

International Human Rights Day December 10, 2009

Embrace Diversity, End Discrimination is the theme for Human Rights Day 2009, commemorated December 10. Each person, made in the image and likeness of God, has an inalienable and transcendent human dignity which gives rise to human rights.



“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights,” the first words of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, established the foundation of international human rights law. Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) sets out a broad range of fundamental human rights and freedoms to which all women and men, everywhere in the world are entitled, without any distinction. The UDHR and its core values of inherent human dignity, non-discrimination, equality, fairness, and universality apply to everyone, everywhere and always.

However, the realization of human rights is hindered often by discrimination, which persists as a source of great suffering for millions and lies at the root of many pressing global problems. The call to everyone is to join hands: to embrace diversity and end discrimination; to promote the common good and work for just and equal treatment for all; and to recognize the unity of the human family and realize a new vision of solidarity.

*The unity of the human race, a communion transcending every barrier,
is called into being by the word of God-who-is-Love...
God’s love calls us to move beyond the limited and the ephemeral,
it gives us the courage to continue seeking and working for the benefit of all.*
(Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, 34, 78)

Resources

- The UN [Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) (*Official UN Languages*) provides information on events and documentation on human rights.
- [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (*360 languages*).
- The [Vatican Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace](#) makes available the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* and statements related to human rights. (*Multiple Languages*)
- The [World Council of Churches](#) (*Deutsch, English, Español*) outlines six priority programs including human rights and just and inclusive communities.
- [Theology Library on Human Rights](#) offers documents, articles, and a directory of web links related to human rights around the world.
- [The Elders](#), a group of eminent global leaders brought together by Nelson Mandela, offer their collective influence and experience to support peace building, and promotion of human rights.
- [Education for Justice](#) (*English, Español*), a project of the [Center of Concern](#), and [Faith Doing Justice](#) offer resources, which foster greater understanding of Catholic Social Teaching and current social justice and human rights issues.
- The UN [Cyberschoolbus](#) (*English, Español*) suggests materials to help to teach and promote human rights.

- [Child Rights Information Network](#) (*English, Español*) gives information and resources on issues impacting children and their rights.
- Multilingual Human Rights, [Children's Rights Across the World](#) (*Multiple Languages*) provides the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- [Business and Human Rights Resource Center](#) (*English, Español*) tracks the positive and negative impact and human rights record of over 4,000 businesses in 180 countries.

Actions

- Pray that the dignity and rights of all are respected.
- Plan an event to commemorate Human Rights Day in your local community, school, or parish.
- Visit the website of the UN [Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) (*Official UN Languages*) for information on the theme and scheduled activities and events for December 10.
- Know your rights; read the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) (*360 languages*).
- Educate for justice by promoting values of [Shalom](#) (*Deutsch, English, Español*), human rights, [Catholic Social Teaching](#), and the [Millennium Development Goals](#).
- Study Pope Benedict XVI's recent encyclical [Caritas in Veritate](#) (*Deutsch, English, Español, Italiano, Polski, Português*) or Pope Paul VI's [Populorum Progressio](#) (*English, Español, Italiano, Português*) to further understanding of integral human development
- Join a human rights organization or network such as [Human Rights Watch](#) (*Deutsch, English, Español, 日本語, and more*) to keep informed of current human rights concerns.
- Learn about forms of discrimination and limitations on human rights in your country or region, and advocate for non-discrimination and respect of human rights for all.
- Express solidarity with someone who has experienced some form of discrimination or limitation of their human rights.
- Share with others whatever you do to mark Human Rights Day; email details and photos to shalom@ssndroma.org or ssndunngo@earthlink.net.

Prayer

God of Justice,
 You have given all of your children
 Human dignity and human rights.
 Help us recognize the dignity and the rights
 Of all of human kind.
 Open our hearts to hear your teachings,
 Open our eyes to the suffering
 Of those who are denied their basic economic, social, and political rights.
 Let our voices join in declaring
 All humanity is sacred, all human rights must be respected.
 (Center of Concern)