

*Faith on Fire*  
*The Seventh Step*  
*Commitment to Social Justice*

During the past six weeks I have suggested several ways we can strengthen our faith so that it will be on fire with love and devotion for Christ. I have said we must be committed (1) to being renewed in Christ, (2) to prayer, (3) to communal worship, (4) to a sacramental way of life, (5) to a liturgical piety, and (6) to our Parish Community. Today, I add a seventh step: *We must be committed to Social Justice.*

Faith has a deeply personal dimension. It is *I* who believe. Nobody else can believe for me. *I* must take the risk of believing and entrusting myself to Christ. But faith is not merely a personal venture. It also involves a communal and social dimension. *I* believe within the context of a community of believers. *I* believe with others. *I* believe, but *I* believe with a community of faith that says *we* believe.

The communal dimension of faith reminds us that we have obligations to others within and outside of our community. Those who believe are not merely concerned about themselves; they are also concerned about others. Consequently, faith has a social dimension. It is concerned about the wider community of faith and the wider society in which we live. *Authentic faith means commitment to social justice.*

A commitment to social justice has always been important to the community of faith, and it is no less important today. Consider some of the issues we face today.

First, despite the affluence in which we live, there are people around us and beyond who live in poverty. They do not have basic needs. They do not have their “daily bread.”

Second, we live in a divided society in which racism continues to raise its ugly head. People are discriminated against because of their race or nationality. African Americans continued to be discriminated against simply because of the color of their skin.

Third, we live in a society in which violence, especially gun violence, causes us to live in fear, even when we live in a privileged area such as the Farmington Valley. All violence is contrary to the Gospel of Peace and Reconciliation that God brings in Jesus Christ.

Fourth, sexual abuse against children and the harassment of women continue to plague us. Sexuality is viewed as a means of power and self-gratification rather than the gift of God reserved for marriage.

Finally, we live a society in which many immigrants live in fear. How ironic this is since all of us come from immigrant stock.

There are other items that could be added to this list. But I have raised these to highlight the relationship between faith in Jesus Christ and the real world in which we live. Authentic faith is on fire with charity for the poor and the disposed. Faith that is on fire fights with all its strength against racism, violence, sexual abuse and harassment. Faith that is on fire is committed to social justice in the Church in in the society in which we live. *Father Matera*

**Our Parish Mission Will Be Held March 3—7**

**Save the Date!**