

Read the following passages and answer the questions at the end of the packet (pages 18-19). Only the answer sheets (pages 20, 21 and 22) will be collected in September.

## Part I: Justice and Peace

### The Good Samaritan

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit life?" Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there? He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." And Jesus said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live." But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them, then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" he said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise." (Luke 10:25-37)

### A Just World is a Scared Place

The Good Samaritan story teaches us about the interest for justice in a broken world. Too many of us find ourselves bleeding and abandoned by the side of the road, beaten down by poverty or limited opportunities, disabilities or discrimination. Our condition may strike us suddenly or weigh us down over a lifetime. Meantime, the rest of the world seems to be moving along the road, oblivious to our plight.

The story Jesus tells invites us to consider a different world. We know the hero simply as a Samaritan – no one special, and not someone with whom the Jews hearing the story would want to associate. The Samaritan shows genuine concern for the suffering man's welfare. He sees someone in need and responds with compassion, one human being helping another. Jesus seems to suggest that the Samaritan is acting in a profoundly human way, while those who pass by without helping are damaging their own humanity.

A world filled with Good Samaritans is the human world at its best, by God's grace and with our cooperation, it also becomes a more sacred place. To be Christian means to participate in fashioning such a world. Today, the task looms large. Today, we realize that those in need are not simply on our streets but are on the other side of the earth as well. Often they do not speak the language we speak. Typically, their suffering results from lacking even minimum necessities while others try to figure out how best to manage all of their wealth.

Nevertheless, isn't it true that we want a world such as the one fashioned by the cooperation of the Good Samaritan with God's kingdom? Its beauty strikes us as too alluring to dismiss. It mirrors the world that Jesus proclaimed and that we have prayed for since we were children: "Your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven." In the words of the old movie, it is "the stuff that dreams are made of." Is a Good Samaritan world doomed to be merely an impossible dream, one that tantalizes us with its splendor, but lies always beyond our grasp?

Contrary to this fatalistic attitude, the Christian vision of justice affirms that with God's grace a world of caring and sharing is possible. With God's grace we can participate in making a just world and expanding reality, a gradual building up of a more holy place. This sacred world cannot be built alone or without hard work, pain, and sacrifice. Nevertheless, it can be built. How we can be part of the human community toward becoming an even more sacred place.

## Four Elements of a Just World

A just world is one in which families, friends, and strangers share their resources, care for another's needs, and work out their differences for mutual benefit. In this reading we will see that such a world mirrors God's design, embodies the message of Jesus, and reveals the concerns of the Church leaders and Christian saints throughout the ages. At the same time, as we will see, challenge and controversy accompany any more we might make toward justice. Taking the time to examine specific characteristics of a just world will give us a better idea of what that world is like and of the steps we can take to help build it.

### 1. Concern for Basic Needs

*God destined the earth and all it contains for all people so that all created things would be shared fairly by all ...*  
~Vatican Council II, *The Church in the Modern World*, no. 69.

Christians teaching on justice declares that all people have a right to basic life goods. For instance, Pope John XXIII listed the following as *basic needs* that people have a right to have met:

- Food, shelter, rest, clothing, health care and social services  
In addition, people have a right to the *means* to attain these basic life goods. These include:
- Equality opportunity, education, and employment  
Affirmation that people should have basic needs met represents a bottom-line principle of justice. Saint Ambrose, an early Christian leader, addressed this point in these words to the rich members of his community:

You are not making a gift to the poor man from your possessions, but you are returning what is his. For what is common has been given for the use of all, (but) you make it exclusive use of it. The earth belongs to all, not to the rich. ~ John C. Haughey, *The Faith That Does Justice*, Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, Page 128.

Similar testimony to this principle of justice comes from our biblical roots. Ancient Jewish law called for a **Jubilee Year** every fifty years. The law required that land be returned to its original owners. Likewise, all debts were to be canceled. This special year was an attempt to insure a fair distribution of wealth and thereby, prevent a widening gap between people who were rich and those who were poor.

*The world produces enough for everyone's need but not for everyone's greed.*

## Justice Versus quality

Concern for meeting basic needs is not without controversy. Sometimes this concern actually appears to run counter to what we might consider fair – equal treatment for everyone. Consider the following scenarios:

A teacher discovers that one of her students suffers from dyslexia, a common reading impairment. She decides to give this particular student extra time to complete tests. Is this “fair” to the other students? Shouldn't all students be required to complete test in the same amount of time?

A woman who has worked successfully for five years as a sales representative for a company takes time off to have a baby. When she returns to work, she requests that she be given a sales territory closer to her home and flexible working hours so that she can care for her child. Her supervisor tells her that it would be unfair to afford her preferential treatment just because she is now a mother.

Two young men are graduating from college. Because his parents are wealthy, one young man attends a prestigious college, has not worked during his college years so that he can concentrate on his studies, and with his good grades and a degree from a top-ranked university is destined to achieve a high level of economic and social success. The

second young man worked jobs that he needed to keep in order to pay tuition. Upon graduating he will take a middle-level job in order to pay off student loans and provide for himself. Since the first young man has higher grades from a more reputable university, it's only fair that he should end up in the higher-level profession? Or isn't it?

Anthony's brother is born with cerebral palsy, a condition that demands much attention from all family members. Anthony, who has been used to receiving his mother's exclusive attention, feels left out and cheated by the fact that his brother gets all the attention.

The child of migrant farmworkers, Joe Miguel has never attended school regularly. Soon he will be expected to pick crops to help support the family. Since he will not be receiving a high school diploma, Jose Miguel will never have anything other than menial jobs.

As the previous scenarios indicate, people have different degrees of need and different types of needs. For instance, a student with dyslexia has different needs from other students in a classroom. A student who comes to school hungry has different needs from the well-fed students. People who are homeless have needs that others do not. Therefore, meeting people's basic needs sometimes runs counter to "treating everyone equally" – a popular definition of justice.

Recent Church teaching about justice makes the following assertions about basic needs and our world today:

- The majority of the earth's population do not have basic needs met.
- Our present resources *could* provide for the basic needs of all people. More equal distribution of the earth's goods would move the human community toward becoming a just world.

## 2. Concern for Personal Dignity

*The God said: "Let us make mankind in our image, according to our likeness ..."*

What is most striking about the story of the Good Samaritan is his recognition of the one beaten by the side of the road as a person of profound worth. The second component of a just world – a concern for personal dignity – considers the psychological dimension of people's basic needs, but also possess *God-given worth and dignity*. Thus, people have a right to a sense of self-esteem and to develop their own capabilities, the ability to *give* as well as to receive. In other words they have a right to be fully human, subjects of their own destiny and not merely objects of someone else's kindness. The incident below illustrates this dimension of justice.

*A service club in a suburban Catholic high school decides to collect toys and clothing for children living in an urban parish. Club members plan on dressing up in Santa Claus outfits and personally distributing the gifts on Christmas Eve.*

*The pastor of the urban parish visits their club to speak to the students. "I appreciate your work on behalf of our children," he tells them, "but I can't have you delivering toys to the children themselves. Parents should be Santa Clause for their children, not wealthy young people from the suburbs. It would diminish the self-esteem of our parents if you brought the gifts to their children. Instead, I suggest that you bring the toys and presents to the church hall the week before Christmas. Then our parents can come and choose the things that they feel would be best for their children. In that way the children will receive gifts at Christmas, and the parents will also participate in the Giving."*

*Do you believe the pastor's concerns in the story are justified?*

The second element of a just world requires that we work toward the *empowerment* of people. Perhaps you can recall what a thrill it was as a child you were allowed to take responsibility for something – walking to the store by yourself, staying at home without a babysitter, spending your own money. Many people feel as though they lack power even over their own lives. If personal dignity is accounted for, then people who are currently far from the centers of power must be included in decision-making. That is, they must gain their own lives and share power with others to shape the world and the human community.

We all know how much greater our sense of personal satisfaction is when we help to design or create something for ourselves. Conversely, we probably can recall science fiction stories about aliens from another galaxy who impose their

idea of a “perfect” civilization upon earthlings. Looking back in history a few decades, we discover totalitarian such as those in China and Cambodia in the 1970’s which imposed on people exactly how they were to live and make a livelihood. Because people have no say in its design, the perfect world ends up being an inhuman nightmare. A truly human world is not imposed from above but grows out of human creativity.

*When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars that you have established;  
what are human beings that you are mindful of the,  
mortals that you care for them?*

*Yet you have made them a little lower than God,  
and crowned them with glory and honor:  
you have given them dominion over the works of your hands;  
you have put all things under their feet,  
all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field,  
the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,  
whatever passes along the paths of the sea.*

*O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

*~Psalm 8:3-10*

### 3. Concern for Solidarity

*Solidarity helps us to see the “other” – whether a person, people, or nation – not just as some kind of instrument, with a work capacity and physical strength to be explained at low cost and then discarded when no longer useful, but as our “neighbor,” a “helper” (cf. Gen. 2:18-21) to be made a sharer, on a par with ourselves, in the banquet of life to which all are equally invited by God.*

*~Pope John Paul II, On Social Concern, no. 39.*

Concern for *solidarity* means that working for justice involves working with, not working for. Solidarity among people with unequal power requires a redistribution of power. Therefore, this element of a just world corresponds with concern for personal dignity. For instance, in the Good Samaritan story, the hero gives no indication that he considers himself above or apart from the person in need. His welfare and that of his neighbor are not separate. The goal of his action is not to maintain a split between himself as powerful and the other as powerless but to empower the other, to bring the other back to life and vitality. In a similar way people concerned about helping people in need do not simply cry, “We must feed the poor.” Instead, they also say: “We must learn from people who are poor how they can help us, as well as how we can help them help themselves. We need to give those who are voiceless a voice. We need to share important decisions among those who are rich and those who are poor.”

*At the age of ten, I was diagnosed with pre-leukemia ... I have greater compassion for those who are suffering, a much greater respect for those who help them. This respect has made me think about becoming a doctor or nurse so that I can help people that are sick or dying. Maybe at the same time I would feel like I have started to repay those people who have helped me.*

*~ Ann Marie Hines, “From Isolation to Liberation,” in I know Things Now:*

*Stories by Teenagers 1, Winina, MN: St. Mary’s Press, pages 56-57*

Pope John Paul II has spoken frequently about solidarity, which he equates with interdependence and mutual responsibility:

*When interdependence becomes recognized ... the correlative response as a mutual social attitude, as a “virtue,” is solidarity. This then is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and preserving determination to commit to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.*

*~On Social Concerns, no.38.*

Put simply, solidary is the quality of justice that breaks down barriers between people: the powerful and the powerless, rich and poor, men and women, black and white, Asian and Western, Hispanic and Anglo-American, young and old, those in prison and those who are free. Christians naturally lean toward solidarity since Jesus so radically identified

with the suffering and joys of all people, especially of those who were penniless and voiceless. Solidarity implies a spirit of **mutuality**.

#### 4. Concern for Social Structures

*Society should be so structured that it is easy for people to be good.*

*~Peter Maurin, co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement.*

The Good Samaritan story describes a one-to-one encounter. Often it is easier to act compassionately when operating on such a personal scale. However, justice also seeks to address problems on a large scale, where “persons” merge into a faceless “society.” And the fact is, **societal problems** are **personal problems**, even if we don’t experience them as such.

For example, if a cousin’s house burns down and she is suddenly homeless, chances are your family would take her in. On the other hand, if during a visit to an urban center, you came across a person who is homeless, you might feel uncomfortable but incapable of doing anything about it. Similarly, if the sole breadwinner of a family you know is out of work, you might contribute to a collection for temporary financial support. But on the other hand, you might remain unmoved when hearing the “unemployment in our state is at 10 percent” – even though behind that statistic are real mothers and fathers with real families to feed.

The immenseness of social problems often seems to overwhelm our ability to respond. Part of the dilemma is that our society can be structured so that it either promotes or hinders justice. It can help either the majority of people or mostly a privileged few. It can either advocate attention to those most in need or shield others from ever encountering them. Concern for justice, then, includes concern for social justice.

*Social structures*, refers to commonly accepted ways a society is organized. For instance, the way a society structures its educational system says a great deal about what a society values and even to a degree whom a society values. Indeed, the percentage of tax money spent on schools compared to other government spending reveals how much education itself is valued. Whether private cars or public transportation is the norm for a society makes a statement about priorities given to public, shared space versus private space. It also speaks to the types of human interaction expected in a society. (For example, people with cars can avoid interacting with people who don’t own cars whereas people without cars more consistently share public space.) Similarly, a country’s economic system can function more or less competitively and more or less directed toward the common good. In the words of the U.S. bishops:

*Our economic activity is factory, field, office, or shop feeds our families – or feeds our anxieties. It exercises our talents – or wastes them. It raises our hopes – or crushes them. It brings us into cooperation with others – or sets us at odds.*

*~ U.S. Catholic Bishops, Economic Justice for All, no. 6*

Here’s an example to illustrate the importance of social structures in terms of meeting or failing to meet people’s needs:

Requiring a wheelchair for transportation creates special problems. Yes, if we don’t need a wheelchair ourselves, we might offer to help those who do by stopping for them or transporting them places. But what happens when we cannot be with them? What about those who require wheelchairs and have no one to assist them?

What changes could occur in a society that would help *all* people who use wheelchair? With this question we address the issue of social structures. For instance, many communities build sidewalks with ramps at intersections so that people in wheelchairs can better travel by themselves. Special parking places and ramps to public buildings also help those in wheelchairs become more self-reliant. As you can imagine, such societal changes can do as much as many hours of volunteer help on the part of caring individuals. These changes also free people to have access to those things they need to be fully human.

Attending to social structures is an essential part of caring for people's basic needs, their self-esteem, and their solidarity. Concern for social structures is such an important consideration in working toward a just society that we will look at this element of justice throughout the course.

## Culture and Counterculture: Reading the Signs of the Times

*You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time? And why do you not judge for yourself what is right?*  
~Luke 12:56-57

The 1997 film *Marvin's Room* tells about two adult daughters who have gone their separate ways. One daughter, Lee left home to pursue her own dreams and aspirations. The other daughter, Bessie, remained home to care for her father, who is bed-ridden with a stroke, and her aunt Ruth, who is borderline senile. By the end of the movie, the two sisters are reconciled because Bessie, who had stayed home to care for her sick father and aunt, now is dying of leukemia herself.

In a poignant conversation near the end of the film, Bessie tells her sister, "I've had such love in my life. I look back and I've had such love." Lee responds by saying, "They love you very much." But Bessie then says, "I don't mean ... I mean I love them. I am so lucky to have been able to love someone so much. I am so lucky to have loved so much. I am so lucky."

Precisely because she has spent most of her life giving to and caring for others. Bessie was dying with a sense of joy and peace. In that sense her entire life runs counter to what typically is presented in our culture as the way to happiness. According to the values of our culture, should we, like Lee, leave behind people who burden us and instead pursue our own dreams? Is it a shame that Bessie will be saddled with caring for two helpless invalids, one physical and one psychological? When we think about "love" in our lives, don't we really mean that we want to *be* loved?

If we want to create a just world, then we need to develop our awareness of the "signs of the times" – that is, the current direction and values in our culture. Certainly there is much that is good in our culture. However, certain cultural values work against the well-being of some or all members of a society. In fact, dominant cultural values can have both positive and negative effects on people.

### Aboard the U.S.S. Earth

*Here is one author's symbolic description of our world today. Admittedly, it paints a grim picture – especially first-class passengers. However, before we reject the scenario as unreal, we would do well to consider whether characteristics of the ocean liner match characteristics actually at work in our world.*

*The earth is like an ocean liner with first-class, second-class, and third-class passengers. The first-class passengers, making up about one fourth of the ship's list, have insisted on bringing along their automobiles, freezers, hair dryers, television sets, kitchen disposal units, and pets. They have indiscriminately filled a number of the ship's holds with empty cans, bottles, discarded plastic, old newspapers, and broken appliances – the residue of their excessive consumption. In other holds they keep cattle, which are periodically slaughtered to sustain their customary first-class eating habits. And in still other compartments, they keep grain reserved for feeding the cattle.*

*Those privileged passengers have some dangerous personal habits as well. They flush garbage down the toilets, blow smoke and gasoline fumes into the ship's ventilation system, and insist on unlimited use of the ship's limited electricity and water. Every once in a while they have a major brawl among themselves and threaten to sink the ship, and "just in case," they constantly improve their assorted bombs with which to do so.*

*The ship has no captain because the first-class passengers are afraid to give anyone authority to steer a new course or to change the ship's arrangements. Instead, there is a committee, which has no power and is not allowed access to the bridge. The committee is permitted only to discuss possible future directions and to make highly tentative suggestions.*

~Adapted from Adam Daniel Finnerty  
*No More Plastic Jesus*, pages 2-3

## Individual Versus Interdependence

*Human beings are a lot like crabgrass. Each blade of crabgrass sticks up into the air, appearing to be a plant all by itself. But when you try to pull it up, you discover that all the blades of crabgrass in a particular piece of lawn share the same roots and the same nourishment system. Those of us brought up in the Western tradition are taught to think of ourselves as separate and distinct creatures with individual personalities and independent nourishment systems. But I think the crabgrass image is a more accurate description of our condition. Human beings may appear to be separate, but our connections are deep and we are inseparable.*

*~Fran Peavey, Heart Politics, page 1*

Let's look at three of the characteristics implied in the ocean-liner image to determine whether they apply to our culture. In addition, let us name values that can serve as antidotes to unhealthy aspects of these characteristics in our society.

Western society, especially the North American branch of Western society, glories in its history of rugged individualism. "I've got to be me" and "every man for himself" are basic social themes. "Self-reliance" is practically synonymous with the North American spirit. At the political level, reliance on military power accompanies excessive individualism.

In 1985 study of North America values, *habits of the Heart*, identifies individualism as a longstanding core theme in American life. The study describes moral individuals should be able to pursue whatever they find rewarding, constrained only by the requirement that they not interfere with the "value systems" of others". The authors, Robert Bellah and his team, interviewed people from across the country to demonstrate this theme. A young man had this to say:

*One of the things I use to characterize life in California, one of the things that makes California such a pleasant place to live, is people by and large aren't bothered by other people's values systems as long as they don't infringe upon your own. By and large the rule of thumb out here is that if you've got the money, honey, you can do your thing as long as your thing doesn't destroy someone's property, or interrupt their sleep, or bother their privacy, then that's fine. (6-7)*

The earlier ocean-liner story hints at the dangers of excessive individualism. Given the precarious nature of our world today, we either learn to live and work together or we perish together. Our world is a "global village" in which all segments are dependent upon one another. In that sense, a realistic description of our world acknowledges that we are neither independent nor dependent. Rather, we are *interdependent*.

Examples of global interdependence are not hard to find.

- When British cows or Taiwanese pigs are found to be diseased, the price of meat rises across the globe.
- An accident at a nuclear power plant anywhere on the earth affects levels of radioactivity everywhere.
- When oil prices go up, the cost of all consumer goods goes up.
- The U.S. heartland serves as the breadbasket of the world because it provides a large portion of the earth's grain. Drought in the U.S. leads to hungry people on the other side of the world.
- Brazil's enormous jungles act as the earth's oxygen tank, producing much of the oxygen we breathe. Destruction of rain forests damages the entire earth's air supply.

Clearly, stressing individual initiative and responsibility is valuable. Individualism has helped make our country great. However, it is important that we acknowledge how much we are interdependent. A spirit of cooperation is needed for our mutual survival.

## Consumerism Versus Simple Living

*Christian faith and the norms of justice impose distinct limits on what we consume and how we view material goods. The great wealth of the United States can easily blind us to the poverty that exists in this nation and the destruction of hundreds of millions of people in other parts of the world. Americans are challenged today as never before to develop the inner freedom to resist the temptation to constantly seek more. Only in this way will the nation avoid what Paul IV called "the most evident form of moral underdevelopment," namely greed.*

*~ U.S. Catholic Bishops, Economic Justice for All, no. 75.*

North Americans have had a long love affair with the frontier. Throughout most of our history, there was always more land available “our West.” If one locality could no longer support more people, then it was always possible to move on. North America seemed to offer limitless land, limitless resources, and limitless opportunities. Even when the land was parceled out and some of our resources showed signs of running out, we put our faith in a space as “the final frontier.”

The ocean-liner image awakens us to different reality – *the crisis of limits*. While we tend to bring an excessive number of possessions along with us on our life journeys, we need to heed experts on the future who are waving a yellow flag of caution. They warn us that if we continue to use our resources at the current rate, we will be facing drastic shortages in the not-too-distant future. If we are to survive, we had better change our ways.

In the quote which opened this section, the U.S. Catholic bishops identify a key problem contributing to the crisis of limits – *consumerisms*. Think of TV commercials or magazine ads you have seen recently. Chances are that they tried to convince you how much better your life would be if you possessed whatever it is they are selling. Ads allure us into believing that our lives will be more comfortable, more interesting, more fun, or more rewarding if we possess this year’s hot toy for children or adults. In the face of this allurements, the U.S. bishops associated three things with consumerism: blindness, lack of freedom, and moral underdevelopment.

All of us *consume* things; otherwise, we would be dead. However, consumerism is the distorted desire to possess things, all out of proportion to our needs or normal wants. Consumerism means allowing a passion for possessions to control us to the point that possessions become an end in themselves. Consumerism preaches that “we can buy happiness.”

### Three Dangers of Consumerism

The ocean-liner story hints at the dangers of consumerism. Certainly, we need much more guidance about what to buy or not buy than what thirty-second commercials tells us. For one thing, excessive consumption takes needed resources away from third-class passengers. That is, money spent on a new car or the latest CD could be spent in ways that benefit people in greater need. Secondly, consumerism affects consumers as well. Namely, it equates happiness with *having* rather than *being*. When we do buy the new car, or the latest computer, we eventually find that we have more possessions but not necessarily more happiness. As news reports make clear, affluent persons sometimes commit suicide; and impoverished person can struggle heroically to hang on to life in any way they can. Finally, consumerism can change people into commodities. Just as we may feel that we need to own a particular make of car, we may also feel compelled to wear certain hairstyle or certain clothes, or to be seen with certain people. In this way consumerism makes commodities – consumer goods – of us and of the people around us. We package ourselves like any other consumer goods.

*Side-by-side with the miseries of underdevelopment, themselves unacceptable, we find ourselves up against a form of superdevelopment, equally inadmissible, because like the former it is contrary to what is good and to true happiness. This superdevelopment, which consist in an excessive availability of every kind of material goods for the benefit of certain social groups, easily makes people slaves of “possession” and of immediate gratification, with no other horizon than the multiplication or continue replacement of the things already owned with others still better. This is the so-called civilization of “consumption” or “consumerism,” which involves so much “throwing-away” and “waste.” An object already owned but now superseded by something better is discarded, with no thought of its possible lasting value in itself, nor of some other human being’s attitude toward people confined to jails and mental institutions or trapped who is poorer.*

~Pope John Paul II, *On Social Concern*, no.28.

### Simple Living: An Antidote to Consumerism

We might conclude that in a consumer society people value material things. In fact, this is seldom the case, instead, we may have so many things, and crave possessing other things, that we do not take time to value what we do have. As a result, a consumer society is a *throwaway society*. The things we craved yesterday become the junk of today. Like the ocean liner, our world can become overburdened with junk. If we apply the attitude of a throwaway society to the treatment of people, then we find in a consumer society that those who appear to be non-contributing members are relegated to human junkyards. That is, if we value only “beautiful people” or people useful to us, then “out of sight, out



of mind” becomes the motto of society’s attitude toward people confined to jails and mental institution or trapped in pockets of poverty.

The antidote to consumerism, then, is *simple living*. Simple living does not imply devaluing things. Rather, it means cultivating a spirit of reverence for both things and people. Simple living includes reducing the amount of energy and resources that we use in our daily living. It also suggests discovering ways to enjoy the many goods of the earth, including manufactured goods and the wonders of modern technology, in ways that are truly appreciative and not possessive.

Simple living makes sense because ...

- It is an act of *solidarity* with all those who have little, not by choice but by circumstance.
- It is an act of *self-defense* against the dangers of over-consumption.
- It is a *celebration* of the true value of persons and things.
- It is a statement of *faith* in being, not having.
- It is an act of *resistance* against a high pressure, achievement-oriented culture.
- It leads to greater *sharing* of public space and common goods.
- It *redirects our energy* away from satisfying artificially created wants toward an appreciation of truly valuable goods and services.

Reading the Gospels, we discover that Jesus speaks about the dangers of wealth and the lure of possessions more than about any other social issue. In addition to keeping the Commandments, Jesus tells the rich man in Mark’s Gospel that if he truly seeks eternal life then he must give all that he has to the poor. When his followers are shocked at this teaching, Jesus repeats it – twice! If Jesus felt the need to stress the dangers of riches in his comparatively simple society, then how much more in our highly affluent society do we need to remain vigilant to the dangers of consumerism?

## Fatalism Versus Hope

*To hope means to be ready at every moment for that which is not yet born, and yet not become desperate if there is no birth in our lifetime ... those whose hope is strong see and cherish all signs of new life and are ready every moment to help the birth of that which is ready to be born.*

~Erich Fromm, “The Revolution of Hope,” in *The Heart Has Its Seasons*,  
New York: Regina Press 1971, page 247.

The ocean-liner story describes a world out of control. We can easily allow the many problems facing us to create a spirit of defeat. We may sense that the world and its problems are too big for us, that we can do little against the overwhelming powers of darkness filling our world. We seem to hear about a new crisis or trouble spot every week. What can we do? Where do we start? How do we counteract *Fatalism*?

The antidote to fatalism is *hope*. According to Christian tradition, hope is a virtue, hope is a quality that we develop through practice. Too often we use the word *hope* only when things are out of our hands. For example, we might say, “That police officer just saw me driving way over the speed limit. I sure hope she doesn’t give me a ticket.” Genuine hope is not throwing up our hands in despair but lending a helping hand where it is needed. As Erich Fromm says in the quote opening this section, hope means searching for signs of the birth of justice and being constantly ready to assist in that birth.

Reminding us of the power of hope, a modern monk notes that: “During the darkest periods of history, quite often a small number of men and women, scattered through the world, have been able to reverse the course of historical evolutions. This was possible only because they hope beyond all hope.” Hope affirms that all things are possible and challenges us to work to make them happen. In the words of Robert Kennedy: “Some men see things as they are and say, “Why”? I dream things that never were and say, “Why not?”

*It would ... be to give a one-sided picture, which could lead to sterile discouragement, if the condemnation of the threats to life were not accompanied by the presentation of the positive signs at work in humanity’s present situation.*

*Unfortunately, it is often hard to see and recognize there positive signs, perhaps also because they do not receive sufficient attention in the communications media. Yet, how many initiative of help and support people who are weak and defenseless have sprung up and continue to spring up in the Christian community and in civil society, at the local, national and international level, through the efforts of individuals, groups, movements and organizations of various kinds!*  
~Pope John Paul II, *The Gospel of Life*, no. 26

**\*\*answer questions on pages 17-18**

## **Part II: World Religions**

### **Studying the World's Religions**

If you can scan the news on day given day, you will probably find examples of how religion influences everyday life around the world. Consider these newspaper excerpts:

*The morning I arrived in Trivandrum, the capital of the south Indian state of Kerala, I met my friend Vinita, a Hindu, who promised to accompany me on a visit to the Sri Padmanabhaswamy temple, a place that is generally off limits to nonbelievers. Though my family is from Kerala, we are Christians. And that morning, one of their fold was proposing to enter a Hindu temple. (From "Going on Faith")*

*A Yiddish play with the title "Toyt fun a Salesman" opened at the Parkway Theater in Brooklyn early in 1951. As most of the audience recognized from the name alone, the show was a translation of Arthur Miller's drama "Death of a Salesman." It seemed a mere footnote to the premiere production, which had completed its triumphal run on Broadway several months earlier, having won the Pulitzer Prize.*

Is Willy Loman Jewish? Did Miller create him devoid of ethnic or religious markings to better serve as an American Everyman broken on the wheel of capitalism? Or did he subtly for part of Willy's tragedy to be his estrangement from the Jewish and Judaic heritage that might have provided some ballast as his working life, and with it his very identity, falls to ruin? (From "Since the Opening Curtain, a Question: Is Willy Loman Jewish?")

The Roman Catholic archbishop of New York Timothy M. Dolan, has filled the pews at St. Patrick's Cathedral. He has spoken before Pope Benedict XVI and the College of Cardinals in Rome. As archbishop of Milwaukee, he once put on a Green Bay Packers "cheesehead" during an outdoor Mass.

But in recent weeks, the cardinal and his office prepared for an entirely different kind of address: his first Twitter message.

"Hey everybody. It's Timothy Cardinal Tebow," @CardinalDolan. "I mean Dolan." (From Now, @Cardinal Dolan)

Perhaps the uglier side of politics is always close to the surface.

President Obama and his Republican rival, Mitt Romney, have said for months that the 2012 elections will be about the economy. But on Thursday, it became – at least for a brief moment – about the always touchy issues of race and religion.

A report in the *New York Times* on Thursday exposed a secret plan by Ruplician strategists and financiers to rekindle questions about the Rev. Jeremiah A. Wright, Jr., Mr. Obama's one-time pastor, and his angry black-power sermons.

Mr. Romney repudiated the plan to use Mr. Wright's words as a racially tinged cudgel against Mr. Obama. (From "Race and Religion Rear Their Heads")

### **A Global Village**

The preceding quotations are drawn from four different articles in the same newspaper on the same day – the *New York Times*, May 18, 2012: compelling evidence that the world's religions are part of people's everyday world. We cannot call ourselves informed citizens without having at least a basic knowledge of them.

Today more than ever before, we live in a global village. Thumbing through the newspaper, logging on to the Internet, flying across the ocean, buying clothes and goods created by people far away, and a host of other activities have us all, in a real sense, neighbors. This unprecedented variety of interactions offers an abundance of opportunities to enrich our lives by connecting us with people who think and live differently than we do. But it also poses challenges. For one thing, it is more difficult than ever to be adequately informed about one's community – now that the "community" includes the entire world. And part of meeting this challenge is gaining a sound understanding of the world's religious traditions.

As the global community grows ever more close-knit, the relevance of religion in our day-to-day lives will continue to increase, not only at the level of international affairs but locally also. Most people already have – or soon will have – friends, classmates, or coworkers who belong to religious traditions quite different from their own.

Recognize the need to understand the world's religions is one thing; achieving such an understanding is another. This reading aims to help. In certain ways, the study of world religions is especially challenging, as the following section explains. But it also offers a great opportunity for discovering the many ways of being human.

## **The Nature of a Religious Tradition**

Religion begins with mystery. Being human inevitably prompts deep questions about our existence: Where did we come from? Where are we going? Why are we here? For that matter, what is "here"? that is, what is the nature of this world? What is the nature of the supreme or ultimate reality" beset with such questions, we find ourselves confronting mystery on all sides. By responding to the questions, religion provides a way of living and dying meaningfully amid the mystery. This reading explores the various responses to mystery that the world's religions offer. Anything so intimately involved with mystery is bound to be difficult, so it will help if the study itself is demystified as much as possible. The process of demystification begins by probing the nature of the questions most religious traditions address.

## **Religious Questions**

Human beings, presumably unlike any other members of the animal kingdom, have the capacity to question such fundamental things as the source and the meaning of their existence. We are self-conscious beings. Along with being physical, rational, and emotional, we have the capacity for self-reflection; we have a conscience; we can ponder our own nature. We are spiritual (although the term *spiritual* is open to interpretation). And by virtue of our spirituality, we ask – and answer – life's most basic questions. Because these questions are more or less pertinent to each religious tradition, they can be organized into a kind of framework for studying the world's religions.

Not everyone chooses to answer these basic religious questions by following a religious tradition. Some people, even though they regard themselves as spiritual, are not members of a specific religion. But others find that a religion helps them to grapple with religious questions. Religious offer responses that have been tested by time, in some cases by thousands of years. They are also fortified by the richness of tradition and by the shared experience of community.

Regardless of how we choose to respond to them, religious questions are inevitable. Studying these questions can us to better understand the nature of each religious tradition. Let us consider the primary ones.

## **What Is the Human Condition?**

The initial religious question concerns the basic nature of the human condition: What is our essential nature? Are we merely what we appear to be – physical bodies somehow equipped with the capacity to think and to feel? Or are we endowed with a deeper spiritual essence, some form of soul? Are human beings by nature good, or evil, or somewhere in-between, perhaps originally good but now flawed in some way?

Often a religion's view of the basic nature of the human condition is set forth in its account of human origins. The story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, told in the Jewish and Christian Bibles and also in the Qur'an (or Koran, the sacred book of Islam), is one clear example.

Suffering is an important aspect of the human condition. All religions recognize that we suffer. The questions is, Why do we suffer? If we by nature good and in no need of greater perfection, then of course suffering is not our fault. But if

we are evil, or somehow flawed, perhaps we deserve to suffer. A religion typically describes a means of overcoming suffering – and of responding to the human condition in general – through the attainment of some

## What Is Spiritual Fulfillment?

Almost every religion describes what is needed to fulfill our spiritual potential most perfectly. Some religions teach a form of spiritual fulfillment that can be attained in this life. Others teach that complete fulfillment must await an afterlife. In either case, fulfillment is a difficult thing to attain; in fact, some religions teach that it is impossible to attain on our own, without divine assistance. Therefore, religions tend to acknowledge the goodness of being as spiritually mature and near to fulfillment as possible. Spiritual transformation, not necessarily leading to complete fulfillment, is a vital objective of most religions.

In this study of religions, you will encounter specific examples that explore various approaches to spiritual maturity and spiritual fulfillment. For now, briefly consider three questions about the way a religion addresses spiritual fulfillment and transformation: What is ethical – that is, how are we to act while living in the world? How do we transcend the human condition? And how do we attain salvation?

### *What is ethical?*

Religions typically prescribe an ethical life as a basic requirement for the journey toward spiritual fulfillment. Indeed, teachings regarding right and wrong constitute a significant part of most religious traditions.

### *How do we transcend the human condition?*

Some forms of spiritual fulfillment can be attained in this life, either temporarily or eternally. Buddhist enlightenment is one example. These forms all involve a type of *transcendence*, or overcoming of the normal limitations imposed by the human condition. Of course, we can respond in a variety of ways to that challenge of being human. Some people try to ignore them by allowing a certain numbness of the spirit. Others become workaholics to block them out. Some hide behind a veil of drugs or alcohol. Religions normally insist on a different type of response, a form of transcendence that brings one face-to-face with the human condition, and then raises one above it or allow one to set through it. (The precise of this transcendence vary by religion. The Buddhist who has attained enlightenment, for example, while continuing to inhabit a physical body with the usual discomforts and needs, is said to maintain a state of indescribable spiritual tranquility and bliss.

### *How do we attain salvation?*

Most religions teach that spiritual fulfillment is closely related to some form of salvation from the ultimate limitation imposed by the human condition: death. Religions that emphasize forms of transcendence typically hold that there is a direct connection between the transcendence attained in this life and final salvation. Some forms of Buddhism teach that the attainment of enlightenment in this life leads to *nirvana*, the final liberation. *Liberation* for religions such as Buddhism is the equivalent of *salvation*; both terms imply an overcoming of the limitations of the human condition. Religions such as Christianity and Islam, which teach that salvation depends on the divine, tend to maintain that final spiritual fulfillment awaits in the afterlife, sometimes after the individual's salvation has already been assured. According to this view, spiritual maturation continues even in a heavenly afterlife.

### *What is Our Destiny?*

As spiritual beings, we ponder our destiny. We wonder. Where are we going, ultimately? Most (though not all) religions provide answer to that question, and their answers are closely linked to the issues of spiritual fulfillment or transformation.

According to some religions, human beings face two possible destinies: one leads to reward, typically eternal life in paradise, and the other leads to condemnation. Individual destiny is linked to the question of spiritual fulfillment naturally corresponds to one's prospects for reward in the afterlife.

The question of destiny is more complex for religions that teach human beings live more than one lifetime – religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. In this case, the immediate destiny after this life is generally not the ultimate, final destiny, but just another step toward the final destiny. Nevertheless, the need to seek spiritual transformation (if not complete fulfillment) in this life remains vital, because the degree of one's transformation tends to determine the nature of one's future life.

### *What is the Nature of the World?*

Along with answering questions about human beings, religions also answer questions about the world. What did the world come from? It is real, or is it just some kind of cosmic illusion? Is it a help or a hindrance to the religious quest?

Such questions belong to the general category *cosmology* – the understanding of the nature of the universe. The answers to cosmological questions tend to determine a religion's degree of interest in the natural world. Some religions express such interest through support of scientific inquiry and theories regarding the natural world, while others tend to be suspicious of science.

### *What is Ultimately Reality, and How is it Revealed?*

Finally, there is the religious question of ultimate reality (or for Western traditions especially, God). Theistic religions hold a belief in God or in multiple gods. These religions teach a certain theology, or doctrine, regarding the divine. The theologies of the world include a range of basic perspectives: *monotheism* (belief in only one God), *polytheism* (belief in many gods), and *pantheism* (belief that the divine reality exists in everything), to name a few.

Some religions do not hold a belief in a god who is essentially relevant for us, although they sometimes do hold a belief in various divine or semi-divine beings. Sometimes such religions are termed *monotheistic*, which literally means that there is no belief in a divine being. The term *transtheistic* is helpful, for it allows room for belief in divine or semi-divine beings without insisting on a god who is essentially relevant. Some of these religions teach that all reality is essentially One thing, and that human beings are part of the ultimate reality.

Most religions also teach that the supreme or ultimate reality, whatever form it takes, is somehow revealed to humans. The *revelation* usually takes place through sacred stories or myths, or through various types of religious experiences.

## **Seven Dimensions of Religion**

Exploring the basic questions to which religions respond helps us to understand the functions of religions. Considering the elements that make up religions helps us to understand the forms of religions. Scholar Niniam Smart suggest that all of the religious traditions manifest seven dimensions: experiential, mythic, doctrinal, ethical, ritual, social, and material. These dimensions are not exclusive of one another: for example, myths often set forth patterns of ritual. Indeed, the seven dimensions are intertwined and complementary, weaving a rich tapestry through which religions respond to humans' basic questions, offering a doctrine here, prescribing a ritual there, and so forth. All religions use the same seven elements to create their own unique tapestry, often emphasizing one dimension more, another dimension less. Xen Buddhism, for example, has a strong experiential dimension but says relatively little about doctrine.

## **Experimental**

Religions commonly begin with the religious experiences of individuals. Some of these beginnings are famous and easy to identify. When you prince named Gautama experienced enlightenment under the *Bodhi* tree, he became the Buddha, and Buddhism was born. When Mahammad began to experience revelations from Allah, Islam began to take off. Other beginnings are not so easily identified. Moreover, religious experiences can be part of anyone's religious life; they do not always result in a new religion.

*Faith* generally belongs to the category religious experience, although it also has doctrinal aspects. In the New Testament, for instance, the Apostle Paul describes faith as being closely related to experience of the Holy Spirit, and involving more than just intellectual belief.

The world's major religions acknowledge numerous types of religious experience, some of them astounding. Generally speaking, in theistic religions God is experienced as a holy presence who is other (that is, as a being distinct from the individual). This experience of God is often characterized by two separate emotions: awe-inspiring fear and fascination. A well-known example of this type of experience is the Revelation of God to Moses on Mount Sinai, through the burning bush. Moses was fearful of God, yet drawn in fascination toward the divine presence.

In nontheistic and transtheistic religions, religious experience usually takes the form of *mysticism*. In one basic type of mysticism, found in Hinduism and other transtheistic religions, the individual becomes one with the ultimate reality through inward contemplation. Another form of religious experience, known as the vision quest, is found in many indigenous religious traditions, including religions of Native American people.

## **Mystic**

The concept of *mythic* may not be familiar to us because most people no longer hold a predominantly mythic worldview. The matter is further complicated by our tendency to use the term *myth* in various ways. Typically, we equate myths with falsehoods – but in the study of world religions, myths actually convey important truths.

We Westerners tend to base our perspectives on history and science, acquiring knowledge through empirical observation and rational thinking. Myths are both nonhistorical and nonrational. But they do not necessarily conflict with history and science, nor are they necessarily false or irrational. Myths are sources of sacred truth and are therefore powerful, for they give meaning to life.

Myths takes the form of sacred stories that are passed along from one generation to the next. Many are conveyed orally, through some are recorded in scripture. Myths are often set in primordial time, a period in the distant past somehow set apart from the ordinary present. They commonly tell of the origins of humans and the world. Myths set forth fundamental knowledge regarding the nature of things and the proper way to live.

The Genesis account of the world's creation is one such story or myth. It provides knowledge about a number of basic issues: the world was created by God; human beings were created in the image of God and are by nature good; humans are meant to have "dominion" over the other creatures of the world and so forth. These mythic ideas depend neither on history nor on science, but they remain sacred truths for Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike.

## **Doctrinal**

For many people, the most obvious and basic aspect of religion is belief. Adherents of a religion believe in something, namely, the creeds, doctrines, or teachings of their religion. Christians believe, for example, in the Apostles' Creed and in the doctrine of the Trinity. The belief aspect of religion is categorized as the doctrinal dimension.

Doctrines, creeds, and other teachings commonly originate in lived religious experience. They also derive from myths. Whereas myth and experience tend in some ways to defy the rational impulses of the mind, doctrines make sense of the content of experience and myth. They are often recorded in sacred texts, or scriptures, along with the myths and the accounts of revelation and other religious experiences that serve as the foundations of religions.

## **Ethical**

Religions tend to devote much attention to *ethics*: How are we to act while living in the world? The ethical dimension includes many sets of teachings that respond to that question: for example, the Ten Commandments in the Jewish and Christian traditions, which have striking parallels in some other traditions. The ethical dimension also incorporates more general ethical principles, such as the Buddhist ideal of compassion, which is notably similar to the Christian ideal of love for one's neighbor.

## **Ritual**

Worship is a common aspect of religions, taking a variety of forms and occupying much of an individual's religious life. Most forms of worship are carried out through some formal practice, or *ritual*. Like belief, ritual is very familiar to most of us. Many religious rituals reenact a myth or sacred story, for example, every Muslim ideally will make at least one pilgrimage to Mecca, the most holy city of Islam. Various aspects of the pilgrimage reenact the sacred story of Muhammad's original journey to Mecca, a leading event in the founding of the religion.

## **Social**

Religions naturally involve communities, and most people consider the communal aspect of religion significant and attractive. A sense of community, of belonging to a group such as a tribe or parish or congregation, is usually empowering for individuals. The shared experience of community also fortifies religions themselves, and often results in some form of organization, typically including a hierarchy of leadership. For example, religions usually

recognize one level of membership for officials or priest and another level for common adherents. Often particular figures are thought to embody the ideals of spiritual perfection: the Taoist sage and the Christian saint are two such figures.

## **Material**

The sacred architecture of cathedrals, temples, and other structures of worship, and the art within them, are among humanity's most beautiful cultural achievements. Icons, such as the crucifix and statues of the Buddha, are part of this material dimension of religion. So too are books of scripture. Other types of sacred entities, whether natural (such as mountains) or of human construction (such as cities), also are highly significant for some religions. In India, for example, Hindus consider almost every major river sacred.

## **Some Challenges and Rewards of Studying the World's Religions**

Several issues might make studying the world's religions unsettling. For example, it would seem by definition, ultimate reality must be the same for all humans. Certainly the monotheistic religions consider God to be the God of all. But if that is the case, can there be more than one true religion? Are the religions saying essentially the same thing, even though they are using different words filtered through different historical and cultural frameworks? Are they in basic agreement about the truth? If so, does the matter of choosing a religion simple come down to personal preference?

## **Two Approaches**

A study of the world's religions is enriched when it is approached in two ways. First, it should be approached using a comparative methodology, Friedrich Max Muller, one of the founders of the study of comparative religions, pointed out that to know just one religion is to know none. Studying many religions should enable us to know each one. Including our own, more precisely.

Second, the study of religions should be approached with *empathy*, which is the capacity for seeing things from another's perspective. A traditional saying cautions that we should never judge a person until we have walked a mile in that person's shoes. Empathy requires the use of the imagination, and it can be quite challenging. It is rewarding too, providing a needed tool for gaining insight into the ways of others. The study of religions would not advance far if it lacked such insight.

All religions are treasure troves of wisdom, and everyone can benefit from exploring them. For another thing, we can try to become better acquainted with the seven dimensions of religion through the study of abundant examples. Finally, we can expect to emerge from this study with a greatly enhanced understanding of the people who follow the religions we have explored. That, in turn, can enrich us in our roles as citizens of the global village.

**\*\*answer the question on pages 17-18**

## **Part III: The Church of Mercy: by Pope Francis I**

### **The Commitment to Peace**

**Address to the Participate in the International Meeting for Peace  
Sponsored by the Community of Sant'Enidio, 30 September 2013**

As leaders of different religions we can do lot. Peace is the responsibility of everyone – to pray for peace, to work for peace! A religious *leader* is always a man or woman of peace, for the commandment of peace is inscribed in the depths of the religious traditions that we represent. But what can we do? Your annual meeting suggest the way forward: the courage of dialogue. This courage, this dialogue, gives us hope. It has nothing to do with optimism; it is entirely different. Hope!

In the world, in society, there is little peace because dialogue is missing; we find it difficult to go beyond the narrow horizon of our own interests in order to open ourselves to a true and sincere comparison. Peace requires a persistent, patient, strong, intelligent dialogue by which nothing is lost. Dialogue can overcome war. Dialogue can bring people of different generations who often ignore one another to love together; it makes citizens of different ethnic backgrounds and of different beliefs coexists. Dialogue is the way of peace. For dialogue fosters understanding, harmony, concord,

and peace. For this reason, it is vital that it grow and expand between people of every condition and belief, like a net of peace that protects the world and especially protects the weakest members.

As religious *leaders*, we are called to be true “people of dialogue,” to cooperate in building peace not as intermediaries but as authentic mediators. Intermediaries seek to give everyone a discount ultimately in order to gain something for themselves. However, the mediator is one who retains nothing for himself but rather spends himself generously until he is consumed; knowing that only gain is peace. Each one of us is called to be an artisan of peace, by uniting and not dividing, by extinguishing hatred and not holding on to it, by opening paths to dialogue and not by constructing new walls! Let us dialogue and meet one another in order to establish a culture of dialogue in the world, a cultural encounter.

**\*\*answer the question on page 19**



**Directions:** Match the term or name in the first column with the phase in the second column that fits it best.

**Column 1**

1. Justice that involves working with People
2. Gaining greater control over one's Life and resources
3. Systems and institutions of a society
4. Canceling debts to restore greater equality among people
5. Reducing energy and resource use
6. A virtue that involves working for change
7. Belief that the world is out of control
8. Obsessive desire to possess things
9. An antidote to individualism
10. Discarding things and people that we No longer have a use for

**Column 2**

- a. Jubilee Year
- b. structures
- c. empowerment
- d. solidarity
- e. fatalism
- ab. interdependence
- ac. throwaway society
- ad. consumerism
- ae. simple living
- bc. hope

**Directions:** Match the term or name in the first column with the phase in the second column that fits it best.

**Column 1**

11. "There's nothing I can do."
12. "We all need each other."
13. "You can buy happiness."
14. "Severely handicapped infants should not be saved. They're useless anyway."
15. "If we limit what we use, we can make a difference."

**Column 2**

- a. consumerism
- b. simple living
- c. throwaway society
- d. fatalism
- e. interdependence

**Part II: World Religions**

**Directions:** Write the letter of the correct answer on the answer sheet at pages

16. The basic dimensions of a religious tradition include
  - a. doctrines
  - b. sacred stories
  - c. rituals
  - d. all of the above
17. The understanding of the nature of the universe is called
  - a. astrology
  - b. universalism
  - c. cosmology
  - d. psychology
18. A religion that includes a belief in a personal god or gods is
  - a. theistic
  - b. nontheistic
  - c. invalid
  - d. pantheistic
19. What questions does religion seek to respond to?
  - a. What is the human condition?
  - b. What is our destiny?
  - c. What is the ultimate reality?
  - d. All of the above
20. Many world religions include sacred stories that are passed along from one generation to the next. These are called
  - a. ethnics
  - b. myths
  - b. rituals
  - d. polytheism
21. Which two things enrich our study of world religions?
  - a. caution and skepticism
  - b. hostility and denial
  - c. comparative methodology and empathy
  - d. none of these

22. Cathedrals, temples, statues, and sacred places in nature are all examples of which dimension of religion?
- |             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| a. ethical  | b. spiritual |
| c. material | d. ritual    |
23. The second dimension of religion promotes all of the following except
- |                                 |                               |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. transcendence                | b. a sense of belonging       |
| c. a sense of shared experience | d. organization of leadership |
24. What are some of the ways of understanding ultimate reality?
- Ultimate reality is found in one personal God.
  - Ultimate reality consists of many divine or semi divine beings.
  - All reality is essentially one thing, and human beings are part of this ultimate reality.
  - all of the above
25. Friedrich Max Muller noted that to know just one religion is to know
- |              |        |
|--------------|--------|
| a. none      | b. all |
| c. the truth | d. God |

**Directions:** Complete the following sentence's, using words from the below. Not all words are used.

- |              |               |                     |                   |
|--------------|---------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| a. Empathy   | b. mystery    | c. ritual           | d. ethical        |
| e. mysticism | ab. salvation | ac. human condition | ad. pantheism     |
| ae. social   | bc. material  | bd. Polytheism      | be. transcendence |

- Religion begins with \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Suffering is an important aspect of the \_\_\_\_\_ , one of the basic concerns of religion.
- The belief that divine reality exists in everything is called \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Most religions teach that spiritual fulfillment is closely related to some form of \_\_\_\_\_ from death, the ultimate limitation.
- Some forms of spiritual fulfillment involve \_\_\_\_\_ , the overcoming of normal intentions imposed by the ultimate limitation.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ dimension of religion deals with how we are to act while living in the world.
- In some forms of \_\_\_\_\_ , the individual becomes one with ultimate reality through inward contemplation.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ dimension of religion includes formal worship practice, which often involves reenacting a myth.
- One important approach for studying religions is \_\_\_\_\_ , the capacity to see things from another person's perspective.
- The worship of more than one god is called \_\_\_\_\_ .

## Summer Reading Senior Answer Sheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** This is the only page you bring to school on your **first** day of Religion class.  
Place your answers to Part I and Part II reading passages below. (2 points each)

**Part I: Social Justice**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_
- 8. \_\_\_\_\_
- 9. \_\_\_\_\_
- 10. \_\_\_\_\_
- 11. \_\_\_\_\_
- 12. \_\_\_\_\_
- 13. \_\_\_\_\_
- 14. \_\_\_\_\_
- 15. \_\_\_\_\_

**Part II: World Religions**

- 16. \_\_\_\_\_
- 17. \_\_\_\_\_
- 18. \_\_\_\_\_
- 19. \_\_\_\_\_
- 20. \_\_\_\_\_
- 21. \_\_\_\_\_
- 22. \_\_\_\_\_
- 23. \_\_\_\_\_
- 24. \_\_\_\_\_
- 25. \_\_\_\_\_
- 26. \_\_\_\_\_
- 27. \_\_\_\_\_
- 28. \_\_\_\_\_
- 29. \_\_\_\_\_
- 30. \_\_\_\_\_
- 31. \_\_\_\_\_
- 32. \_\_\_\_\_
- 33. \_\_\_\_\_
- 34. \_\_\_\_\_
- 35. \_\_\_\_\_

**Part III: The Embrace of God’s Mercy**

**Directions:** Answer the question below in 75 words or more. (30 points)

Explain how Pope Francis speaks about God being merciful and give two examples from this homily.

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