



Solidarity Walk 2020: We are called

*"What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds?
Can such faith save them? ...Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."*

James 2:14,17

Table of Contents

Welcome and Introduction	2
Solidarity Walk Sample Script.....	7
Other Related Scriptures.....	14
Quotations from Sister Parish members.....	15
Suggested Songs.....	16
After the Walk	17

Welcome

Dear Friend,

Thank you for expressing interest in hosting a Solidarity Walk (whether virtual or socially distanced this year). The Solidarity Walk is our largest fundraiser and outreach event of the year. The walks give our community the opportunity to gather in prayer and reflection, as well as to raise funds and awareness. Our needs for fundraising, reflection, prayer, and connection have only been heightened by the pandemic.

The theme for this year's walk: **We are called**. At Sister Parish, we feel called to stand by our communities in prayer and friendship, to challenge ourselves to take bigger steps toward racial and economic justice, and to provide relief aid to those most in need. But we need your help to do so.

In this booklet, you'll find a sample script for you to adapt. Please alter it in whatever way suits your community. If you have any questions about planning the walk, please contact **Carrie Stengel at usoffice@sisterparish.org**.

This work that God has inspired is a privilege to continue. Thank you for all that you bring to your congregation, to your Central American neighbors, and to all of us in the larger Sister Parish family throughout the year.

En la buena lucha!

--The Sister Parish staff and Board of Directors

P.S.-- This booklet is designed for churches organizing a Solidarity Walk, but some churches have also planned other events in solidarity with their partner community around the same time as the Solidarity Walk. The walk is all about gathering, learning from, and standing in solidarity with our brothers and sisters. This can take many forms. Just keep us posted on your plans and send us pictures so we can share your event with your partner community.

[See this blog from 2015 for some Solidarity Event ideas.](#)

Solidarity Walk Sample Script

Station 1: We are called

Host: Thank you for joining us on this Sister Parish Solidarity Walk. The Solidarity Walk is a way for Sister Parish communities across the Americas to come together to support the mission we all share and to reflect on the ways that these relationships change our lives. As we walk, we are joined in spirit by all of the sister communities in Guatemala and El Salvador.

[In addition to being a prayerful and educational experience, the Solidarity Walk is also Sister Parish's biggest fundraiser of the year. (*Mention the different ways to give this year – whether on a MightyCause fundraiser page, the Sister Parish website, or by sending a check.*)]

Reader 1: The theme of our walk today is, **“We are called”**, raising questions about how we live out our faith and how our sistering relationships influence the way we move in the world. As people of faith, what are we called to do in today's world? What are we called to do in this time of crisis that has magnified inequality and injustice throughout the world? What kind of world do we want to build through our solidarity? How are we inspired / moved to action as a result of the relationships we hold dear?

Host: We would like to begin our walk by praying for those we hold dear in the Sister Parish family, especially in (*your partner community*). Who have you encountered through this relationship, in person or through presentations, Skype calls, or letters? Who do you hold dear? We invite you to speak the names of those in (*your sister community or home community*) for whom you would like to pray, to bring them into our presence as we begin our walk.

(Give people time to name Sister Parish friends aloud)

We pray that those named, and all members of (*your church*) and (*your sister parish*) may be brought closer together in God's love, seeing each other as neighbors facing the world

together, in faith that this solidarity can bring God's Kingdom just a little closer to completion. Amen.

[Time for discussion, prayer, or silent reflection here.]

Walk to Station 2

Suggested song: "We are called" or "We Are Marching"

Station 2: We are called to love tenderly

Host: Jesus tells us to love our neighbor as ourselves. We are called to love each other. Sister Parish participants often talk about the love that is given and received. We experience radical hospitality and an outpouring of unconditional love, in spite of and because of our differences.

Reader 2: "They are gifted in transmitting love. They make us feel like we are worth a lot, like we are unique. We should always act like this with each other. We feel so grateful for their love. – Rosario, TN2, reflecting on a North to south visit

Reader 3: "We don't need to be close physically – we are close because we know that there are people who care for us, who pray for us, who feel the same way about us that we feel for them. We learn from each other. We love each other. Their problems are our problems, their happiness is our happiness, and their sorrow is our sorrow. This is true friendship. This is what Sister Parish is about, coming to the realization that we are not alone in the world, that we are one big family." Julieta Borja, Sister Parish staff in Guatemala

Reader 4: "In this time of division and suspicion of other cultures and peoples of the world, what could be more important than a welcome and invitation into someone else's life? It dispels fear, creates bonds of trust and gives us a shared humanity. I believe this is what the gospels call us to be." - St Joan of Arc participant, 2019 South to North

Host: We would like to take a minute to reflect on the love that each of us has shared through Sister Parish. How have you experienced this love? How has this love brought you closer to God?

[Time for discussion, prayer, or silent reflection here.]

Walk to Station 3

Suggested song: "Un millón de amigos" or "Amar es entregarse" or "Open the eyes of my heart"

Station 3: Let us love in truth and action

Host: Sister Parish partner communities minister to each other. We give and receive the love and radical hospitality. How does this love affect our understanding of the world and what we are called to do?

Reader 1: 1 John 3:16-18 We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God’s love abide in anyone who has the world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses to help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.

Reader 2: “A civilization of love is not sentimentality, it is justice and truth. A civilization of love that did not demand justice for people would not be true civilization ... It is only a caricature of love when we try to patch up with charity what is owed in justice, when we cover with an appearance of benevolence where we are failing in social justice. True love means demanding what is just.” - Saint Oscar Romero, Archbishop in El Salvador martyred during the war

Host: How do our sistering relationships affect how we see injustice locally and/or globally? How have the interconnectedness of our struggles and our lives been revealed to you in this time? How are we prepared to take action for real change? How are we

prepared to lay down our lives for one another?

[Time for discussion, prayer, or silent reflection here.]

Walk to Station 4

Suggested song: "Enviado soy de Dios" or "God of Justice (We must go)"

Station 4: Disturb us O Lord

Host: Our most common prayers, ask God to help us find peace, acceptance, and love. But sometimes God's role is to push us into uncomfortable territory – so that we might dream more expansively, act more bravely, grow more deeply, and love more fiercely.

Reader 3:

Prayer by Desmond Tutu – Disturb us, O Lord

Disturb us, O Lord

when we are too well-pleased with ourselves
when our dreams have come true because we dreamed too little,
because we sailed too close to the shore.

Disturb us, O Lord

when with the abundance of things we possess,
we have lost our thirst for the water of life
when, having fallen in love with time,
we have ceased to dream of eternity
and in our efforts to build a new earth,
we have allowed our vision of Heaven to grow dim.

Stir us, O Lord

to dare more boldly, to venture into wider seas
where storms show Thy mastery,
where losing sight of land, we shall find the stars.
In the name of Him who pushed back the horizons of our hopes
and invited the brave to follow.

Amen



Reader 4: “History will have to record that the greatest tragedy of this period of social transition was not the strident clamor of the bad people, but the appalling silence of the

good people.” Martin Luther King, Jr.

[Time for discussion here, prayer or silent reflection here.]

Walk to Station 5

Suggested song: “No basta rezar” or “Here I am Lord”

Station 5: We are called to act with justice

Host: We share some messages from Sister Parish members about how they feel called, trusting in God and trusting that we are where we need to be.

Reader 1: “God gives each of us a nudge towards action...God wants us to change the world we live in now, a world with so much impunity, violence and poverty. You do your part here and we do our part in Guatemala. The hope for a more just world is inside each of us. Through our relationship we realize that we are not poor. We are not alone. We are one. We are all part of one whole.”

– Miriam and Alba, mass presentation

Or

“This is hard, but we are called as Christians...to listen to the cries for help and take action. We want people alive and active in these times of violence and the pandemic.”

- Miriam, in a Zoom conversation

Reader 2: “Sister Parish taught me to work WITH the people instead of FOR the people and that I will only be free when ALL people are free. Working to make the world a better place for every being is a slow, difficult process, but rewarding-- and a process well worth engaging in.”

– Alejandro Alfaro, former Sister Parish staff in Guatemala, now a pastor in the US

Reader 3: “I encourage you to make this the year that you step out of your comfort zone and try something new. My time involved in faith and justice ministries has not always been comfortable, but I’ve found that it’s usually at these moments when I am feeling the most uncomfortable or defensive that I am doing my greatest learning...Participating in the ministries of St. Joan of Arc helps to remind me that we are called to live lives of action as we each play our small part in the story of building the kingdom of God in our world.”

- Sarah Gant

Host: How has our sistering relationship nudged each of us toward action? What has inspired you? What do we have to learn from our brothers and sisters in Central America? How can we challenge ourselves to take more and bigger steps toward creating a more just world?

[Time for discussion here, prayer or silent reflection here.]

Walk to Station 6

Suggested song: “Make Me a Channel of Your Peace / Hazme un instrument de tu paz”

Station 6: We are called to be hope for the hopeless

Host: Thank you again for participating in our Solidarity Walk. This is the final station on the walk. Please visit the Sister Parish website and (*your local website*) to learn more about Sister Parish, and our relationship with (*name of your Sister Parish*).

Before we close, I invite you all to take a moment to share **your hopes for the future** of our relationship with (*name of sister community*). My own hope is (*name hope*). What are your hopes for the future of our relationship and our shared solidarity?

[Give people a chance to speak their hopes.]

Reader 4: We close with a prayer and/or song.

Suggested prayer by Ross Starkson:

Let us remember that we are always and everywhere in the presence of God.

You are calling us into the future on a path that sometimes seems steeper than it should be. Help us to remember that we are not alone.

Others, too, have been called.

Some of them will greet us with open arms, jubilant hearts and welcoming homes that will be sacraments of your healing in the world.

Some will speak to us of things that we do not want to hear and will reveal the pain of their wounds. Wounds that cut us deeply even in the midst of our ignorance. They are the sacraments of your compassion.

Some will invite us into their world with the simple hope that we will want to enter. They are the sacraments of your kingdom.

We are being called into your future. Help us to embrace it with all of the hope you have for it. Help us to be sacraments of your love in the world.

Suggested closing songs: "Vamos todos al banquete / Let Us Go Now to the Banquet" or "This Little Light of Mine"

Thank you to all who participated in this year's Solidarity Walk. Our next committee meeting takes place on _____. You can also join us at (*name any upcoming events*). Go in Peace to love and serve the Lord!

Additional Options for Readings

James 2:14,17: "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? ...Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."

From the Gospel of Joy: "I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. I do not want a Church concerned with being at the centre and then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures....More than by fear of going astray, my hope is that we will be moved by the fear of remaining shut up within structures which give us a false sense of security, within rules which make us harsh judges, within habits which make us feel safe, while at our door people are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying to us: "Give them something to eat" (Mk 6:37)." (49)

Author unknown: "Where would be today if women, men, and even children had not come forward at times when humanity seemed to be heading for the worst? They held onto a fine hope in humanity and to an invisible presence. They found a way to go beyond personal conflicts and to cross the barriers which separate nations and people of different spiritual families or races. They perceived, rising up from the heart of the peoples of the earth, an aspiration to a fullness of joy and peace, but also an endless lamentation. As for us, are we going to let ourselves fall asleep in dull indifference? Will we let our lips and heart become frozen in an attitude of, "What's the use, we can do nothing, let things take their course." Or will we remain awake? We have a long journey ahead of us. Will we take our place among those women, men, and children who have decided to act?"

Paulo Freire: "Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral."

White Eagle, Hopi Elder on 03/16/2020: This moment humanity is going through can now be seen as a portal and as a hole. The decision to fall into the hole or go through the portal is up to you. If they repent of the problem and consume the news 24 hours a day, with little energy, nervous all the time, with pessimism, they will fall into the hole. But if you take this opportunity to look at yourself, rethink life and death, take care of yourself and others, you will cross the portal. Take care of your home, take care of your body. Connect with the middle body of your spiritual House. Connect to the egregor of your spiritual home. Body, house, medium body, spiritual house, all this is synonymous, that is to say the same. When you are taking care of one, you are taking care of everything else. Do not lose the spiritual dimension of this crisis, have the aspect of the eagle, which from above, sees the whole, sees more widely. There is a social demand in this crisis, but there is also a spiritual demand. The two go hand in hand. Without the social dimension, we fall into fanaticism. But without the spiritual dimension, we fall into pessimism and lack of meaning. You were prepared to go through this crisis. Take your toolbox and use all the tools at your disposal. Learn about resistance with indigenous and African peoples: we have always been and continue to be

exterminated. But we still haven't stopped singing, dancing, lighting a fire and having fun. Don't feel guilty about being happy during this difficult time. You don't help at all by being sad and without energy. It helps if good things emanate from the Universe now. It is through joy that one resists. Also, when the storm passes, you will be very important in the reconstruction of this new world. You need to be well and strong. And, for that, there is no other way than to maintain a beautiful, happy and bright vibration. This has nothing to do with alienation. This is a resistance strategy. In shamanism, there is a rite of passage called the quest for vision. You spend a few days alone in the forest, without water, without food, without protection. When you go through this portal, you get a new vision of the world, because you have faced your fears, your difficulties ... This is what is asked of you. Let them take advantage of this time to perform their vision seeking rituals. What world do you want to build for yourself? For now, this is what you can do: serenity in the storm. Calm down and pray. Everyday. Establish a routine to meet the sacred every day. Good things emanate, what you emanate now is the most important thing. And sing, dance, resist through art, joy, faith and love.

Saint Oscar Romero: I will not tire of declaring that if we really want an effective end to violence we must remove the violence that lies at the root of all violence: structural violence, social injustice, exclusion of citizens from the management of the country, repression. All this is what constitutes the primal cause, from which the rest flows naturally.

Father Gregory Boyle on kinship: "Soon we imagine, with God, this circle of compassion. Then we imagine no one standing outside of that circle, moving ourselves closer to the margins so that the margins themselves will be erased."

Quotations from Sister Parish participants

"I learned that sometimes we shut ourselves up in church and talk about God, but we don't see God in our brothers and sisters. I was so impressed by the way that St Joan of Arc works for others. I learned that seeing the other person is important to be able to understand their needs. I didn't realize what others needed, not even my neighbors. Now, I see my neighbors and the people in need. I learned that it is important not to ignore that."
– Olga, Tierra Nueva 2, reflecting on the South to North delegation in 2018

"We are not just two parishes – we are a family that shares achievements and difficulties together...Jesus also says that whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood will have eternal life and even though we didn't always eat bread, but also birthday cake and tortillas, these memories will be part of us forever because of the love that God has made us capable of feeling and sharing." – Daniluz, St Joan of Arc, reflecting on the North to South delegation

"Faith without works is dead...As human beings, we all want to help our neighbor, even if we are poor. It is like when Jesus took off his shoes to give them to someone who was barefoot – we have to share what little we have. We have to set aside our pride and all that divides us." – Tierra Nueva 2 delegates on South to North delegation in 2015

“We all have rights – the right to demand what is ours. This is not a new struggle – from the 1980s through today we have struggled. I am glad that we are sharing this – that this struggle will continue and we will not falter. One day, everything will be illuminated. We don’t know when, but we know our God sets things right.” - *Basilia, San Andres Itzapa, Guatemala*

“Sister Parish helps us through prayer, the bonds of friendship we have, and the opportunity to learn about how other people live...There is a lot of discrimination in this country, but we don’t have that (in Sister Parish) – they come and adapt to our reality. That’s very important for us...The love we have for our brothers and sisters is always in our hearts, just like the love we have for God. God is always in our heart and they are a part of God.” - *Dina Velásquez, UPAVIM, Guatemala*

“I have learned from my sisters and brothers in our sister parish relationship what it means to live in poverty. We often allow someone’s lack of material goods to define them as poor. There is a difference between material poverty and spiritual poverty. I have discovered from many who are materially poor, that they have spiritual richness beyond what I encounter in my daily life in a culture of consumerism and success. The poverty is often my own as I let material bounty crowd out my spirituality.” - *Vicki Schmidt, Faith Lutheran, North Dakota*

“Sister Parish has made a profound impact in creating an understanding of the importance of solidarity in creating a more just, compassionate, and peaceful world community. The Sister Parish experience has been spiritually transforming for so many of us. As the heart is touched through personal connections, one’s thinking expands and changes.”
- *Arlene Reed, California*

“Recognizing the living Jesus in the stories of the people has been the most transforming experience for me. It is in witnessing these stories, especially from the war—feeling the grief, the loss, the fortitude, the perseverance, the solidarity, the commitment to justice—these are the stories and the feelings that gripped my heart on that first delegation and continue to today. The witness of Romero and Cortina and Grande and others who gave their lives, brought my Jesus to life. Now I can see Jesus more clearly in all the people of the world.” - *Marie, Wallingford, Seattle*

“For us, the sister parish relationship has awakened our conscience. We learn and look for solutions together in solidarity. We realize that there are people in the U.S. that work for peace, not just war, that people advocate for an immigration reform that could affect our families, and that we can work together for a more humane world.” ~*Tierra Nueva II delegates’ pre-mass speech at St Joan of Arc, 2015*

“I have [rarely] felt such unconditional love and compassion from people who are in no way shape or form related to me. I will never forget that feeling and I hope to spread it to others as I move through life.” - *Delegate to Guatemala from FUMC Downers Grove*

“My homestay experience was an absolute blessing... I am so grateful for their hospitality. They shared their time, space, food, and family and it means so much to me. I’m grateful for all the trust between us that allowed us to share our stories with each other.” – *Delegate to Guatemala from FUMC Downers Grove*

“This week I learned what community means. I learned what love looks like. I have felt the presence of God. I can’t say thank you enough.” – *Delegate to Guatemala from FUMC Downers Grove*

“It is comforting and gives us hope that, even with the distance, our friends stand in solidarity with us in this time of the pandemic and that they pray for us. As we are grateful to you, we are also grateful to God for the blessings he bestows upon you and your families.” – *Rosa, Tierra Nueva 1*

Songs

“Open the Eyes of my Heart”

“They’ll Know We Are Christians”

“We Are Called”

“Juntos como hermanos”

“Demos Gracias al Señor”

“Make me a Channel of your Peace / Hazme un instrumento de tu paz”

“Un millón de amigos”

“Alabaré”

“Solo le Pido a Dios”

“Vamos Todos al Banquete”

“No basta rezar”

“Amazing Grace”

“Walk a Mile in Your Shoes”

“We Are Marching/ Siyahamba/Caminando en la Luz de Dios”

“I’ve got that joy / Tengo alegría (o gozo)”

“Amar es entregarse”

“Dios está aquí”

“Here I am Lord / Aquí estoy Señor”

“This Little Light of Mine”

“Enviado soy de Dios”

“God of Justice (We must go)”

After the Walk - Follow-Up on your Solidarity Walk

- **Please mail all checks to:**
Sister Parish Financial Office
PO Box 5202
Fargo, ND 58105
- **Please email pledge sheets to:** usoffice@sisterparish.org
- **Email us a brief write-up about your Solidarity Walk and send us pictures we can post on the blog.** We use the blog posts to share information with southern communities and other northern churches. Also, please mention any useful advice you have for other northern churches interested in hosting a Solidarity Walk in the future. Visit our [blog](#) for examples.
- **Send a thank-you note to everyone that locally supported your Solidarity Walk.** Each walker can also thank friends and family that pledged.

*The Sister Parish Board of Directors and staff, together
with the Guatemalan and Salvadoran Directivas, thank you
for joining us in the 2020 Solidarity Walk.*

*Your support enables us to strengthen community
across borders, as brothers and sisters.*

Sister Parish, Inc.
PO Box 5202, Fargo, ND 58105
usoffice@sisterparish.org
(612) 326-4361