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Sr. Sarah Grace: The Common Good

Abstract: This paper includes part of an interview with Sr. Sarah Grace from January 2, 2018. She is a women religious who has worked in education for 25 years. This paper includes a portion of the interview where she shared her perspective on the common good.

When I interviewed Sr. Sarah Grace she said a lot of inspirational things about humanity. One question that I asked was about her opinion on the common good. The common good is a principle taught in Catholic Social Teaching and is the foundation of these lessons. Pope St. John XXIII defines the common good as “the sum of total social conditions which allow people, either as groups or individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily” (Glossary, n.d.). This teaching is often misunderstood and there are a lot of different perspectives on what the common good is. By the end of our conversation I felt compelled to ask Sr. Sarah Grace what her perspective was on this teaching and what it means to her. Before she answered my question, she went quiet for one moment and asked a clarification to my question; whether I wanted to hear the short version or the long version.

Her thoughts are so important for the world to hear, so there is the long version: “I think that the common good is the dignity of each person and giving them their needs, caring about the creation of the Earth, the less fortunate, and the young so that they can have a good life. I think that’s what God has put in each of our hearts. The Ten Commandments that are coded into our hearts. These are the basic human virtues that we all need. We have it written in our hearts. If we were to all really believe that each person is made in God’s image, there would be more respect,

care, and love and peace in the world. Because that's what Christ taught us when he came to our world. From my perspective, there are three levels to the common good. The common good of the world, of society, and of the person. On the common good of the world, the world will never be ideal, but that we can do our part to uphold the good of humanity. On my part, whenever the senate or government is passing a law, if we can petition for something that helps, we do that. We aim to teach kids how to be good citizens and know ethics, and that the good of people come first as opposed to commercialism or materialism. We teach them service and how to make a difference. On the common good of society, it's to help people get access, help the poor, teach them them trade, make sure children get a good education and know their faith and live according to their faith. All religions, if they are true, they have God and the good of people, respect, care, and love for one another as their basic premise. Helping people to have what they need, not just giving but educating and providing opportunities to get that and to be educated in faith. On the common good of the person, it is a person's inalienable right that God gave to each person as a human being, the right to life, liberty, and happiness, which are constitutions the United States is based on. A dignified life, free to choose what they want to do. To choose good decisions and need education and guidance to make decisions that will help society. Honesty, happiness, shelter, clothing, food, education, rights of people, that's the common good. From a holistic view, there is a spiritual good as well. To know God and learn to have a living relationship with him especially through education, and how to relate them and what he's done throughout history and one day go to heaven and save your soul. At the human level, it is the right to the basic necessities of life, happiness, freedom to choose what want to do with our life in a positive way and not to harm others."

Sr. Sarah Grace answered the question regarding the common good thoroughly and with no pauses or breaks in her ideas. She implements all of this into her teachings and work as well; fighting commercialism and materialism in order to teach the youth how to make a difference in the world. You could hear in her voice how deeply she believed in her decision to listen to a higher power to devote a life to very simple living conditions, minimal monetary income, and contributing all of her time and efforts to helping, praying for, and educating the unfortunate and the youth of our society. These principles are more apparent than ever in her congregation as well. Sr. Sarah Grace lives out these principles in her everyday life while carrying out her career; putting to use her talents and skills for God's work.

References

Glossary. (n.d.). Retrieved January 22, 2018, from

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