Jeff and Roger had known each other for a number of years. Although they were not close friends, they sometimes played golf together and discussed various aspects of their lives, including their work. On one occasion, Jeff confided in Roger that a very attractive female executive in his company had been coming on to him. In the process she had intimated that if he would help her do some business things that were ethically questionable, there could be some attractive rewards for him.

Roger’s initial response was to just listen and keep his nose out of Jeff’s business. After all, Jeff had not asked him for advice. Then he remembered the story of Cain and Abel and he thought to himself “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

1. Share with the group a situation in which you were faced with a decision to be your “brother’s keeper.” How did you respond? Why? What were your feelings?

2. What are the consequences of being your brother’s keeper, or refusing to be?

3. Describe a time when someone tried to look out for you. What were your feelings? How did you respond?
4. Has envy, or any other sin, ever prevented you from reaching out to a brother?

5. What organizations in your community seek to care for the needs, both physical and spiritual, of others? How can you best support these organizations?

6. What should be the attitudes of employers in taking care of the needs of their employees? In your profession, how do you, or how do you not, practice being your brother’s keeper?

7. The Catholic Church has expressed “a preferential love” for the poor (see Catechism 2448). How does this relate to being our brother’s keeper in third world countries?

Out of love for my brothers, I will:

* try to make a friend, be a friend, and bring a friend to Christ.
* be more open to the needs of my brothers.
* resist the tendency to not get involved
* other:
Lesson 47– Caring for the Needs of Others: Am I My Brother’s Keeper?

Genesis 4: 1-10

1 The man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have produced a man with the help of the LORD."
2 Next she bore his brother Abel. Abel became a keeper of flocks, and Cain a tiller of the soil.
3 In the course of time Cain brought an offering to the LORD from the fruit of the soil,
4 while Abel, for his part, brought one of the best firstlings of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering,
5 but on Cain and his offering he did not. Cain greatly resented this and was crestfallen.
6 So the LORD said to Cain: "Why are you so resentful and crestfallen?
7 If you do well, you can hold up your head; but if not, sin is a demon lurking at the door: his urge is toward you, yet you can be his master."
8 Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let us go out in the field." When they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.
9 Then the LORD asked Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" He answered, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?"
10 The LORD then said: "What have you done! Listen: your brother's blood cries out to me from the soil!

2 Samuel 12:1-8

1 The LORD sent Nathan to David, and when he came to him, he said: "Judge this case for me! In a certain town there were two men, one rich, the other poor.
2 The rich man had flocks and herds in great numbers.
3 But the poor man had nothing at all except one little ewe lamb that he had bought. He nourished her, and she grew up with him and his children. She shared the little food he had and drank from his cup and slept in his bosom. She was like a daughter to him.
4 Now, the rich man received a visitor, but he would not take from his own flocks and herds to prepare a meal for the wayfarer who had come to him. Instead he took the poor man's ewe lamb and made a meal of it for his visitor."
5 David grew very angry with that man and said to Nathan: "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this merits death!
6 He shall restore the ewe lamb fourfold because he has done this and has had no pity."
7 Then Nathan said to David: "You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I anointed you king of Israel. I rescued you from the hand of Saul.
8 I gave you your lord's house and your lord's wives for your own. I gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were not enough, I could count up for you still more.
Luke 10:25-37

25 There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test him and said, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"
26 Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?"
27 He said in reply, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."
28 He replied to him, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live."
29 But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"
30 Jesus replied, "A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead.
31 A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side.
32 Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side.
33 But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight.
34 He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him.
35 The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, 'Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back."
36 Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?"
37 He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

I. The Communal Character of the Human Vocation

1878 All men are called to the same end: God himself. There is a certain resemblance between the unity of the divine persons and the fraternity that men are to establish among themselves in truth and love. Love of neighbor is inseparable from love for God.

1879 The human person needs to live in society. Society is not for him an extraneous addition but a requirement of his nature. Through the exchange with others, mutual service and dialogue with his brethren, man develops his potential; he thus responds to his vocation.

2448 "In its various forms—material deprivation, unjust oppression, physical and psychological illness and death—human misery is the obvious sign of the inherited condition of frailty and need for salvation in which man finds himself as a consequence of original sin. This misery elicited the compassion of Christ the Savior, who willingly took it upon himself and identified himself with the least of his brethren. Hence, those who are oppressed by poverty are the object of a preferential love on the part of the Church which, since her origin and in spite of the failings of many of her members, has not ceased to work for their relief, defense, and liberation through numerous works of charity which remain indispensable always and everywhere."