

Charity and Justice

The two lungs of Catholic Social Teaching

The value of the Human Person

- Charity and Justice are necessary because of the infinite value of the human person
- There are an infinite variety of ways in which people can live out their values and dreams and flourish as human beings
- But human flourishing requires freedom.
- The less free you are, the less choices you can make and the less you can flourish

Charity as a reaction to unfreedom

- People are trapped in numerous situations which cause them not to be able to make the choices that will allow them to flourish
- Poverty reduces choices. Lack of education reduces choices. Hunger and thirst reduce choices. Lack of all human rights reduces choices.
- Charity sees the person suffering and sets about helping. Feeding the poor, clothing the naked, housing the homeless.
- Charity is characterised by providing immediate help in a situation on a short term basis

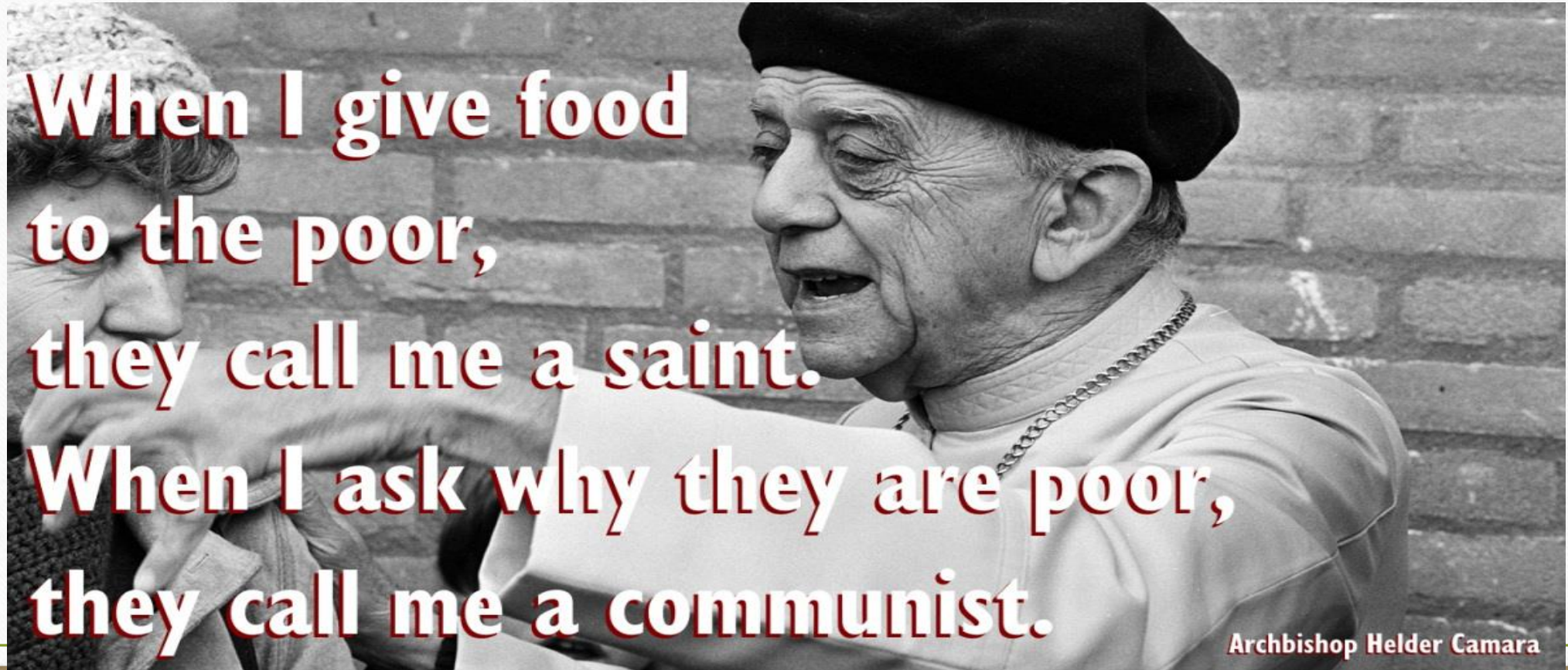
Justice- taking charity deeper

- Justice looks at the whole situation of unfreedom and tries to find causes
- What is there in the structure of things that means some people are incredibly rich while others are dying because of the effects of poverty?
- What is it about living in a country like Australia that means that I will have choices, while someone my age in another country will have none?
- When I look at a particular problem, what is the cause?

A story

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vpmVX9F3y74>
- We need BOTH charity and justice. One without the other reduces our impact in the world.

Moving from Charity to Justice



**When I give food
to the poor,
they call me a saint.**

**When I ask why they are poor,
they call me a communist.**

Archbishop Helder Camara

Making Charity Justice

- To make a work of charity a work of justice, just add ‘why?’

Moving from Charity to Justice	
CHARITY supplies Christmas hampers, emergency food services, handouts.	JUSTICE looks at the wages and welfare on which people are supposed to live and asks: “Why are people hungry? Why is unemployment so high? Why is it impossible to live on social assistance?”
CHARITY gives money to calls for overseas relief.	JUSTICE looks at multinational companies and maquiladoras and asks: “Why are people poor? Why do the really rich pay no taxes? How do you redistribute the world’s resources?”
CHARITY visits the sick.	JUSTICE looks at the demolition of the health care system and asks: “Why are poor children twice as likely to die before their first birthday than are other children? Why is the best health care system in the world being sabotaged?”
CHARITY binds up the wounds...	JUSTICE asks, “Why does it happen? How do we prevent it from happening again?”
CHARITY finds short-term solutions	JUSTICE takes longer, digs for root causes, upsets the apple cart.
CHARITY is socially acceptable ...	JUSTICE is socially, politically, and economically the bigger risk.

—developed by Jesuit Brother Jim McSheffrey and adapted by John Asling

Assessing our own work

- In your school groups (if possible), run a check on all the activities of your social justice group. Try to evaluate whether you are doing works of charity or works of justice. Suggest some ways in which the works of charity could blossom into works of justice (7 minutes)
- Find another school and share your findings with them.