

# ALIVE IN CHRIST

GRADE 6

The Word of God in the Old Testament

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**Our Sunday Visitor**

# Justice and Peace

## Let Us Pray

**Leader:** Lord God, help us work hard for justice so that all people may live in peace.

“The LORD does righteous deeds,  
brings justice to all the oppressed.”

**Psalm 103:6**

**All:** Lord God, help us work hard for justice so that all people may live in peace. Amen.

## Scripture

Learn to do good. Make justice your aim: redress the wronged, hear the orphan's plea, defend the widow. **Isaiah 1:17**

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### What Do You Wonder?

- What is the difference between what's fair and what's just?
- Why is working for justice linked to peace and acting as a peacemaker?



## Seeking Justice

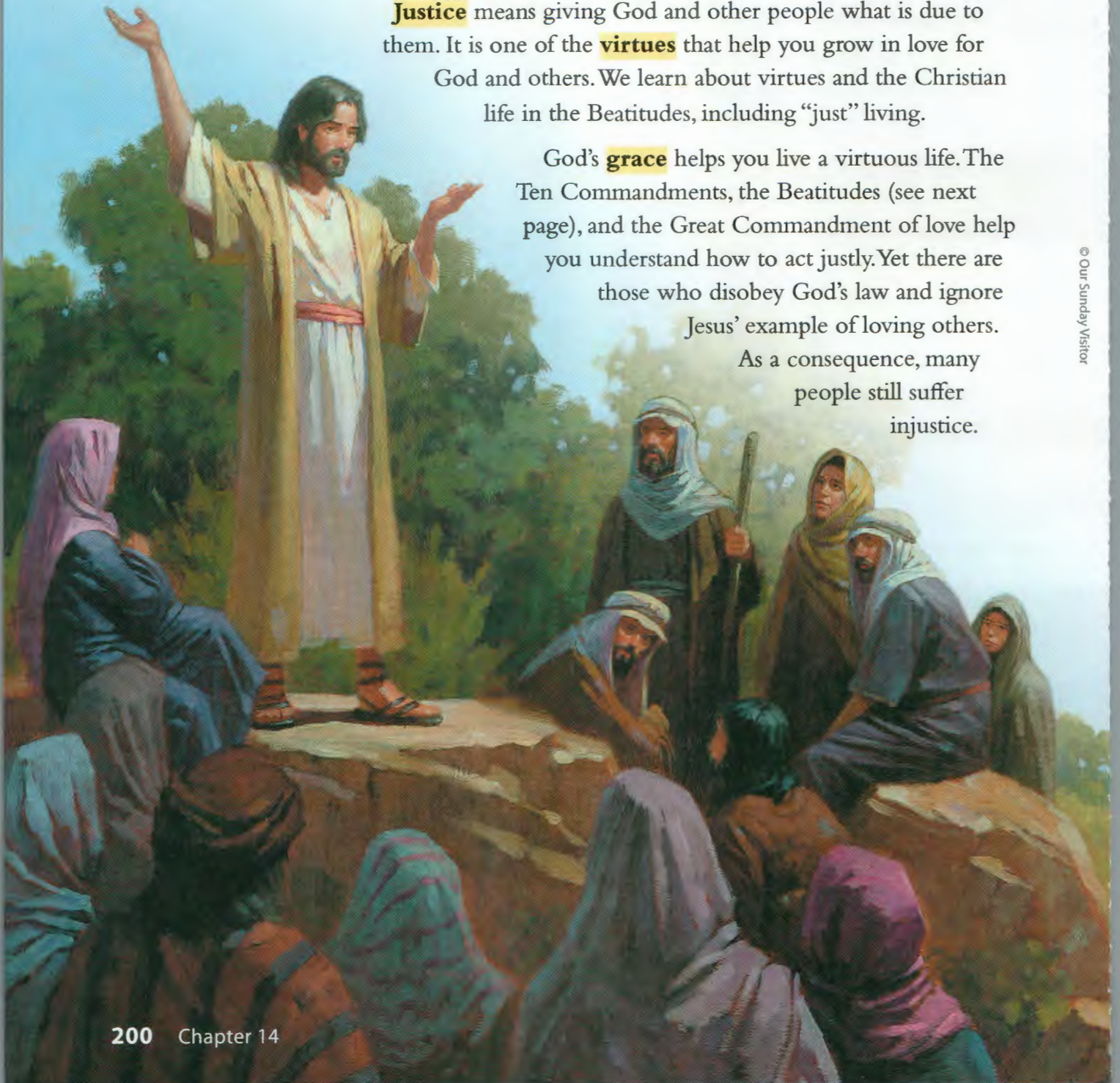
### What does it mean to act justly?

The search for justice is a response to the natural moral law, rules about goodness that are written in our hearts and are natural to follow. The natural moral law expresses the God-given human dignity, or inner worth, of all persons. Anything that robs us of that dignity is unjust. Unborn children, the elderly, family members, enemies, people who live in other lands, people who are poor, even criminals in prison—all are humans with God-given dignity.

**Justice** means giving God and other people what is due to them. It is one of the **virtues** that help you grow in love for God and others. We learn about virtues and the Christian life in the Beatitudes, including “just” living.

God’s **grace** helps you live a virtuous life. The Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes (see next page), and the Great Commandment of love help you understand how to act justly. Yet there are those who disobey God’s law and ignore Jesus’ example of loving others.

As a consequence, many people still suffer injustice.







## Scripture

### The Beatitudes

"Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn,  
for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek,  
for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness,  
for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful,  
for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart,  
for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of  
righteousness,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

**Matthew 5:3-10**



## Catholic Faith Words

**justice** giving God what is due him. This virtue also means giving each person what he or she is due because that person is a child of God.

**virtues** good spiritual habits that strengthen you and enable you to do what is right and good. They develop over time with our practice and openness to God's grace.

**grace** God's free, loving gift of his own life and help to do what he calls us to do. It is participation in the life of the Holy Trinity.

## Share Your Faith

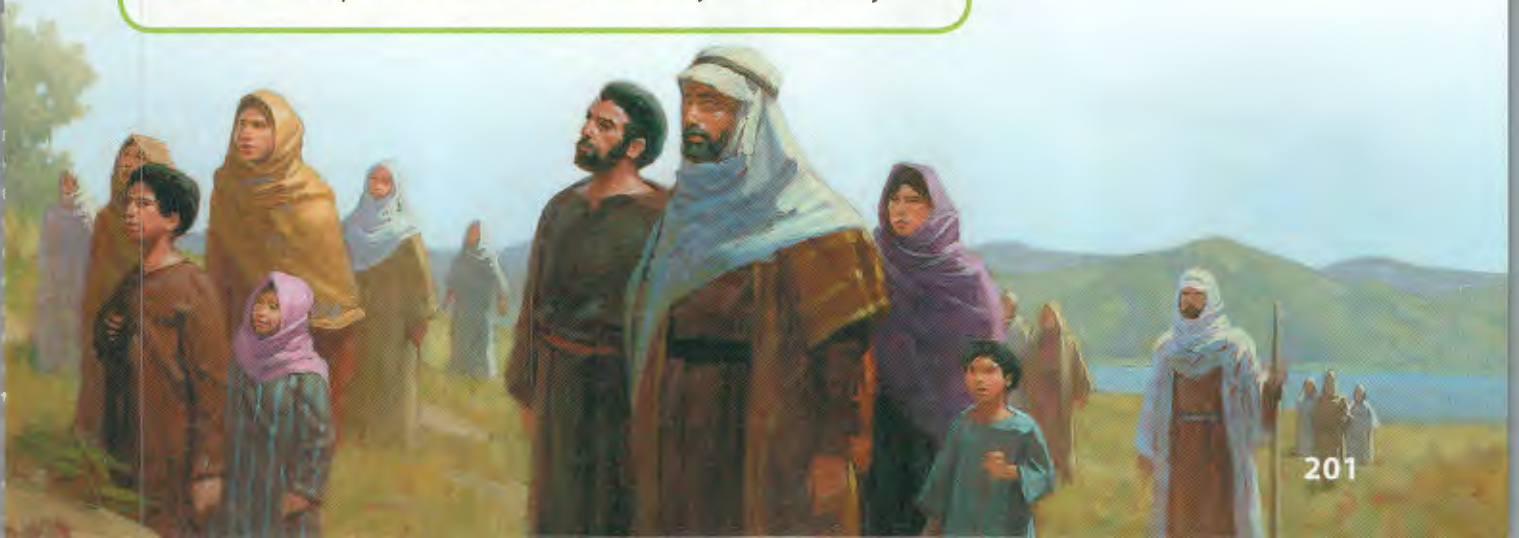
**Reflect** Think about an unjust action that you have witnessed or experienced. Write about why it was unjust and how it made you feel.

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**Share** With a partner, brainstorm when or why actions are unjust.





## Catholic Faith Words

**peace** a state of calm or harmony when things are in their proper order and people settle problems with kindness and justice

**common good** the good of everyone, with particular concern for those who might be most vulnerable to harm

**social sin** unjust structures that can occur as the result of personal sin. One person's sin can cause others to sin, and the sin can spread through a whole society.

## Peace

### What is the relationship between peace and justice?

Where there is an absence of justice, there is no **peace**. Only people and nations who live in justice will know real peace.

The Law addressed issues of peace and justice among the Israelites, such as paying workers their wages on time. But not everyone listened. About eight centuries before Christ, three prophets spoke of people living without justice and peace. God said through the prophets that the people would bear the consequences of their sin, but he would never stop loving them.

### Three Prophets

Hosea reported that lying, murder, stealing, and adultery had replaced fidelity and mercy. Yet he prophesied that one day God would heal the sinners and love them freely. "I will be like the dew for Israel: he will blossom like the lily..." (**Hosea 14:6**).

Amos observed that the weak were trampled down, that the just were oppressed, and that bribery was everywhere. Yet Amos also pointed out that one day God would restore his People, Israel, and return them to their land. The prophet Micah reminded people that the path to righteousness was simple.



Underline the words in Micah's message that state what the Lord requires of you.



## Scripture

### What the Lord Requires

"You have been told, O mortal, what is good, and what the LORD requires of you: Only to do justice and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God." **Micah 6:8**

This section of *The Ghent Altarpiece*, by Hubert and Jan van Eyck, depicts the prophet Micah.







## Justice Seekers and Peacemakers

Today, the Church continues the work of the Old Testament prophets. The Church helps you understand the responsibility you have to work for justice and peace as Jesus did. We come to the realization that when we love God with our whole heart, we instinctively reach out in love to others. There are certain areas that need your close attention.

The failure to give others what is due them is an injustice and goes against the **common good**. When personal sin leads whole communities or societies to make such choices, the sin grows. This kind of sin can be called **social sin**. Racism, sexism, and terrorism are examples of social sins. Wherever there is hatred, envy, prejudice, or division between people, there is no real peace. A just world is a sign of the Kingdom of God.

### Connect Your Faith

**Listen to the Prophets** Match what each prophet teaches about living with peace and justice.

Hosea ●

● One day God would restore his People, Israel, and return them to their land

Amos ●

● The path to righteousness is simple

Micah ●

● One day God would heal the sinners and love them freely

### The Common Good

#### Life

Your duty as a Christian citizen is to protect all human life and work for peace, striving to heal injustices that threaten human life.

#### Dignity

Your duty is to work with those in authority to build a society in which the dignity of all people is respected. Christians must work to reject and counteract prejudice and discrimination.

#### Basic needs

Your duty is to care for those who are poor and to see that they have adequate food, shelter, and clothing.



## Our Catholic Life

### What does it mean to promote human dignity?

A just world is a sign of the Kingdom of God. Justice begins when you recognize the dignity, or inner worth, of each person.

God created each of us, and he has a plan for our lives. We are all valuable to him and each other. When you respect and promote human dignity, you honor God, in whose image and likeness humans are created.



Mark a Y next to what you can do to respect yourself, and an O next to what you can do to respect others.

Y or O



- Remember that God created you in his image and likeness. (See Genesis 1:27.)
- Be honest and kind in your communications. (See Ephesians 4:25, 32.)
- Make time to talk with God in prayer. (See Sirach 37:15.)
- Develop an honest, healthy view of yourself. (See Romans 12:3.)
- Stand up for the rights of others. (See Proverbs 31:8–9.)
- Practice moderation, or balance, in the way you eat, dress, exercise, and rest. (See 1 Timothy 4:7–8.)
- Avoid stereotyping and prejudice. (See James 2:1–9.)
- Insist on respect for your body and the bodies of others. (See 1 Corinthians 6:19–20.)

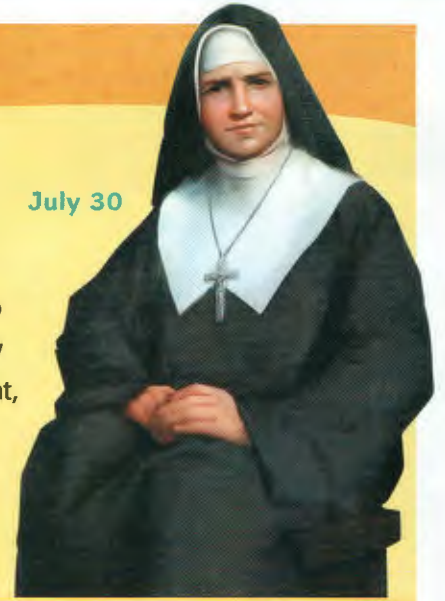


# People of Faith

## Blessed Maria Vicenta, 1867–1949

July 30

Blessed Maria Vicenta was born in Mexico. She was known for her devotion to the Infant Jesus. After she recovered from a serious illness, she decided to dedicate her life to God by helping those who were poor and sick. She knew that every person has an inner worth that must be respected. To help do that, she founded the Servants of the Holy Trinity and the Poor. The Servants cared for the wounded during the Mexican Revolution and opened seventeen hospitals, clinics, and nurseries. Blessed Maria and her sisters worked to create a society in which the dignity of all was important.



**Discuss:** How do you show that you value the dignity of each person you meet?



Learn more about Blessed Maria Vicenta at [aliveinchrist.osv.com](http://aliveinchrist.osv.com)

## Live Your Faith

**Think** of the person whom you chose for your word map in the activity on page 193. Recall some specific actions of this person.

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**Write** one way you will try to follow that person's example this week.

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 Let Us Pray

## Litany of Justice and Peace

This litany prayer helps us to voice our prayers of intercession, asking God's help to make us his instruments of bringing peace and justice to all the world.

Gather and begin with the Sign of the Cross.

**Leader:** God our Father, you have called us as one family to care for one another, to live in peace, and to be concerned for each other because we are one.

**Side 1:** Jesus, friend of the poor,

**All:** help us to bring justice to the world.

**Side 2:** Holy Spirit, who enables us to do what seems impossible,

**All:** help us bear peace to the world.

**Side 1:** Jesus, Herald of the Good News,

**All:** help us to bring justice to the world.

**Side 2:** Holy Spirit, who gives us confidence,

**All:** help us bear peace to the world.

**Side 1:** Jesus, who said yes to the Father,

**All:** help us to bring justice to the world.

**Side 2:** Holy Spirit, source of all unity,

**All:** help us bear peace to the world.

**Leader:** For what particular situations in our local area, in our world, can we pray today for peace and justice?

**All:** Help us bear peace to the world. Amen.



Sing "Raise Your Voice for Justice"



## YOUR CHILD LEARNED >>>

This chapter explores the virtues of peace and justice and the common good, and explains social sin, human dignity, and natural moral law.

### Scripture



Read **Isaiah 1:17** to find out what it means to be just and to learn to do good.

### Catholics Believe

- God's grace makes it possible for us to live a life of virtue, respecting the human dignity of all.
- Justice is giving what is due to God and others. Where justice is absent, peace is not possible.

To learn more, go to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1807, 1939–1942, 2304–2306 at [usccb.org](http://usccb.org).

### People of Faith

This week your child learned about Blessed Maria Vicenta, who cared for the wounded of the Mexican Revolution.

## CHILDREN AT THIS AGE >>>

**How They Understand Justice** The social perspective of your child is still somewhat limited. What is fair and just in matters concerning himself or herself can sometimes be limited to what he or she wants in the situation. Still, when children this age step back from this to view larger issues in society and in the world as a whole, they have a strong sense of justice and a desire to do what they can to make the world a better place.



## CONSIDER THIS >>>

When have you seen or read something that made you ask, "How can we have let that happen?"

When communities of people act together in sin or allow sin to happen, the result can be horrendous. Racism, sexism, terrorism, and lack of respect for human life are all examples of what can happen when people look away or participate in what may seem small ways. As Catholics, we know that "sins give rise to social situations and institutions that are contrary to the divine goodness. 'Structures of sin' are the expression and effect of personal sins. They lead their victims to do evil in their turn. In an analogous sense, they constitute 'social sin'" (CCC, 1869).

## LET'S TALK >>>

- Ask your child to share one important message of the prophets.
- Talk with your child about what it means to treat people with dignity.

## LET'S PRAY >>>



Merciful God, help us follow the example of Blessed Maria Vicenta by doing our part to respect the dignity of everyone we meet. Amen.



For a multimedia glossary of Catholic Faith Words, Sunday readings, seasonal and Saint resources, and chapter activities go to [aliveinchrist.osv.com](http://aliveinchrist.osv.com).



# Chapter 14 Review

**A Work with Words** Complete each sentence with the correct term.

1. Where there is an absence of justice, there is not full \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The search for justice is a response to the \_\_\_\_\_ God writes in our hearts.
3. The prophet \_\_\_\_\_ called on the people to do the right thing, love goodness, and walk humbly with God.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ means giving God and people what is due to them.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ are habits of goodness that help you grow in love of God and others.

**B Check Understanding** Use the terms from the Word Bank to write a summary of the chapter.

6–10. \_\_\_\_\_

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**Word Bank**

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human  
dignity

justice

peace

social sin

grace

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