

Common Interest

By Cicero

5 This, then, above all, ought to be regarded by every one as an established principle, that the interest of each individual and that of the entire body of citizens are identical, which interest if any one appropriate to himself alone, he does it to the sundering of all human
10 intercourse. And further, if nature prescribes this, that man shall desire the promotion of man's good for the very reason that he is man, it follows in accordance with that same nature that there are interests common to all. The antecedent is true; therefore the consequent is true. For this is absurd indeed which some say, that they would take nothing from a parent or a brother for their own benefit, but that it is quite another thing with persons outside
15 of one's own family. These men disclaim all mutual right and partnership with their fellow-citizens for the common benefit, — a state of feeling which dismembers the fellowship of the community. Those, too, who say that account is to be taken of citizens, but not of foreigners, destroy the common sodality of the human race, which abrogated, beneficence, liberality, kindness, justice, are removed from their very foundations. And those
20 who remove them are to be regarded as impious toward the immortal gods; for they overturn the fellowship established among men by the gods, the closest bond of which fellowship is the opinion that it is more contrary to nature for man to take anything from man for his own benefit than to endure all forms of discomfort, whether external, or bodily, or even mental, which leave room for the exercise of justice. For this one virtue is mistress and queen of all the virtues.