

Pre-Work/Homework: Session#1

Welcome to the Economic Justice course with ICJS! Each week, we will send you information to better prepare you for the upcoming class. Prior to our first session, we ask that you watch the brief video below about “Debate vs. Dialogue” and take a look at the texts in the first section below to give you some background for the course content. We have also included the in-class texts so that you may follow along via this document instead of through the Zoom slides.

Video:

<https://youtu.be/BHnmysaDuNY>



Texts:

Sacred Sources for Dorothy Day

Matthew 25: 31-46 (NRSV)

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. ³⁴Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you

visited me.’³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink?’³⁸ And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing?’³⁹ And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’⁴⁰ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’⁴¹ Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels;’⁴² for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink,⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Corporal Works of Mercy

<https://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/how-we-teach/new-evangelization/jubilee-of-mercy/the-corporal-works-of-mercy>

“The Corporal Works of Mercy are found in the teachings of Jesus and give us a model for how we should treat all others, as if they were Christ in disguise. They “are charitable actions by which we help our neighbors in their bodily needs.” They respond to the basic needs of humanity as we journey together through this life.” – United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

1. Feed the hungry
2. Give drink to the thirsty
3. Shelter the homeless
4. Visit the sick
5. Visit the prisoners
6. Bury the dead
7. Give alms to the poor

In-Session Texts: Session #1

[Pope Francis' Address to U.S. Congress \(9/24/2015\)](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/social-issues/transcript-pope-franciss-speech-to-congress/2015/09/24/6d7d7ac8-62bf-11e5-8e9e-dce8a2a2a679_story.html)

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/social-issues/transcript-pope-franciss-speech-to-congress/2015/09/24/6d7d7ac8-62bf-11e5-8e9e-dce8a2a2a679_story.html

"In these times when social concerns are so important, I cannot fail to mention the Servant of God Dorothy Day, who founded the Catholic Worker Movement. Her social activism, her passion for justice and for the cause of the oppressed, were inspired by the Gospel, her faith, and the example of the saints."

Dorothy Day: Text Study on Deserving/Undeserving Poor (Full text)

Dorothy Day "Catholic Worker Ideas on Hospitality" (May 1940) - DDLW #358

"Many times we have borne the charge that Houses of Hospitality, this "new wrinkle," do more harm than good. It is said that they perpetuate chronic laziness and drunkenness. Communists ask us, "How can you say you're against capitalism when you keep it alive by feeding the poor the crumbs of the rich?" We are told to discriminate on the side of the "deserving poor."

The "new wrinkle" was old long before we appeared on the scene. Christ once told his disciples, "I was hungry and you gave me to eat," etc. Since that day, all over the world, pilgrims to holy places, weary travelers, the hungry and thirsty, saint and sinner have been succored in the name of Christ. Hospices, centuries ago, were under the supervision of the Bishops. They were set up in lonely and hostile regions. Lepers by the thousands were helped in the many hospices scattered all over France. The monks of St. Bernard are famous for their hospitality. The work of these monks was started back in 962. The early monasteries founded by Benedict of Nursia designated monks as hospitallers and almoners. The former welcomed guests while the latter fed, clothed, and gave shelter to the needy. There is no record in the history of hospices and hospitality of discrimination."

[**UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights**](#)

[**\(Philip Alson, UN Report on the United States, after his official visit, 12/15/2017\)**](#)

"I have been struck by the extent to which caricatured narratives about the purported innate differences between rich and poor have been sold to the electorate by some politicians and media, and have been allowed to define the debate. The rich are industrious, entrepreneurial, patriotic, and the drivers of economic success. The poor are wasters, losers, and scammers. As a result, money spent on welfare is money down the drain. To complete the picture we are also told that the poor who want to make it in America can easily do so: they really can achieve the American dream if only they work hard enough."

UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights
(Philip Alson, UN Report on the United States, after his official visit, 12/15/2017)

Discussion Questions: Session #1

1st Discussion:

- What is your connection to religion?
- What does fairness, dignity & economic justice look like to you?
- How does your religion(s) inform this vision?

2nd Discussion:

Dorothy Day challenges the idea of “the deserving poor.” She thinks this idea is antithetical to both the Gospel message (Matthew) and to Christian tradition (Works of Mercy, Traditions of Hospitality). That somehow assistance should only go to certain “deserving” people, and that giving assistance to the “undeserving” will breed laziness, substance abuse, or further contribute to individual moral decline.

- What do you think of the categories of deserving/undeserving poor? What do you think of Dorothy Day’s argument against this distinction that utilizes Christian sources?
- In your organization, your work, or your life, do you judge or categorize certain people as deserving or undeserving of your help? How might removing that distinction of deserving/undeserving change things for you in a positive way? How might removing the distinction of deserving/undeserving be challenging or difficult?

Suggestions for Further Learning (OPTIONAL): Session #1

TAKE A LISTEN: Episode #2 in particular!

[Busted: America's Poverty Myths \(Podcast Series, WNYC: On the Media, 2016\):](#)

On the Media's series on poverty is grounded in the Talmudic notion that "We do not see things as they are. We see things as we are." Brooke Gladstone traveled to Ohio to learn from people living the varied reality of poverty today, and to unpack the myths that shape our private presumptions as well as our policy decisions. In each episode, we feature the voices and complex stories of individuals, as well essential context from scholars, to lay open the tales we tell ourselves.

<https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/otm/projects/busted-americas-poverty-myths>

Pre-Work/Homework: Session#2

Video:

[God loves Justice](#)

Text:

- 1) [Infographic: Justice: The Spirit of Islam](#)
- 2) [Divine Duty: Islam and Social Justice](#)

Discussion Questions: Session #2

1st Discussion:

In Islam, moral and material progress have to go hand in hand when implementing economic justice. Where do we see applications of that in our society?

2nd Discussion:

What do you make of Said Nursi's understanding of cosmic justice?

Suggestions for Further Learning (OPTIONAL): Session #2

[Justice in Islam](#)

[Video Series on Social Justice](#)