

HOLY SATURDAY, APRIL 19

Will you ... respect the dignity of every human being?

—*The Book of Common Prayer*, p. 305

Every human being? Certainly I make an effort to respect the dignity of everyone I see at church, and people I meet day to day. But every human being? All seven billion? I can pray for them. What else can I do?

While there are billions we will never see, our actions have consequences that reach further than we imagine. Every dollar we spend has ethical potential. Good may be done when spending one way. Or we may support enterprises that are doing a great deal of harm by spending differently. I don't imagine we would be pleased purchasing shoes we knew our neighbor forced his children to make, yet without researching what we buy, we make similar purchases every day.

Do we support farmers who pay workers a living wage, or do we search for cheaper food regardless of how the person who harvested it was treated? Almost every cell phone has slave labor inside it. What happens to our spirit when we understand our action of buying a phone that has kept a child in slavery? How might knowing that someone was abused in the making of products change our relationship to what we buy? How might it change us?

Yes, these are complicated questions. And yes, we take that on in baptism. "Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?"

How do we dare reply, "I will?" Only "With God's help."

—**Rosa Lee Harden**