

CARITAS IN VERITATE || CHARITY IN TRUTH

“MINUTE MEDITATIONS”

10 brief meditations from *Caritas in veritate* for use with parish bulletins, newsletters and websites

Week 1

Pope Benedict XVI: Caritas in veritate

Charity in truth, to which Jesus Christ bore witness by his earthly life and especially by his death and resurrection, is the principal driving force behind the authentic development of every person and of all humanity. Love - caritas - is an extraordinary force which leads people to opt for courageous and generous engagement in the field of justice and peace. It is a force that has its origin in God, Eternal Love and Absolute Truth. Each person finds his good by adherence to God's plan for him, in order to realize it fully: in this plan, he finds his truth, and through adherence to this truth he becomes free (cf. Jn 8:22). To defend the truth, to articulate it with humility and conviction, and to bear witness to it in life are therefore exacting and indispensable forms of charity. (CV, 1) *Read the Holy Father's encyclical online at www.vatican.va.*

Week 2

Pope Benedict XVI: Caritas in veritate

Charity goes beyond justice, because to love is to give, to offer what is “mine” to the other; but it never lacks justice, which prompts us to give the other what is “his”, what is due to him by reason of his being or his acting. I cannot “give” what is mine to the other, without first giving him what pertains to him in justice. If we love others with charity, then first of all we are just towards them. ...On the other hand, charity transcends justice and completes it in the logic of giving and forgiving. (CV, 6) *Read the Holy Father's encyclical online at www.vatican.va.*

Week 3

Pope Benedict XVI: Caritas in veritate

Deeds without knowledge are blind, and knowledge without love is sterile. Indeed, “the individual who is animated by true charity labors skillfully to discover the causes of misery, to find the means to combat it, to overcome it resolutely.” (CV, 30) *Read the Holy Father's encyclical online at www.vatican.va.*

Week 4

Pope Benedict XVI: Caritas in veritate

Man's earthly activity, when inspired and sustained by charity, contributes to the building of the universal city of God, which is the goal of the history of the human family. In an increasingly globalized society, the common good and the effort to obtain it cannot fail to assume the dimensions of the whole human family, that is to say, the community of peoples and nations, in such a way as to shape the earthly city in unity and peace, rendering it to some degree an anticipation and a prefiguration of the undivided city of God. (CV, 7) *Read the Holy Father's encyclical online at www.vatican.va.*

Week 5

Pope Benedict XVI: Caritas in veritate

God is the guarantor of man's true development, inasmuch as, having created him in his image, he also establishes the transcendent dignity of men and women and feeds their innate yearning to "be more". Man is not a lost atom in a random universe: he is God's creature, whom God chose to endow with an immortal soul and whom he has always loved. (CV, 28) *Read the Holy Father's encyclical online at www.vatican.va.*

Week 6

Pope Benedict XVI: Caritas in veritate

Openness to life is at the centre of true development. When a society moves towards the denial or suppression of life, it ends up no longer finding the necessary motivation and energy to strive for man's true good. If personal and social sensitivity towards the acceptance of a new life is lost, then other forms of acceptance that are valuable for society also wither away. The acceptance of life strengthens moral fiber and makes people capable of mutual help. (CV, 28) *Read the Holy Father's encyclical online at www.vatican.va.*

Week 7

Pope Benedict XVI: Caritas in veritate

The economic sphere is neither ethically neutral, nor inherently inhuman and opposed to society. It is part and parcel of human activity and precisely because it is human, it must be structured and governed in an ethical manner. (CV, 36) *Read the Holy Father's encyclical online at www.vatican.va.*

Week 8

Pope Benedict XVI: Caritas in veritate

Only in truth does charity shine forth, only in truth can charity be authentically lived. Truth is the light that gives meaning and value to charity. ...Without truth, charity degenerates into sentimentality. Love becomes an empty shell, to be filled in an arbitrary way. In a culture without truth, this is the fatal risk facing love. It falls prey to contingent subjective emotions and opinions, the word "love" is abused and distorted, to the point where it comes to mean the opposite. (CV, 3) *Read the Holy Father's encyclical online at www.vatican.va.*

Week 9

Pope Benedict XVI: Caritas in veritate

Individual rights, when detached from a framework of duties which grants them their full meaning, can run wild, leading to an escalation of demands which is effectively unlimited and indiscriminate. An overemphasis on rights leads to a disregard for duties. ...Duties thereby reinforce rights and call for their defense and promotion as a task to be undertaken in the service of the common good. (CV, 43) *Read the Holy Father's encyclical online at www.vatican.va.*

Week 10

Pope Benedict XVI: Caritas in veritate

In nature, the believer recognizes the wonderful result of God's creative activity, which we may use responsibly to satisfy our legitimate needs, material or otherwise, while respecting the intrinsic balance of creation. If this vision is lost, we end up either considering nature an untouchable taboo or, on the contrary, abusing it. Neither attitude is consonant with the Christian vision of nature as the fruit of God's creation. Nature expresses a design of love and truth. It is prior to us, and it has been given to us by God as the setting for our life. Nature speaks to us of the Creator (cf. Rom 1:20) and his love for humanity. It is destined to be "recapitulated" in Christ at the end of time (cf. Eph 1:9-10; Col 1:19-20). (CV, 48) *Read the Holy Father's encyclical online at www.vatican.va.*