

THE TWO FEET OF SOCIAL ACTION

If you are new,
start here ↓



- Supporting food pantries
Providing food baskets
- Promoting clothing centers
- Visiting the elderly, prisoners, shut-ins
- Upholding birthright
- Supporting hospitality houses
- Sponsoring an immigrant family
- Volunteering for projects such as Meals On Wheels, transporting elderly, tutoring children, providing cultural opportunities

... but you must move on
to the next foot. You
need both feet to walk.



- Being politically active.
- Volunteering for voter registration
- Supporting political candidates who support 'people' issues
- Starting a diocesan or statewide legislative network
- Organizing the community
- Working with & promoting Pax Christi, Bread for the World, Network
- Starting a co-op or credit union
- Monitoring government agencies-getting them to change administrative policy that causes problems
- Educating the public
- Raising funds for needed projects

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Charity and Justice

Below is a basic chart to help clarify the distinction between works of justice and works of charity.

Charity – Social Service	Justice – Social Change
Cause: Occasioned by an accidental event e.g. floods, earthquake, etc.	Cause: Results from human systems or institutional, e.g., non-enforced housing codes, racism or sexism, etc.
Characteristic: Spontaneity; there is no attempt to identify or cope with causes; relief is designed to go directly to the victims.	Characteristic: Planned and organized projects involving research and actions to impact upon the leadership and practices that cause the hardships
Duration: Temporary provisions to satisfy the immediate needs; expectations are that things will return to normal and relief measures will no longer be needed	Duration: Provisions call for permanent change to ensure that social systems provide adequate food, shelter, etc., for all according to human needs and development.
Non-controversial actions: Actions are clearly identifiable; questions are not whether to respond, but how much is needed.	Non-controversial actions: Questions are projected toward accepted institutions and prevailing order, not isolated instances or events; change is needed on both individual and societal levels.
Scriptural examples: Jesus responding to individual needs when he fed the hungry, and healed the sick.	Scriptural examples: Jesus, by his preaching and actions called for change in attitude and practices (systems); he treated equally tax collector and friend; social outcasts and apostles and disciples.
Scriptural Reference: Good Samaritan Story The Gospel story does not attempt to survey the causes of highway banditry; the Good Samaritan provides temporary and immediate relief.	Scriptural Reference: Exodus Story Moses does not ask for food and medicine for Jewish slave-labor force. He challenges the institutional injustice of the Pharaoh’s system.

“Charity will never be true charity unless it takes justice into account. ...Let no one attempt with small gifts of charity to exempt themselves from works of justice.”

