

MMOC Human Rights Committee: “What We’ve Been Reading Lately”

Note: These are meaningful, thought-provoking books and writings that relate Catholic social teaching. Aside from the writings of Pope Francis, we are not officially endorsing them or saying that every part of them is congruent with Church teaching.

Almost Home: Helping Kids Move from Homelessness to Hope

By Kevin Ryan and Tina Kelley

General Topics: Homelessness, At-Risk Youth, Education

Social Teaching Topics: Life and Dignity of the Human Person; Call to Family, Community, and Participation; Rights and Responsibilities; Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

Link: http://www.amazon.com/Almost-Home-Helping-Kids-Homelessness/dp/1118230477/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1453087807&sr=8-1&keywords=almost+home+helping+kids+move+from+homelessness+to+hope

Summary: *Almost Home* tells the stories of six remarkable young people from across the United States and Canada as they confront life alone on the streets. Each eventually finds his or her way to Covenant House, the largest charity serving homeless and runaway youth in North America. There is a Covenant House in St. Louis. Inviting us to get to know homeless teens as more than an accumulation of statistics and societal issues, this book gives a human face to a huge but largely invisible problem and offers practical insights into how to prevent homelessness and help homeless youth move to a hopeful future.

EVANGELII GAUDIUM: Joy of the Gospel

By Pope Francis

General Topic: Living and Sharing the God News

Social Teaching Topics: Life and dignity of the human person; Solidarity; Call to Family, Community, and Participation

Link: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html

Summary: The Joy of the Gospel (Evangelii Gaudium) is the long-awaited teaching of Pope Francis on the proclamation of the Gospel. Pope Francis is calling upon the Church and the world with encouragement to begin a new chapter in evangelization. This dynamic document is written in the plain, everyday language for which the pope has become famous.

From the Back of the Pews to the Head of the Class

General Topics: Civil Rights, race, education

Social Teaching Topics: Life and Dignity of the Human Person; Call to Family, Community, and Participation; Rights and Responsibilities; Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

Link: <http://www.actapublications.com/spirituality/fromthebackofthepewstotheheadoftheclass/>

Summary: *From the Back of the Pews to the Head of the Class* documents the moving and sometimes dramatic stories of students, parents, teachers, sisters, and priests who were part of a segregated Catholic school, Most Pure Heart of Mary High School in Mobile, Alabama, during a period of revolutionary social change in both the United States and the Roman Catholic Church. Most Pure Heart of Mary High School was the only Catholic high school available to black children in southern Alabama and Mississippi from the early 1940s to the end of the 1960s.

Laudato Si: On Care for our Common Home

By Pope Francis

General Topic: The environment

Social Teaching Topics: Care for God's Creation; Solidarity; Life and Dignity of the Human Person; Call to Family, Community, and Participation; Rights and Responsibilities; Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

Link: <http://www.usccb.org/about/leadership/holy-see/francis/pope-francis-encyclical-laudato-si-on-environment.cfm>

Summary: *On Care for Our Common Home (Laudato Si')* is the new appeal from Pope Francis addressed to "every person living on this planet" for an inclusive dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. Pope Francis calls the Church and the world to acknowledge the urgency of our environmental challenges and to join him in embarking on a new path. This encyclical is written with both hope and resolve, looking to our common future with candor and humility.

Mr. Smith Goes to Prison

By Jeff Smith (St. Louis native and state senator)

General Topics: Prison Reform

Social Teaching Topics: Life and Dignity of the Human Person; Call to Family, Community, and Participation; and Rights and Responsibilities

Link: http://www.amazon.com/Mr-Smith-Goes-Prison-Americas/dp/1250058406/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1453087210&sr=8-1&keywords=Mr.+Smith+Goes+to+Prison

Summary: The fall from politico to prisoner isn't necessarily long, but the landing, as Missouri State Senator Jeff Smith learned, is a hard one. In 2009, Smith lied to the Feds about seemingly minor campaign malfeasance and earned himself a year and a day in Kentucky's FCI Manchester. *Mr. Smith Goes to Prison* is the fish-out-of-water story of his time in the big house; of the people he met there and the things he learned. And throughout his sentence, the senator tracked the greatest crime of all: the deliberate waste of untapped human potential. In *Mr. Smith Goes to Prison*, he traces the cracks in America's prison walls, exposing the shortcomings of a racially based cycle of poverty and crime. He offers practical solutions to jailbreak the nation from the financially crushing grip of its own prisons and to jump-start the rehabilitation of the millions living behind bars.

The Other Wes Moore: One Name, Two Fates

By Wes Moore

General Topics: Race, poverty, education, crime

Social Teaching Topics: Life and Dignity of the Human Person; Call to Family, Community, and Participation; Rights and Responsibilities; Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

Link: http://www.amazon.com/Other-Wes-Moore-Name-Fates/dp/0385528205/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1446339702&sr=8-1&keywords=the+other+wesley

Summary: Two kids named Wes Moore were born blocks apart within a year of each other. Both grew up fatherless in similar Baltimore neighborhoods and had difficult childhoods; both hung out on street corners with their crews; both ran into trouble with the police. How, then, did one grow up to be a Rhodes Scholar, decorated veteran, White House Fellow, and business leader, while the other ended up a convicted murderer serving a life sentence? Wes Moore, the author of this fascinating book, sets out to answer this profound question. In alternating narratives that take readers from heart-wrenching losses to moments of surprising redemption, *The Other Wes Moore* tells the story of a generation of boys trying to find their way in a hostile world.

"The chilling truth is that his story could have been mine. The tragedy is that my story could have been his."

Walking the Blue Line

By Terrell Carter- Former St. Louis Metropolitan Police Officer

General Topics: Race, poverty, education, crime

Social Teaching Topics: Life and Dignity of the Human Person; Call to Family, Community, and Participation; Rights and Responsibilities; Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

Link: http://www.amazon.com/Walking-Blue-Line-Community-Solutions/dp/1940784468/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1453087568&sr=8-1&keywords=walking+the+blue+line

Summary: From his insight as a black police officer in a volatile urban setting (St. Louis), as well as a community leader and church minister, Terrell Carter offers a constructive approach to addressing racism, societal divisions and police/community interaction--and points the way to a more hopeful future.