

Reflection: Exploring Solidarity

(45 minutes)

1 of 1

FACE THE FAST

Objective

Through this reflection, participants will:

- think more deeply about the characteristics of solidarity;
- form and articulate personal responses to the concept of solidarity through journaling;
- share and discuss the meaning of solidarity with other participants; and
- connect solidarity with the themes of climate change and food security.

Activity Summary

Participants will read four passages on solidarity and care for God's creation and explore the different aspects of solidarity through journaling.

Materials Needed

- copy of the *Exploring Solidarity* handout for each participant
- pens/pencils

Procedure

The term "solidarity" is used throughout Catholic social teaching and in the outreach work of the Church, but oftentimes, Catholics do not fully understand its meaning. Consider using this reflection early in the Food Fast to provide grounding in the meaning of solidarity.

Distribute an *Exploring Solidarity* handout to each participant. Invite them to read each passage and then spend time responding to the questions that follow each passage. They can spend their time on those passages and questions that interest them the most. Allow participants to journal for about 30 minutes.

Debrief

Ask participants to come back to the larger group. Invite them to share the questions they explored and what they discovered about solidarity through this reflection. End the reflection by asking why solidarity is so important when we look at global poverty and hunger issues, including the role climate change plays in people's food security.

Reflection: Exploring Solidarity

Handout

FACE THE FAST

“Solidarity is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.”

Pope John Paul II, *On Social Concerns*, #38

Some things to consider and journal on (you are not limited to these questions, nor required to answer all):

- Did you have a firm idea of what solidarity was before you read this quote?
- How does John Paul’s definition of solidarity help you understand what this concept means?
- Why does he include the concept that one has to “persevere” in one’s determination?
- What does this mean in your own life?
- When John Paul adds the idea that we are responsible for each other, how does he expand on the concept of helping your neighbor?
- What does taking on responsibility for others mean to you?
- How can you foresee it playing out in your life as you move through different stages (e.g., child, teenager, student, professional, marriage and family)?

Reflection: Exploring Solidarity

Handout

FACE THE FAST

“In a world that tends to give more and more incentives to individualism, the first service of people of faith is attention to neighbors, in solidarity and sharing.”

Pope Benedict XVI, Homily, June 15, 2008

Some things to consider and journal on (you are not limited to these questions, nor required to answer all):

- In what ways does our culture encourage individual accomplishments?
- In what ways does our culture encourage common goals?
- How has this influenced your life?
- Do you recognize a tension within yourself between individualism and the call to solidarity?
- Why is it important to give “attention” to others?

Reflection: Exploring Solidarity

Handout

FACE THE FAST

“We have inherited from past generations, and we have benefitted from their work. We have obligations towards all, and we cannot refuse to interest ourselves in those who will come after us to enlarge the human family. The reality of human solidarity, which is a benefit for us, also imposes a duty for future generations.”

Pope Paul VI, *On the Development of Peoples*, #17, 1967

Some things to consider and journal on (you are not limited to these questions, nor required to answer all):

- In what ways have you directly benefitted from the generations that have come before, in terms of both the generations of our global family and of your individual family?
- What do you *owe* future generations, in general, and in terms of food security?
- What do you *owe* future generations in terms of the environment?

Reflection: Exploring Solidarity

Handout

FACE THE FAST

Creative Solidarity

Your creative love, O God, brought forth our world,
Once a garden where humans
Could taste and see the goodness of the earth.

But our eyes have been blinded
to the beauty of Creation,
to the knowledge that it is Gift,
one given so that all humans may live and flourish.

Our indifference changes the world;
Even mighty glaciers weep now.
Our disregard for our sisters and brothers
Threatens the very skies above us.
Our passivity begins to choke us, and
The excess of our lifestyles blot out the sun.

Call us to renewal, to stewardship;
Call us to solidarity to the earth and all its creatures.
Give us new vision to see the fragile beauty that remains to us;
Give us new spiritual energy to become active
In loving the world through our daily life;
Give us new voices to speak out for environmental solidarity.

Bless us again with the gift
Of being a joyful community;
Bless us with a love of your Creation
And we will glimpse your Eden once again.

J. M. Deren

This poem presents images of what the world was created to be: Psalm 34 calls people of faith to “taste and see” that the Lord, and all that he has made, is good. The poem also reflects on what is happening to God’s creation. Consider some of the following questions:

- How is the physical world tied to God’s desire that we are nourished in body and in spirit?
- Are there things that keep you from seeing and tasting the richness of the natural world?
- Are there times you become “indifferent” to God’s Creation?
- How does solidarity help us gain new perspectives on the earth and its people and offer us a new vision of what the world can be?
- How do we “love the world” in our daily life?
- How can the activity of being a loving and joyful community give us “new voices” so we can help with the healing of the earth and the feeding of its entire people?