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When you're lost, it's best to stop and ask for directions.

The United States has become the land of the lost. The White House is a gold-plated den of thieves. Congress is positively vestigial. Our highest court is an ethical nightmare. Universities are abandoning academic freedom in favor of federal funding. Masked thugs gun down our neighbors and are paid to do so with our tax dollars. We are in a pointless war, using artificial intelligence to tell us which civilians to bomb.

Utterly disappointed by the institutions meant to guide us, how do we find our way? Catholic social teaching offers a vision of a world that neoliberalism was never designed to deliver, one where the well-being of every person is the concern of each one of us.

I sincerely believe that if Christians got serious and got active, we could change things for the better. That's not to be mistaken for a longing for theocracy; we can build a pluralistic society by holding on to the highest Christian value: love.

I know that's the way I want to follow, even if I go slowly, occasionally break down or get lost.

So I assigned myself the task of asking directions from people who better know where they are going. And since it's the 21st century, I've turned this personal project into a podcast, so that others can listen and learn right alongside me as I converse with Catholics who are truly living our church's social teachings — not just talking or writing about them.

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On any given episode of "[Flipping the Tables](#)," you might hear from [Jimmy Estrada-Hannigan and Cesar Rivera](#), who started the Ark of Noah Fund to provide direct assistance to families broken up by Immigration and Customs Enforcement; [Natalie Wasek](#), who helps a group of religious women undertake shareholder activism; [Lincoln Rice](#), a Catholic Worker who helps guide war tax resisters; and [Mark Colville](#), who is frequently imprisoned for direct actions supporting the rights of unhoused people, [opposing nuclear weapons](#), and more.

These unsung heroes are all doing things that actively respond to Christ's teachings, things that anyone can fairly easily join, replicate or support. It's exciting to be Catholic right now.

The institutional church has a lot to answer for, but the church is not really about institutions; it's about the mystical body of Christ. I'm reminded of that every time I interview a member of that body, asking them for directions on the path. I have hope that through the body of Christ, the institution is being moved toward an authentic representation of Christ that will offer this drowning world a lifeline.

Many of my guests reference Pope Francis' great [encyclical *Laudato Si'*](#), which calls us all to action to save creation — an imperative that governments worldwide seem to suicidally reject. Pope Leo XIV gave me much hope this year by [calling just war theory "outdated."](#) Both the current pope and his predecessor offered brave criticism of some of the U.S. government's most egregious actions.

"It is the saints that keep appearing all through history who keep things going," [Dorothy Day](#) wrote in a letter to her friend Gordon Zahn. I believe that the saints are pushing the institution toward greater authenticity. The saints are everywhere, of course, because the call to sainthood is universal. Listen to them. That's not always easy in a world of noise, but when you do it, you'll find your way.