



Holy Spirit Catholic Church Social Ministry Newsletter

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

JANUARY, 2011

Committed to the principles of Catholic Social Teaching

JRLC: JOINT RELIGIOUS LEGISLATIVE COALITION

Principles of Catholic Social Teaching

1. Life and dignity of the human person
2. Call to family, community, and participation
3. Rights and responsibilities
4. Option for the poor and vulnerable
5. The dignity of work and the rights of workers
6. Solidarity
7. Care for God's creation

Dates to Remember

January

- 15-16 Fair Trade sales
28 Friday assistance

February

- 3 SJ Commission
17 JRLC Day On The Hill
19-20 Fair Trade sales
25 Friday assistance
26 ProLife Rally with Mary Ann Kuharski

March

- 3 SJ Commission
19-20 Fair Trade sales
25 Friday assistance

April

- 7 SJ Commission
10-17 IHN host week
16-17 Fair Trade sales
29 Friday assistance

Try to imagine a very large room filled with hundreds of people gathered together around tables according to the political districts they live in, and spending the morning talking about issues they all can agree on, with no idea who is Republican, Democrat or Independent. Yes—agree on. A fairy tale? Considering our current political and cultural climate, you might think so but no, this scene takes place every year in St. Paul at the JRLC's Day on the Hill.

The Joint Religious Legislative Coalition (try saying that 3 times fast) is the largest and most inclusive interfaith public interest group in Minnesota—people of diverse faiths bringing vision and wisdom to the public realm for the well-being of Minnesotans. JRLC is authorized and governed by four Sponsoring Members: the [Minnesota Catholic Conference](#), the [Minnesota Council of Churches](#), the [Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas](#), and the [Islamic Center of Minnesota](#). When JRLC was founded in 1971, it was the first interfaith public-interest lobby group in the United States. JRLC now has an extensive body of public policy statements and continually influences Minnesota legislation in many policy arenas.

You might have been taken aback when you saw the words "lobby group". Lobbyists are generally not held in high esteem these days, but that's unfortunate since lobbying is actually what we need to do if we are going to be advocates for justice. So much of what happens in the public sphere affects the poor and marginalized but so much of what happens is determined by those with power, especially financial power. We need to speak for the powerless and that's what we do when we participate in this lobbying activity.

This year, the Day on the Hill will take place on **February 17, 2011**. It begins at the River Center in downtown St. Paul with an 8:30 AM registration. After a welcome and opening prayer, the keynote speaker is presented; this year it will be Father David McCauley, Interim Executive Director of the Minnesota Catholic Conference. Then come the issue briefings. JRLC is governed by a 16-person Executive Board made up of representatives from each of the four sponsoring

faith communities. The Board guides policy decisions culminating in a ratification process that requires each JRLC position to be approved by all the sponsors' governing bodies. The end result each year is 4 issues and these are explained, one at a time, to the assembly. After the presentations, time is set aside for each table to discuss the next step—traveling to the capitol and meeting with their legislators, making their own presentation on these issues and asking for their support. It is faithful citizenship in action.

You may know the story about some people who lived near a river and one day saw a body floating by. They pulled that body out and buried him but the next day there were two more bodies, and more on the days that followed. Everyone worked hard burying all the bodies but one villager announced that he was leaving and traveling up river. "Why?" they asked. He answered them: "We need to find out what is killing these people." In our world, many good people are tending to the bodies in the river but we need more of us to go up river and find out *why* people are dying, are hungry, are homeless, so that we can make a real change. We need to be the voice of those who are voiceless and our voice is strongest when we speak as a group.

Check out the website, www.jrlc.org, where you can read about this year's issues. Consider joining us this year for Day on the Hill.

You can register online or by mail. The cost:

- By February 1 - \$30 (\$15 student/low income)
- After February 1 - \$40 (\$25 student/low income)
- After February 14 - \$45 (\$30 student/low income)

Carpools will be formed. Contact Margie Hake at 202-3223 (margiehake5@gmail.com) or Judy O'Fallon at 282-7253 (ofallon.judy@gmail.com) to catch a ride or caravan with the group. If this is your first time, know that those who've done this before will take the lead. Give it some thought. It is a great experience to be part of something this good.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: INTERFAITH HOSPITALITY NETWORK

The First Interfaith Hospitality Network

In 1982, Karen Olson was a marketing executive who developed promotional campaigns for consumer products. One morning, on her way to a meeting, she saw a homeless woman, someone she'd seen over and over again on her way to work.

She decided to buy a sandwich for the woman. The stranger accepted the sandwich but asked for something else - a moment to be heard, to be comforted, and to be considered as more than a mere statistic on a cold street corner.

Olson learned that there were hundreds of homeless people, including families, in her home community of Union County, New Jersey.

She turned to the religious community for help, convinced that there were many who shared her concern and that together they could do what they couldn't do alone. Within ten months, eleven area congregations came forward to provide hospitality space within their buildings. The local YMCA agreed to provide showers and a day center for families. A car dealer discounted a van.

On October 27, 1986, the first Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) opened its doors.

As word spread, ten more congregations formed a second Network. Programs for transitional housing, childcare, and family mentoring followed - outgrowths of increased awareness and involvement.

The Network Goes National

The success of the first Networks led other congregations to seek help in developing similar programs. In 1988, National Interfaith Hospitality Network (an affiliate of Family Promise) was formed to bring the program to other areas where neighbors could work together to help homeless families.

To date, Family Promise has established 162 affiliates in 41 states, using the services of more than 130,000 volunteers and 5,000 congregations.

The IHNs provide shelter, meals, and housing and job placement support to more than 47,000 homeless family members annually, 60 percent of them children. Family Promise's proven approach has helped 80 percent of the families it serves secure housing.

Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Rochester Area

Interfaith Hospitality Network of Greater Rochester was started in March of 1999 when a group of individuals saw the need to provide shelter, meals and comprehensive assistance to homeless families in the Rochester area. IHN opened its doors to guests in March of 2001 and relocated to its current day center in January of 2003.

IHN has 15 host sites and 35 additional faith communities that

assist with the mission. There are a total of over 1600 volunteers that work with the local network and provide the nightly housing, meals and support. IHN is an affiliate of Family Promise.

Family Stabilizer Counselor Program

In 2005 IHN of Greater Rochester added this program. In our Shelter Program the Stabilizer Counselor works with the guest families on a daily basis, helping them to network in the community to find housing, employment and stability. Our Counselor holds life skills training classes for the guests helping them with financing, parenting, rental and legal issues. After securing housing, the Counselor works with the families for one year in a follow-along program to provide stability so that the children stay in the same schools, and the families remain in their housing and do not fall back into homelessness. Families that work with the follow along program have a success rate of over 75% remaining stable.

IHN at Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit joined the Rochester Area IHN in 2001 as a host Church. Holy Spirit Catholic School was our host site. The families and volunteers slept in classrooms and the Commons area was the gathering area where meals were served. Our first coordinators were Bridget Carns and Martha Buntrock. Penny Porter took over as coordinator from Bridget and Martha. Penny is currently serving on the IHN Board of Directors. Karen and John Orbeck took over the coordinator responsibilities from Penny. John is the current coordinator.

In 2007, Holy Spirit changed its status from host church to buddy church. Holy Spirit, along with Pine Island United Methodist, became the buddy churches to host church Homestead United Methodist. When Pine Island Methodist Church became a host church, Bethel Lutheran took their place.

2010 Summary

IHN of Greater Rochester operates 365 days a year and has room for 14 people. Host churches host families for a week at a time. Buddy and support churches supply volunteers to help serve the families. IHN offers these families the basic necessities of life – food, shelter and security – while they are going through their personal crisis. We give them a chance to regroup, rejuvenate and then get back on their feet with dignity.

In 2010, IHN of Greater Rochester:

- Served 22 families, 75 people (33 males, 42 females)
- Of the 75 people, 48 were 0-17 years of age (20 under age 5) and 27 were 18-64 years of age
- 19 families found housing, withdrew, or terminated. 3 were active in the program.
- The average length of stay for the 19 families was 5 weeks.

AN INSIDE LOOK AT CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

In 1995, *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions*, produced by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, identified 7 key social justice themes:

- Life and dignity of the human person
- Call to family, community, and participation
- Rights and responsibilities
- Option for the poor and vulnerable
- The dignity of work and the rights of workers
- Solidarity
- Care for God's creation

Theme 2: Call to Family, Community, and Participation

The family is the central social institution that must be supported and strengthened, not undermined. While our society often exalts individualism, the Catholic tradition teaches that human beings grow and achieve fulfillment in community. We believe people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable. Our Church teaches that the role of government and other institutions is to protect human life and human dignity and promote the common good.¹

The U.S. Catholic bishops have stated that given the Triune God is communal with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the human family

created in the image of God is also communal and social. Krier says, "Community goes to the heart of God, and to God's creative activity in the world, and community is at the heart of what it means to be human." According to their creed Catholics believe in the community of the Trinity.²

In the last four decades Catholic teaching has preached on the right to participate in the political process and community decision making. The U.S. bishops in 1986 in their pastoral letter, *Economic Justice for All*, called participation "a demand of basic justice". Krier goes on to say, "The bishops teach that it is a sinful situation when we do not change policies and practices that continue to exclude people, socially, politically, and economically."³

Questions to ponder: What does the term "common good" mean to me? What efforts and activities am I involved with in promoting the common good?

References

1. USCCB, *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions*, 1998.
2. Marvin L. Krier Mich, *The Challenge and Spirituality of Catholic Social Teaching* (Louisville, KY: JustFaith, 2005), p. 71.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 88.

MEET THE SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMISSION

The mission of the Social Justice Commission is to serve Holy Spirit parishioners as a resource for understanding Catholic Social Teaching. The commission is to be a catalyst for action on behalf of justice and thus foster a caring community that would respectfully address and act upon the social injustices of our parish, local and global communities.

The Commission meets regularly on the 1st Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the Emmaus Room. Everyone is welcome to join the Commission. For further information, contact current chair, Judy O'Fallon at ofallon.judy@gmail.com

Current members of the Social Justice Commission:

- Back row: Bob Hake, John McGuire, Margie Hake, Marcia Hartmann, Rich Hartmann
- Front row: Mary Margaret Yaeger (staff Liaison), Bob Loechler, Judy O'Fallon (chair), Colette Sweeney, Ariel Caride
- Not pictured: John Orbeck



Committed to the principles of Catholic Social Teaching

Holy Spirit Catholic Church
5455 50th Ave. NW
Rochester, MN 55901
Phone: 507-280-0638
E-mail: hspirit@holyspiritrochester.org

WE'RE ON THE WEB

WWW.HOLYSPIRITROCHESTER.ORG

MN BISHOPS OFFER REFLECTIONS ON IMMIGRATION

In December 2010, the Catholic Bishops of Minnesota designated Epiphany Sunday, January 2, 2011, as Statewide Immigration Sunday. The Minnesota Bishops asked priests and deacons to include in their homilies some reflections about immigrants and to underscore the urgent need to reform our nation's immigration policy. On the MN Catholic Conference website the bishops offered the following homily reflection for this special feast.

Nations shall walk by your light. Isaiah 60:3

Gentiles are coheirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Ephesians 3:6

When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him.

Matthew 2:10-11

The readings for Statewide Immigration Sunday convey a strong message about the dignity of the human person and the unity of the human family. All human beings – regardless of their nationality, race, creed, or status – are “coheirs, members of the same body, and copartners in the promise in Christ Jesus.” As Christians, we are called to treat others as sons and daughters of God, brothers and sisters in Christ, and temples of the Holy Spirit.

Reforming our nation's immigration system is a matter of fundamental justice. Current immigration laws and policies do not adequately uphold the human dignity and rights of immigrants. Many immigrants live in fear, in the shadows of our communities. Too often, immigrant families are broken or kept apart by our laws and policies.

While Catholic social teaching recognizes a nation's right to control and protect its borders, and does not condone unlawful entry or circumvention of immigration laws, it also upholds the right to emigrate for just reasons. Terrible suffering, poverty and violence often impel people to flee their homelands and to seek elsewhere a better life for themselves and their families.

Of the estimated 37 million foreign-born residents in the U.S., some are naturalized citizens, some are moving along the path to citizenship, and some are students. Most are here for employment reasons. Whatever their legal status, the vast majority of our immigrant brothers and sisters are here seeking work to support themselves and their families.

As members of Christ's Body we are called to advocate for immigration policies and enforcement practices that are humane, just, and serve the common good. Reform should include expanded

opportunities to reunify families, a temporary worker program, and an earned legalization program for undocumented immigrants.

If we truly believe that “the Church is the sacrament of the unity of the human race,” let us work together to achieve justice for our immigrant brothers and sisters.

Minnesota Immigrant Facts

In 2008, 1.1 million people immigrated to the United States. That same year, nearly 16,000 people immigrated to Minnesota: approximately 7,600 from Africa, 4,800 from Asia, 1,200 from Europe, 11,600 from North America and 563 from South America.

In 1890, 40% of Minnesota's population was foreign born. Today, 6.6% of Minnesota's population is foreign born.

Today's immigrants leave their homes for the same reasons that many of Minnesota's early immigrants did—persecution, oppression, family separation, poverty, drought, globalization, and increased population. Today's immigrants also come to Minnesota for the same reasons that many of Minnesota's early immigrants did—family reunification, higher wages, jobs, availability of land, and social equality.

Minnesota is home to the nation's largest Somali population. Approximately 15,000 Somalis call Minnesota home. Minnesota is also home to the nation's largest Oromo population, an ethnic group from Ethiopia. 20,000 Ethiopians live in Minnesota.

Minnesota is home to the nation's second largest Hmong population (California has the largest Hmong population and Wisconsin has the third largest). Minnesota also has the nation's second largest population of Tibetans. More than 60,000 Hmong and 2,500 Tibetans call Minnesota home.

Minnesota's students and families speak more than 103 languages and dialects.

In 1896, Minnesota's election instructions were printed in nine languages—Czech, English, Finnish, French German, Italian, Norwegian, Polish and Swedish. Today, Minnesota's election instructions are printed in six languages—English, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish and Vietnamese.

In any given year, 25-50% of Minnesota's immigrants are refugees; nationally, in any given year, 8 percent of immigrants are refugees.