this universal destination of earthly goods. . . . The right of having a share of earthly goods sufficient for oneself and one's family belongs to everyone. (*Gaudium et Spes*, 69)



*The individual right to car ownership would be fruitless without supporting the common need for shared highways and roads.*

Distributive justice is an obligation for all people and all societies. However, its application varies from nation to nation. Distributive justice certainly is not in opposition to private ownership of goods and services, but it requires individual citizens to support the common needs of all. For example, the private ownership of cars and homes is part of the so-called American dream. Yet Americans must also support programs, either public or private, to provide transportation and housing for those who can't afford ownership of either.

**distributive justice** The type of justice that governs what the greater community owes individuals based on their contribution and needs.

# JUSTICE CHEAT SHEET

## SUMMARY / WHO IS INVOLVED / EXAMPLE

### COMMUTATIVE JUSTICE

What we owe each other individually



- paying back debts
- repairing a borrowed car you wrecked
- employees fulfilling their duties and employers paying them accordingly

### DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

What society owes us



- civil services like roads and police and fire departments
- security through the armed services
- public education

### LEGAL JUSTICE

What we owe society



- paying taxes
- serving on a jury

Taxes are one way this support is given. In the case of transportation, taxes not only help to fund transit service, but also the costs of road repair, snow removal, and the like—services that benefit all people.

The previous example shows distributive justice based on someone's *contribution*. Distributive justice, as you will learn in ensuing chapters, can also be based on someone's *need*.

## Legal Justice

**Legal justice** involves citizens' responsibilities to society. It includes paying taxes, obeying just laws, and offering help in times of crisis. What constitutes legal justice is usually spelled out in laws and legal documents.

To review the three types of justice, examine the chart on this page.

## Social Justice

The term **social justice** was first employed in Church documents by Pope Pius XI in 1931 in his encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* ("On Reconstructing Social Order"). But the practice of social justice has always been part of the Church's work and is rooted in Christ's very mission of service. The Church's modern body of teaching on social justice began with Pope Leo XIII in 1891, when he issued the first **social encyclical**,

**legal justice** The type of justice that governs what individuals owe their country and society.

**social justice** The application of the virtue of justice. The defense of human dignity by ensuring that social structures and institutions on all levels—including political, cultural, and economic—provide for essential human needs and protect human rights.

**social encyclical** A letter from the Pope to the Church on issues related to human rights, social justice, and peace.

*Rerum Novarum* (“On the Condition of Labor”). Social justice applies the Gospel message of Jesus Christ to the structures, systems, and laws of society in order to guarantee the rights of individuals. Social justice demands that everyone has a right to a fair say in the social, political, and economic institutions of society.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that “society ensures social justice when it provides the conditions that allow associations or individuals to obtain what is their due, according to their nature and their vocation” (CCC, 1928). Theologian Fr. John Hardon, S.J., explained social justice as a person working

in concert with others, through organized bodies, as a member of a group whose purpose is to identify the needs of society, and, by the use of appropriate means, to meet these needs locally, regionally, nationally, and even globally.<sup>8</sup>

Social justice is an overarching type of justice that ensures the practice of the other types of justice described in this section. Social justice is most closely related to legal justice, although it does, indeed, address all types.

## SECTION ASSESSMENT



### NOTE TAKING

Use the graphic organizer you created to complete the following questions.

1. What is the difference between commutative justice and distributive justice?
2. Which type of justice is social justice most like?



### VOCABULARY

3. Define the terms *justice* and *social justice*.
4. What is the difference between justice and social justice?



### CRITICAL THINKING

5. What are the basic responsibilities of citizens in society?
6. Conversely, what are the basic responsibilities of society toward citizens?
7. Why is justice both a personal obligation and a social necessity?

## SECTION 3

# Other Justice Topics

### MAIN IDEA

Justice aims at the common good, which is the set of conditions that help the human person flourish. Charity is always essential to justice. Together justice and charity can combat social sin.



Several other topics are crucial to an initial understanding of justice and what it means to live a truthful and happy life. Three of these topics are (1) the need to commit to the common good, (2) the practice of charity and justice, and (3) awareness of how

sin—specifically, social sin—affects people collectively and individually. These topics are addressed in the next subsections.

## The Common Good

The term *common good* refers to the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily.<sup>9</sup> Three essential elements of the common good are:

1. Respect for the life and dignity of every person.
2. A commitment to the social well-being and development of the group, especially by ensuring that individuals' basic needs are met.
3. The establishment of a peaceful and just society.

The common good always begins with the needs of individuals. Starting from the needs of individuals, society builds structure and methods that meet these needs, benefitting everyone. It is the role of the state to defend and promote the common good of civil society and its citizens. The common good is always oriented toward the *progress of persons*. This order is founded on truth, built up in justice, and animated by love. A just society is relentless in its efforts to maintain the dignity



## NOTE TAKING

**Word Webs.** Create word webs around each of the following concepts. To make a word web draw lines from the circle to key words and phrases that will help you understand the meaning of the concept.

**Common  
Good**

**Justice &  
Charity**

**Social  
Sin**



of the individual human person, both for his or her own benefit and for the common benefit of all. In using the word “common,” the Church does not reject the needs of the individual for the sake of the greater community, but rather exactly the opposite. The Church recognizes that because of the social nature of human beings, the good of the individual is inseparable from the communal good. The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* explains how the well-being of the individual human person is integral to the common good:

A society that wishes and intends to remain at the service of the human being at every level is a society that has the common good—the good of all people and of the whole person—as its primary goal. The human person cannot find fulfillment in himself, that is, apart from the fact that he exists “with” others and “for” others. (CSDC, 165)

Actions aimed at the common good should always begin with the human person. Economies, governments, private organizations, and other societies should spring forth from the dignity of the human person. Pope Benedict XVI explained that the common good is linked to love of others:

It is the good of “all of us,” made up of individuals, families and intermediate groups who together constitute society. It is a good that is sought not for its own sake, but for the people who belong to the social community and who can only really and effectively pursue their good within it. To desire the *common good* and strive toward it is a *requirement of justice and charity*. The more we strive to secure a common good corresponding to the real needs of our neighbors, the more effectively we love them. (*Caritas in Veritate*, 7)