

# *Tidings of Hope: The Social Concerns Newsletter of the Diocese of Green Bay*

Volume 15, Issue 2

June, 2010

A few months ago, Tom called me and said, "Steve, you tell me that you serve in social justice, but I don't know what that means. Would you like to address that topic at our retired men's club meeting?" Considering that Tom's request was less than two weeks after Glenn Beck admonished his listeners on Fox News to flee their faith communities, if the phrase social justice is used on the congregation's bulletin or Website, I thought that Tom's request presented a very teachable moment! Several weeks later, a parishioner from the Fox Valley called me and shared that he and his conversation partners were perplexed over the meaning of "social justice". After a long phone conversation, I figured that I might have a new email pal. I believe that some instances within our own diocese best demonstrate the necessity and difference between social charity and social justice.

In late May, the Fox Valley Warming Shelter, Appleton and New Community Shelter, Green Bay, each held ground breaking ceremonies for a new construction and addition, respectively. I admire the mission of both organizations, know staff and board from each shelter, and have volunteered and or donated to each. As a representative to the Brown County Homeless and Housing Coalition for seven years, I have come to understand the need for adequate shelter and permanent housing for all of God's children.

It was ironic that the same week of these two ground breaking ceremonies, the United States House of Representatives was voting to include \$1.065 billion dollars to H.R. 4213, The American Jobs and Closing Tax Loopholes Act. The money would be used, over ten years, to build new housing rental units, and renovate existing ones, for lowest income families. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, in the United States today, there are only 37 rental homes available and affordable for every 100 households with incomes below 30% of their area median. A scarcity of housing that the poorest families can afford is the principal cause of homelessness in the United States. Every \$1 billion provided to the Trust Fund will support the immediate construction of 10,000 rental homes, creating 15,100 new construction jobs and 3,800 new jobs in ongoing operations.

There were a lot of persons advocating for social charity at the ground breakings, including myself. According to the two feet of social action, supporters of social charity apply direct social services to help the marginalized meet their physical needs for food, shelter, and health care. The housing shelters provide basic shelter to people who might otherwise be sleeping in cars, under bridges, or in parking ramps. Millions of dollars have been pledged or collected for these two necessary projects.

But why has it taken the U.S. Congress nearly two years to vote to appropriate funds for long term, permanent housing for lowest income families? According to the two feet of social action, the practice of social justice brings about long term social change to benefit communities. Increasing the stock of affordable rental units for extremely low income people, while providing jobs in the construction industry, seems like a long term solution to our lack of safe and affordable shelter for low income Americans and the double digit unemployment that many of our communities face today.

Maybe I should have been soliciting signatures at the groundbreakings for passage of H.R. 4213; talk about a teachable moment! If you have not contacted your U.S. Senator yet, please do so and ask them to include funding for the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund in H.R. 4213.

Yours in Christ,

*Steve Herro, O. Praem*

Steve Herro, O. Praem  
Social Concerns Director



## *The Peace-Building Parish: Mapping the grassroots reclamation of the social mission of the local church*



Pax Christi USA annual Chicago-based conference, July 16 - 18, to host track: **"The Peace-Building Parish: Mapping the Grassroots Reclamation of the**

### **Social Mission of the Local Church"**

A quick survey of the thousands of Catholic parishes nationwide would indicate that most demonstrate some kind of commitment to charitable giving and activity. However, compare this to the relative scarcity of peace and justice committees and social change initiatives. Given the current polemical climate in the country, and the growing ideological gap which pervades our cultural, political and religious institutions, how can the parish become the locus for the reconciling, prophetic mission of the Gospel? Where and how do we resume the healing

process of dialogue? What transformative tools are needed to build relationships that transcend the drive to alienate? How do we begin to envision the challenges of peace-building within a church divided? **Jack Jezreel and Joe Grant** of the JustFaith Ministries' national staff will map out some of the challenges of parish peace-building. This interactive presentation will invite the sharing of questions and strategies. Together we will envision the reclamation of the Catholic peace parish and invoke the creative gifts of the Spirit to restore and reinvigorate us and our communities of faith. For more information about the weekend conference and this track, please see <http://www.paxchristiusa.org/NationalConference2010.asp>

## *Update on relations between the Diocese and JOSHUA and ESTHER*

In March, Bishop Ricken asked Mark Mogilka, Director of Stewardship and Pastoral Services, and Bro. Steve Herro, Social Concerns Director and Diocesan Director for Catholic Campaign for Human Development, to convene a task force to review and then recommend a set of operating guidelines for Catholic parishes and faith based community organizations like JOSHUA and ESTHER. Mark and Steve met with board presidents and organizers in early April and formed a task force with seven Catholic leaders from JOSHUA and ESTHER. The challenge is to develop a set of guidelines that affirms the good work of these groups, while at the same time ensuring

appropriate relationships, lines of accountability, training and formation for Catholics and parishes involved in such efforts.

In addition, the group has also recognized the need for the development of diocesan policies to guide all Catholic parishes and organizations when they are approached by other organizations to enter into coalitions, memberships, co-sponsorships and endorsements. The task force hopes to have proposals ready for review by diocesan administration by mid summer.

## *Reminders: Legislative alerts and social justice announcements*

☞ Interested in receiving email legislative alerts on important bills being debated in the U.S. Congress and Wisconsin legislature? Email Steve Herro, [sherro@gbdioc.org](mailto:sherro@gbdioc.org), and ask to be added to the legislative advocacy email network. You will receive no more than one email alert per week.



☞ Make it a weekly to keep abreast of local social justice matters in northeastern Wisconsin. See <http://sites.google.com/site/cdgbpsm/> for important announcements, upcoming events, list of diocesan social justice videos, etc.

## Regional parish social concerns meetings set for 2010-2011

Earlier this spring, a pastor from the Fox Valley called me to discuss a common concern amongst the parishes in his area. How could all of the parishioners of the Valley come to a deeper understanding of the needs of the Spanish speaking church of the Valley while also beginning to build longer term relationships with people outside of their own ethnicity? I reminded him that we have a process in place to promote dialogue amongst local parishes. Four times a year, persons meet in the Green Bay and Appleton areas to discuss common concerns for parish social ministry. These meetings have been occurring for nearly a decade! The schedule for the upcoming school year is as follows:

### **Brown County Parish Social Concerns Network Meeting**

Monday, September 13, 6:30 - 8:00 pm  
Resurrection Parish, 333 Hilltop Dr, Green Bay

### **Fox Valley Parish Social Concerns Network Meeting**

Thursday, September 23, 6:30 - 8:00 pm  
St Joseph Parish, 404 W Lawrence St, Appleton, Rm 205

### **Brown County Parish Social Concerns Network Meeting**

Monday, November 8, 6:30 - 8:00 pm  
Resurrection Parish, 333 Hilltop Dr, Green Bay

### **Fox Valley Parish Social Concerns Network Meeting**

Thursday, November 18, 6:30 - 8:00 pm  
St Joseph Parish, 404 W Lawrence St, Appleton, Rm 214

### **Brown County Parish Social Concerns Network Meeting**

Monday, February 14, 2011, 6:30 - 8:00 pm  
Resurrection Parish, 333 Hilltop Dr, Green Bay

### **Fox Valley Parish Social Concerns Network Meeting**

Thursday, February 24, 2011, 6:30 - 8:00pm  
St Joseph Parish, 404 W Lawrence St, Appleton, Rm 205

### **Brown County Parish Social Concerns Network Meeting**

Monday, April 11, 2011, 6:30 - 8:00 pm  
Resurrection Parish, 333 Hilltop Dr, Green Bay

### **Fox Valley Parish Social Concerns Network Meeting**

Thursday, April 28, 2011 6:30 - 8:00 pm  
St Joseph Parish, 404 W Lawrence St, Appleton, Rm 205

Persons may contact Steve Herro, 272-8299/877-500-3580 x8299, email [sherro@gbdioc.org](mailto:sherro@gbdioc.org), with questions, agenda items, etc.

## Websites, books, and articles worth checking out

Time is running out on the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, but the Catholic Church remains committed to comprehensive immigration reform this year. Several new Websites have been launched, including The American Catholic History Classroom: . . .Bishops and Immigration



([http://libraries.cua.edu/achrcua/immigration/immigration\\_about.html](http://libraries.cua.edu/achrcua/immigration/immigration_about.html)) and Faces of Immigrants (<http://www.facesofimmigrants.org>). You are also invited to send an email message to Congress calling for comprehensive immigration reform this year and to join the mailing list for the United States Bishops Justice for Immigrants campaign; please see <http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org>. You might also read Bishop John Wester's interview, "Answering tough questions about immigration".

<http://justiceforimmigrants.org/documents/wester-interview.pdf>. Bishop Wester is the Chair of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Migration. Another excellent article is Fr. Daniel Groody's "Building a Civilization of Love: Catholic social teaching and immigration reform," <http://www.nd.edu/~dgroody/Published%20Works/Other%20Articles/files/sojourners.pdf>.

Ecological Tool Kit, from the Basilica of St. Mary in Minneapolis, contains resources for prayer, learning, reflection, and action for parish groups or individuals. Get your kit from [http://www.mary.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=60&Itemid=75](http://www.mary.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=60&Itemid=75).

Dr. Dan R. Ebener consults with Quad City Leadership Consulting and teaches organizational leadership as a tenured professor at St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa. *Servant Leadership Models for Your Parish* is the first in a series of four books the author hopes to write on servant leadership. Dr. Ebener is the former social action director for the Diocese of Davenport, Iowa.

The USCCB Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development has collaborated with 11 Catholic organizations to create a new web site to help campus ministers, students, and young adults promote Catholic social teaching. The site features Catholic social teaching resources, prayer materials, small group guides, tools for action, and multimedia such as videos and podcasts. Please see <http://www.usccb.org/campus/>.



**Catholic Diocese  
of Green Bay**  
P.O. Box 23825  
Green Bay, WI 54305-3825

Social Concerns Newsletter

NON-PROFIT  
ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
GREEN BAY,  
WI  
PERMIT #104

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



## ***What is new with JustFaith Ministries in the Diocese of Green Bay?***

On March 13, over a dozen persons from our diocese attended training to facilitate the JustFaith Ministries module Engaging Spirituality (<http://justfaith.org/programs/engagingspirituality.html>). Engaging Spirituality presents a spiritual deepening process that invites small groups of adult Christians to explore the intersection between contemplative presence and social action, as it is lived out in their own lives. If interested in being part of an Engaging Spirituality group in our diocese, please contact Dr. Kristina DeNeve, Spirituality and Evangelization Director, 272-8304/877-500-3580 x8304 or email [kdeneve@gbdioc.org](mailto:kdeneve@gbdioc.org) or Steve Herro, 272-8299/877-500-3580 x8299, email [sherro@gbdoc.org](mailto:sherro@gbdoc.org).

Michele Becker, Resurrection Parish, Green Bay, is co-facilitating a JustFaith (<http://justfaith.org/programs/justfaith.html>) group in the Brown County area starting in Fall 2010 - Spring 2011. For more information about this group, please contact Michele, 920-336-7768 or email [mbecker@gbres.org](mailto:mbecker@gbres.org).

If interested in JustFaith groups for other parts of the diocese, JusticeWalking (<http://justfaith.org/programs/justicewalking.html>), a social justice faith formation program for teens, College JusticeWalking (<http://justfaith.org/programs/collegejusticewalking.html>), or JustMatters (<http://justfaith.org/programs/justmatters.html>), please contact Steve Herro 272-8299/877-500-3580 x8299, [sherro@gbdioc.org](mailto:sherro@gbdioc.org).

*Just*  
FAITH