

Department of Social Concerns Winter 2010 Newsletter



Prayer for the Common Good

Loving and gracious God, we remember that your plan for us is fullness of life lived with love, justice and mercy.

Be with us and all of our elected political leaders this year and help us keep the common good before us.

Strengthen our gifts of wisdom, courage and respect for the views of others.

Help us to be persistent in testing political remedies against what they will do for people, to people, with people, and what they will mean for the health of our earth home.

Strengthen us to continue to work together, seeking an ever more just society that acts in harmony and interdependence with all creation.

We ask this through Christ Lord. Amen.

Adapted from "Prayer at Election Time," *Sisters of Mercy*

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The Big News!!

Before we begin with anything else, there is great news! It comes in 2 parts:

Part 1. There is a new diocesan priority (one of 4) for the next 3 years and it reads, "To promote and embrace Catholic social teaching". (Wonderful!)

Part 2. There is a new resource that will be used for small faith sharing groups throughout the Diocese during Lent 2011. It is Bishop Kinney's new revised pastoral letter focusing on Matthew 25 and Catholic social teaching. (A great resource for every parish...including yours!) Read more on p.4.



Mark Your Calendars



Joint Religious Legislative Coalition sponsored Day on the Hill:

On **Thursday, February 17, 2011** join faithful citizens from across the state to form a united voice for social justice. Please keep an eye out for further announcements about travel arrangements to the State Capitol. To learn more about Day on the Hill please visit <http://www.jrlc/day-on-the-hill>. Also **please let us know** if you or a group from your parish will be attending. At this point we are planning to take a bus for this diocese, so start to plan for this moving and powerful event.



Immigration Sunday, January 2, 2011

The Feast of the Epiphany is once again the date for our statewide Immigration Sunday. If that day will not work in your parish, choose another weekend in January and celebrate the heritage of all persons in our Diocese. You will find helpful educational and liturgical resources online at <http://immigrationsundaymn.org/>

Speakers are also available by contacting Kathy Langer.

Parish Social Ministry Gathering

The 2010 Regional Parish Social Ministry training was held October 8-9. Forty-one people from the Dioceses of St. Cloud, Duluth, and Winona gathered at the Lake Koronis Assembly Grounds in Paynesville, MN to discuss the theme of "Bringing the Gospel to Life."

Friday evening began with prayer. Barbara Sutton, set the tone of the weekend as she presented the biblical concept of justice, using Ezekiel's dry bones prophecy and *visio divina* with the Saint John's Bible. On Saturday, Jeff Korgen and Tom Ulrich, nationally known presenters, discussed how to build a parish social ministry team and implement it into parish life.

Throughout the conference, participants who had experience developing programs in their own parishes shared their successes and challenges with the entire group, with the opportunity for others to ask questions about specific practices. Tina Baldera of Catholic Charities USA presented briefly on the role of CCUSA and the support provided for local parishes. One participant remarked, "The expertise of the presenters was wonderful. I also appreciated getting to connect with others involved in parish social ministry."



Fall beauty and a general feeling of unity enlivened all assembled. During breaks, attendees had the chance to buy fair trade coffee, tea, chocolate, crafts, copies of the Saint John's Bible, books and converse with the speakers. In the spirit of the Saint John's Bible, blank canvases were set up Friday evening in the meeting space with the invitation for all present to "bring the Gospel to life" and apply an image or word which was particularly poignant to the individual from a presentation, prayer, or discussion. On Saturday afternoon the canvases were cut and distributed during the closing prayer/commissioning and participants took home a visual reminder of what they encountered during the two days.

(Handouts from the presenters are available from the Social Concerns staff.)



New Bipartisan Bill Introduced to Address Poverty in US

On September 28, 2010, Sen. Robert Casey of Pennsylvania and Rep. James McGovern of Massachusetts introduced The National Opportunity and Community Renewal Act (NOCRA) in Congress. This bill is the result of more than a year of effort on the part of Catholic Charities USA to "revamp our nation's approach to poverty prevention and alleviation".

During this past year, CCUSA travelled the country hosting Centennial Leadership Summits - listening tours involving human service providers, educators, elected officials, and consumers to identify challenges and best practices related to poverty issues.

These Summits led to the development of NOCRA which has three spe-

cific objectives: creation of holistic approaches to poverty alleviation, a results oriented strategy that utilizes modern technology, and a market based approach focused on programs that encourage self-sufficiency.

The Act seeks to effectively provide services addressing basic human needs while advocating for system reforms that will create long-lasting change. Rev. Larry Snyder, President of CCUSA explains, "With this legislation, we tell the tens of millions of Americans living in poverty that there is a new hope... enabling them to achieve new legacies of health and happiness for their families."

You are invited to:

Learn more about NOCRA (S.3845/H.R.6222) at: www.catholiccharitiesusa.org (Under 'Advocacy' tab)

Contact your representatives in Congress to share your thoughts

Pray for solidarity and collaboration between the economically poor and non-poor to work toward just solutions to poverty

Best Practices

JustFaith at St. Francis Xavier–Sartell

The second JustFaith group has formed and is meeting at St. Francis Xavier Parish in Sartell! The first group, from multiple parishes, completed the program in 2008.

Just Faith looks at social issues of the day through the lens of the Gospel and Catholic social teaching. It uses the structure of a small-group community. The St. Francis Xavier group consists of two facilitators (including Weyrens) and five participants who meet once a week for thirty weeks, with each session being two hours long.

The three components are education, transformation, and spirituality. Beginning from a foundation of compassion, the group moves through Catholic social teaching and into current issues. They will read parts of 12-15 books, watch DVDs, and welcome speakers. Participants attend opening and closing retreats. There

are also four immersion experiences. The group visits different social service organizations to learn about the services offered and why those services are needed. Everything is done with a heart open to transformation and in the context of prayer.

Topics covered include domestic poverty, homelessness, charity v. justice, racism, capital punishment, and voluntary simplicity.

Molly Weyrens chose to initiate JustFaith at her parish because she hopes it catches on and other parishes will start a JustFaith group as well.. According to Weyrens, it is very user-friendly, and any parish interested in implementing the program should do it. You may contact Molly Weyrens with questions at mollyweyrens@gmail.com.



Want JustFaith in your parish?

JustFaith Ministries provides programs that transform people and expand their understanding of Church teaching. Through these life-changing opportunities, members of a church or parish can study, explore and experience Christ's call to care for the poor and vulnerable in a lively, challenging, multifaceted process in the context of a small faith community.

Over 18,000 people have participated in various JustFaith programs in over 1,000 churches across the country. JustFaith Ministries, in conjunction with its partners, makes available introductory workshops, curriculum, resources, a website, and support services.

Visit www.justfaith.org for more info.

Franciscan Community Volunteers—St. Cloud

This year, five individuals from across the nation are experiencing community life, service to the marginalized of the St. Cloud area, and reflection on faith and justice all through a Franciscan lens by participating in a year long program known as Franciscan Community Volunteers (FCV).

FCV developed as a way for the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls to share their charism with young adults. Beginning with focus groups in 2006 and a summer of planning in 2008, the full-year program began in 2009 under FCV Director S. Clara Stang, OSF, and

FCV Volunteer Manager Katie Cassidy.

Volunteers commit to ten months of service and work in various community sites serving the marginalized of the St. Cloud area. Some of this year's sites are Lutheran Social Services, Catholic Charities St. Cloud Children's Home, and Hands Across the World. One volunteer, Ann Cook, has been working part time in the Social Concerns office. (We love her!)

Volunteers meet weekly to reflect on issues of faith and justice related to their experiences. This way of intentional living allows each individual

to be strengthened by the community and develop in each of their leadership roles.

Would you like to learn more?

Every Monday night is FCV community night. Come to learn about FCV, meet the volunteers, or simply join the community for a meal. Dinner and prayer begins at 6:00pm. Please call S. Clara or Katie at 320-229-0307 to RSVP. They are located at 1600 11th Ave S. St. Cloud

“The Big News” Continued...

Exploring Bishop Kinney’s New Pastoral Letter “As I Have Done for You... So You Also Should Do”

“As Christians we are called to love one another as Jesus has loved. The Church, as articulated in Catholic social teaching, asks us to show this love of Christ in daily acts of charity and in the more difficult work of justice. May all of us take up the challenge to do for one another as Christ has done for us and in the doing, encounter Christ in the face our neighbor locally and globally.”

Bishop John F. Kinney

- Bishop John F. Kinney’s Pastoral Letter titled “As I have done for you...”

As was stated on page 1, we will have a Diocesan tool to use in small faith sharing groups this coming Lent that will help many people in our diocese learn about the best kept secret in the Church, Catholic social teaching (CST). In a survey done a year ago, we found that less than 40% of people in parishes knew what CST was and so this seems like a perfect tool to be used in every parish in the Diocese! Don’t you think?

In 1998, Bishop Kinney wrote his first Pastoral Letter to the people of the Diocese titled, *As I Have Done for You...* Now in 2011, we have an updated, revised version titled, *As I Have Done for You...So You Also Should Do*.

This revision takes the 1998 statement and makes it into a resource for small faith sharing groups by adding discussion questions periodically within the statement and also adds stories from our Diocese that reflect what parishes are doing to put CST into action. Companion guides for small groups as well as youth and young adults guides, will be part of the tools that will help the Pastoral be more accessible to people of all ages. These guides will include prayers and rituals, suggestions for action and activities that are age appropriate.

Now you ask, ‘What can I do?’. Well, your job is to spread the word and start planning for Lent of 2011 in your parishes and among your friends. It is difficult to get people excited about something they haven’t seen but I am sure you can do it! This is our big chance to educate, with Bishop Kinney’s help.

The DREAM Act

The DREAM Act would give people who came as children and are undocumented and have graduated high school in the United States the opportunity to earn a path to citizenship through completion of higher education or military service. The USCCB supports the DREAM Act because it reflects Church teaching that calls us to protect the dignity of every human being, especially that of our children.

Action Alert: Dream Act

What you can do to help:

Go to www.justiceforimmigrants.org

to send an electronic letter in support of the DREAM Act to your Members of Congress and to learn more about the USCCB Justice for Immigrants Campaign



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Additional Resources

Have you visited our website?

You will find resources and links for parish social ministry committees and educators so be sure to check it out at <http://www.ccstcloud.org/SocialConcerns>

Social Justice Bulletin Reflections Available!

Laura Fanucci, formerly a CCHD Intern, has developed social justice reflections that are available for use in parish bulletins. If you would like to be on the email list to receive these reflections, please email Kathy Langer at klanger@ccstcloud.org

Stay updated on legislation and advocacy:

The legislature will be in session again on January 4th. It is crucial that we stay updated and informed about issues that impact our communities and nation, particularly those that affect the poorest of the poor. Please join the Minnesota Catholic Advocacy Network sponsored by the Minnesota Catholic Conference found at <http://mncc.org/> and sign up for action alerts. Also visit the Office of Social Justice for the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis website for legislative updates, advocacy, and events in the Twin Cities: <http://www.osjspm.org>

Looking toward the future?

Kathy Langer is available to assist social ministry groups with visioning and long-range planning. For more information, contact her at klanger@ccstcloud.org



A warm thank you for your support of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) annual collection that took place on November 20-21.
It is greatly appreciated!

Final Note: Please email any announcements, best or good practices or stories of your work to Ashley at socialconcernsintern@gw.stcdio.org

NOTE: If you would like your social ministry highlighted in our next newsletter, please submit your 'Best Practices' to our office at klanger@ccstcloud.org or socialconcernsintern@gw.stcdio.org It is a great way to help others with new ideas!

*If you do not want to receive subsequent newsletters or announcements please reply to this email with the subject heading: **Unsubscribe.***