

Navigating the World as Catholics

Did you watch James Cameron's "Avatar" in 2009? The lush alien world of Pandora is poisonous to humans, and to enter this magical kingdom, humans have to first enter a machine to be transported there, and be one with the Na'vi who inhabit the planet.

Fr David Garcia, OP asked, "Are we Avatar Catholics?" In other words, do we live our lives as 'humans' outside the church, be transported through the machine called the 'church grounds' and enter the church as 'Catholics'? Only to leave the church grounds and go back to being 'humans' again.

Fr Garcia's urged the over 60 participants at the Catholic Social Teaching workshop at Agape Village on Saturday, 22 July, to consider, "**Are we disconnected from the realities of our faith?**"



Fr Garcia explained how the popes through the years have written over **250 documents on social issues** to guide the faithful in their responses to these issues. Lay people have a responsibility to continue Jesus' mission in our world today. The Catholic Social Teaching gives us principles to help us discern how we can do this in our lives, our families, workplace and society.

Fr Garcia also shared on **Human Dignity**: All persons share the same personal dignity. Human dignity is universal, egalitarian and inalienable. It should be in all people, equal for all people and no one should legitimately deprive another person of these rights. He noted, a person who holds a higher position has the same and equal rights as another who holds the most menial of jobs.

Fr Garcia shared, “**Goodness leads the world in a good direction**”. When common interest overlaps with common good, it brings the community to ponder on what makes a difference, and not what is wanted anymore. In this way, the whole is greater than the parts.

As for the principle of **solidarity**, there is a call to be cooperative. It is also a reality that solidarity is a better strategy. As for **subsidiarity**, people are assisted and allowed to be autonomous; this is empowering. Fr Garcia shared, “Association, participation, solidarity and subsidiarity make societies more human”.

Through the CST workshops, Caritas Singapore hopes to raise awareness of the social teachings to Catholics and communities, to help them reflect on daily issues in the light of their faith and to act with the love of God for all.