



Justice

Notions of justice can vary across cultures and even across faiths. Caning of an adulterous women, while perceived as fitting in some Islamic countries, would be viewed as abhorrent to the Christian believer. A Christian view of justice is centred on biblical justice foretold by the prophets of the Old Testament and embodied in the person and ministry of Jesus. Such a view is grounded in the pursuit of *right relationships*.

The concept of right relationships has a rich history in the Catholic tradition. Throughout scripture we see examples of God's relationship with the People of God as characterised by and described as *righteousness*.

Western understanding of righteousness today is often thought of in terms of personal piety but the concept of personal in biblical times was foreign. The measure of a person's worth was always in relationship to their community. People experienced honour or shame not as an emotional response but as a community's measure of one's actions. So righteousness was not measured in terms of personal virtue but how a person was in right relationship.

This was the basis of the call of the prophets against the injustices of their time, a critique on how one cared for the orphans, widows and foreigners in their midst which has strong resonance with our modern day prophets.

This also was the grounding of Jesus ministry. The proclamation of the reign of God through Jesus' teachings and healings was a call to right relationships based on justice, love and peace.

This call continues for us today - a call to right relationship with God, self, others and creation. A Catholic anthropological view of life shapes the way in which people live in community, relate to each other, and promote the common good through works for justice and peace.