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THE OFFICE FOR CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY

Of the Archdiocese of Hartford

April 2023

Advancing Catholic social teaching by educating, preparing and animating parishes to work for social justice.

From the Director



Thank you for the many kind notes and well wishes on my retirement. I am overwhelmed by your words of appreciation, particularly for this newsletter.

Over the years, our office has spoken of the “Two Feet.” These are two different, but complementary, ways that we can walk the path of love. The Charitable Works Foot meets basic needs. The Social Justice Foot addresses root causes and improves systems and structure.

There are challenges to using that social justice foot. It takes time, sometimes years to create change. The work is not immediately gratifying. Yet, there are those that can and do walk with both feet. How does one do that? Listen to others’ stories. Expand your perspective. Be with the marginalized. Ground yourself in prayer. Go deep in getting your information. Work with others to gain collective power. I know many of you use these tools. You went to Haiti, Mexico, Honduras, or our southern border and listened to the people’s stories, and then worked in solidarity with the people. In this newsletter, you will find some stories of parishes doing the bridgework of the “Two Feet.”

Community organizations also use these tools. These organizations get results. During my time here, I have seen improved working conditions, safer housing, and greater access to higher education, transportation and health care for immigrants. I leave with a shout out to these organizations. You all are a part of them through your support of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development. [CONNECT](#). [CT Worker Center](#). [Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance](#). [Keep the Promise](#). [Naugatuck Valley Project](#). [United Action CT](#). Reach out to them. You can get involved individually, if parish involvement is not possible.

It has been my honor. Keep on walking with both feet. May you continue to

shine Christ's light in all that *you* do.

Fondly,
Lynn Campbell

Where We've Been

- Hosted an informational meeting with [Safe Families for Children](#), an organization founded to help families that have no one to call when facing a crisis.
- Hosted a human trafficking awareness presentation at St. John Fisher Parish.
- Met with CCHD grant applicant organizations.

Spotlight on Parishes

Here are some inspiring stories of parishes using the tools to walk in the “Two Feet of Love”

St. Mary Parish in New Haven recently hosted a talk with Sr. Helen Prejean, C.S.J., author of *Dead Man Walking*. They also offered the USCCB's Stations of the Cross against Racism along with a CRS Rice Bowl meal. Both were opportunities to learn and broaden their perspectives.

*A group of Mid-South Catholic parishioners participated in the “[Sacred Air](#)” of the JustFaith Eco-Justice series and is now introducing *Laudato Si'* information through the parish bulletin. This is an example of learning more about an issue and reflect on its respective Church teaching.

St. Mary, Simsbury members, including their pastor and deacon, are participating in the *JustFaith*- Catholic series. They completed the first two [Faith and Poverty](#) programs and intend to complete the third. Each program is eight sessions plus an immersion experience and grounded in Catholic social teaching. *JustFaith* programs are transformative and inspire action to address the root causes of injustice while serving with love.

Parishioners at St. Rose of Lima, Meriden, have been doing one-on-one meetings and house meetings to build relationships and identify issues of concern. As a result, a core group of twenty plus parish leaders are meeting regularly. They have learned of the necessity to build relational power in the parish and beyond in order to have the power to effect change. The parish leaders are working on issues around education, and the parish became dues paying members of [CONNECT](#). CONNECT is a broad-based community organization made up of 37 congregations and institution, whose focus and purpose is grassroots community power building and organizing.

****(On Thursday, April 27th at 3:30 p.m. ET, JustFaith Ministries staff members will host a meeting for those interested in the Eco-Justice Series. The meeting will cover tips on starting groups in your church, organization, or area, general***

information about the programs, and a brief experiential introduction to the programs. [Register here.](#))

Save the Date



Social Justice Dinner and Awards

On Tuesday October 24th, we will hold our Annual Social Justice Dinner and Awards at the Aqua Turf Club in Plantsville, CT.

Our keynote speaker will be Dr. Kevin Dowd. Dowd is an educator, author and speaker. He completed his Ph.D. in Theology and Education from Boston College with a dissertation entitled, "Toward a More Perfect Union: Religion and Education in American Public Schools." Dowd will speak on the deep connection between the Mass and the Mission.

More information will be posted at www.catholicsocialjustice.org

Catholic Relief Services



ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA, April 10, 2023 –Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is devastated to report the loss of two staff members in Ethiopia. On Sunday, April 9, Chuol Tongyik, a security manager, and Amare Kindeya, a driver, were shot and killed in a CRS vehicle in the Amhara region as they were returning to Addis Ababa from an assignment. Details of the murder are still unknown.

"The depth of our shock and sorrow is difficult to measure and we are saddened over this senseless violence. CRS is a humanitarian agency dedicated to serving the most vulnerable people in Ethiopia. We express our deepest condolences to Chuol's and Amare's families and hope they find strength in this tragic time," said Zemedu Zewdie, CRS country representative in Ethiopia. "CRS reiterates our commitment to continue working in support of the people in Ethiopia."

Please keep Chuol's and Amare's families in your prayers. I remember Zemedu from my CRS immersion trip to Ethiopia in 2019 and mourn with him the loss of his colleagues. CRS was always well respected wherever we traveled and the dedication of his employees to the people of Ethiopia was remarkable. This photo is from my trip.



Rice Bowl Grants Available



Looking to start a parish garden? Support a refugee family? Provide food gift cards to women in crisis pregnancies? We can provide a small grant to take your hunger/poverty relief program to the next level.

These grants are offered to Catholic parishes, schools, or Archdiocesan entities within the Archdiocese of Hartford. Grants must be used for hunger and poverty alleviation programs within the Archdiocese of Hartford. Funding from the grants come from the **Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowl** program. Recipients must demonstrate intent to participate and promote the CRS Rice Bowl Lenten program.

Applications are available at:

<http://www.catholicsocialjustice.org/catholic-relief-services.html>

or email: Administration.ocsjm@aohct.org

Applications currently accepted on a rolling basis.

Parish Social Ministry Capacity Building Grants Available

Designed to empower the parish's efforts to educate and raise awareness of social concerns and strengthen their resolve to work for justice. Sample projects include:

- JustFaith program fees and materials
- Establishing a Care for Creation Team and enhancing parish sustainability practices
- Purchase of liturgical art to feature Black Catholics and greater cultural diversity

- Film or book discussions with a social justice theme
- Speaker series with a social justice theme

Grants in the range of \$250 - \$5,000 are available to parishes on a rolling basis until the funding depletes. These grants are made possible through of the generosity of our Associates for Justice-donors who have given directly to the Office for Catholic Social Justice Ministry to support its mission of advancing Catholic social teaching by educating, preparing and animating parishes to work for social justice.

Grant materials are available at:
[Grants \(catholicsocialjustice.org\)](https://catholicsocialjustice.org)

Fight Human Trafficking

Move for Amirah

June 16 - 25, 2023

Looking for a way to bring energy to summer church calendars?

Looking for an opportunity to support survivors of human trafficking?

Move for Amirah can unite, mobilize, and engage your community. Amirah is one of two safe houses in CT for survivors of human trafficking. Less than 1% of trafficking victims ever exit exploitation. The primary reason is lack of "exit ramps." Amirah is that exit ramp!

Move for Amirah is a national fundraising event in which individuals or teams "Move" (bike, walk, swim, ski, etc.) on behalf of survivors of trafficking and exploitation. Recovering from trafficking and exploitation is hard, like swimming the English Channel or running a marathon. We "Move" in solidarity with these women. Join this year's Move for Amirah to call attention to their courage and raise funds for their recovery journey!

[Click here for more information and to sign-up](#)



Human trafficking is occurring in our state and across the globe, and YOU can do something about it. Consider inviting our Human Trafficking Task Force to offer an awareness presentation. Participants will learn about the

different types of human trafficking and warning signs, efforts to combat the issue, and how your faith community can get involved. Contact [our office](#) to learn more. Fighting human trafficking is a pro-life, pro-human activity, and should be a priority for all as we work together to defend the right to life.

Have You Heard of GHIAA?

GHIAA, short for Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance, is operated out of the [Center for Leadership and Justice](#). This faith-based community organization is proudly supported by the Catholic Church through the funding received by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development. Founded just four years ago, it consists of 47 dues paying congregations, who understand that we accomplish more when we are in relationship with each other. GHIAA has had a significant impact on legislation that helps lift people out of poverty. Follow [this link](#) to hear updates from GHIAA members on housing, mental health, access to health care, environmental justice, and education funding.

Here is a [short clip](#) of some of the testimonies delivered by GHIAA leaders this year. One of the issues GHIAA is addressing is the fact that Connecticut lacks affordable housing choices, especially in its suburbs. [Please watch](#) the testimony on the Fair Share bill. This bill has the potential to ensure housing choice for CT residents and a fair distribution of affordable housing. Our Office submitted testimony on this bill. We believe the process of Fair Share Planning and Zoning embraces the Catholic teaching of subsidiarity. It will allow municipalities to develop their own plans for meeting their Fair Share goal, giving responsibility over to the local communities to work towards the common good, while holding them accountable to their goals.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Prayers of the Faithful for Mental Health Awareness

For all persons who face discrimination and stigma due to mental illness, that they will find welcome and inclusion as branches of Jesus' vine,...Let us pray to the Lord.

For all persons -- who themselves or within their families live with mental and emotional crises, that the joy and love of Jesus may bring them comfort....
Let us pray to the Lord.

For all persons who live with mental health concerns, that the Church and public agencies will act with justice to ensure the availability of necessary supportive services to aid in their recovery....
Let us pray to the Lord.

For all who provide services for persons whose lives are affected by mental illness – social workers, counselors, mental health professionals, pastoral caregivers – that they will bear witness to God's spirit of love....
Let us pray to the Lord.

Resourced from the National Catholic Partnership on Disability

Mental Health Ministry

Featured on the Pope's Prayer Network

We pray that mental health ministry becomes an integral ministry in the Church that is available in every Catholic parish and community.

We pray for the elimination of the stigma and discrimination that people living with a mental illness encounter.

Visit clicktopray.org or download the app in your preferred App Store.
Visit the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network at www.popesprayer.va



Association of
Catholic Mental
Health Ministers



Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network



Domestic Workers Have Rights Employers Have Responsibilities

Thinking about employing a house cleaner? Home attendant? Do you or a relative need a nanny? Do you know your responsibilities as an employer? Our Catholic faith teaches us that if the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected. These rights include the right to decent and fair wages, to private property, and to economic initiative.

Hand in Hand, the Domestic Employers Network, will be running a virtual training for the employers of nannies, house cleaners, and home attendants on Thursday, **April 20th** from 6:00 - 7:30 p.m. You can find the registration link [here](#). The CT Domestic Worker Justice Campaign, of which we have been active members, works to ensure that domestic workers rights are recognized. If you are an employer of a domestic worker, we encourage you to attend this event.

Thinking of Hosting a Screening of "The Letter - A Message for Our Earth"

Have you been thinking of hosting a [screening of "The Letter: A message for Our Earth"](#) for your parish, school, or religious community, but just have a few questions?

Join the Catholic Climate Covenant community **ONLINE SCREENING of *The Letter*, followed by a discussion session** that will answer all your screening questions, and give you confidence in handling either an online or an in-person screening of your own. Staff from Catholic Climate Covenant and Laudato Si' Movement-US will be teaming up for this event!

The Catholic Climate Covenant will host TWO online screenings this Month: a daytime screening on April 25th and an evening screening on April 26th!

Each screening will include an opportunity to watch the film, a general discussion, and breakout sessions to choose from:

- Further discussion on themes from the film
- A screening Q&A to get you ready to host your own screening
- A youth focused discussion
- A young adult focused discussion

Register for one of these two April screenings today!

DAYTIME SCREENING

Tuesday, April 25th – 1:00 -3:00 p.m. Eastern [Register here](#)

EVENING SCREENING

Wednesday, April 26th – 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Eastern [Register here](#)

Diocese of Santa Fe Webinar



The Archdiocese of Santa Fe extends an invitation to join them in their eleventh in a series exploring the Pastoral Letter Against Racism, "Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love" by the U.S. Catholic bishops. **The topic is "Becoming and Belonging: The Intersection of Identity and Welcome" on Tuesday, April 18, 2023, from 8-10 pm (EDT) and will be virtual.**

Presenter: Ms. Ogechi Akalegbere

Ogechi, a Nigerian-American, is Director of Youth and Young Adult Ministry at St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Washington and the **2021 winner of the Cardinal Bernardin New Leadership Award from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development**. She has served as a catechist, lector, pastoral council co-chair, and small group leader at her parish and

diocese and is involved as a community organizer and diversity practitioner in her community.

This event is free. Pre-registration required. [Pre-register here.](#)

Social Action Summer Institute ("SASI")

The annual Social Action Summer Institute (SASI) will be taking place in-person at Emory University in Atlanta, GA from July 12 - 15, 2023. This year's theme is *Out of the Shadows: Shining a Light on Human Trafficking*.

Programming will emphasize the various facets of human trafficking, including sex, labor and migrant trafficking, as well as how the Catholic Church, people of faith and/or community organizations respond to this pro-life issue. This issue demonstrates how the entire community must come together to put an end to human trafficking. Watch for more details at the [Roundtable Association's website](#).

Editor's Note: I first attended SASI in 2004 when I was a parish volunteer. There my eyes were opened to the wonderful social justice ministries being done on the parish and diocesan level. The conference is well organized, inspiring, and informing. It is a great opportunity to network with others. We at OCSJM think so highly of SASI that we offer scholarship money to attend. [Contact the office](#) for an application.

Veterans for Peace Golden Rule Sailboat Visits May 29th - June 11th

The Golden Rule is a project of *Veterans for Peace* ("VFP"), whose aim is to oppose nuclear weapons and war. *The Golden Rule* is a sail both that set sail in 1958 to stop nuclear weapons tests in the Marshall Islands, and which inspired the many peacemakers and peace ships that followed. The restored ship will arrive on Memorial Day May 29, in **Norwalk**, stay until June 2nd when it departs for **New Haven** for that weekend, then to **Hartford** June 5th through the 8th when it leaves for **New London**. The goal is to start a dialogue that questions the \$2 trillion investment to upgrade nuclear weapons.

VFP members invite you to:

- Host an in-person or virtual presentations for your parish, faith group, or school on the history of this boat and its message of the threat of nuclear weapons before its arrival May 29.
- Get involved by hosting a fundraiser.
- Join May 29th Norwalk Memorial Day Parade starting at 10am. Join VFP members and friends as they march for peace and greet the boat and its crew as it arrives at Vet's Park in Norwalk.
- Participate in interfaith silent vigils in Hartford on June 6th and 7th.

- Visit and tour the boat.

Details of the Golden Rule Project can be seen at:

<http://www.vfpgoldenruleproject.org/>

including a link to the Facebook page showing day-to-day progress. For more information and to get involved, text, call or email Jim Brasile (860) 508-3685, VFPCConnecticut42@gmail.com

"To take sides with massive power is to take sides against the innocent. The side I take is the side of the people who are sick of war and who want peace, who want to rebuild their lives and their countries and the world," Thomas Merton

Submitted by Jim Brasile
Veterans for Peace

Sr. Helen Prejean Quote

"I saw the suffering and I let myself feel it...I saw the injustice and was compelled to do something about it. I changed from being a nun who only prayed for the suffering world to a woman with my sleeves rolled up, living my prayer."

Helen Prejean C.S.J., born April 21, 1939, leading American advocate for the abolition of the death penalty



St. Paul, Kensington

St. Paul, Kensington members are spreading love and joy through giving. They gave the sweetness of Easter to 166 children and teens, who are vulnerable to human trafficking. They also provided gift cards for The Underground NE's Adult Survivor Support Services Mentor program.

[Earth Day](#)

The Catholic Climate Covenant invites you to download the 2023 Earth Day program, "[Simple Living: God's Vision of Abundant Life](#)", and explore the available prayers, readings, short video, discussion questions, and suggested actions. The materials can be used to celebrate Earth Day (April 22) and/or the anniversary of *Laudato Si'* (Laudato Si' Week is May 21 – 28) or use at any time that fits your community's schedule.

The program is designed to assist you, your family, your parish or community commemorate Earth Day or the anniversary of *Laudato Si'* this year and discover ways to live more simply, more sustainably, and more "abundantly". If you have questions about the Earth Day 2023 program, please contact Paz Artaza-Regan (Paz@catholicclimatecovenant.org).

[Eucharistic Revival Resources](#) **Social Ministry and the Eucharist**

The most recent USCCB *Sacraments and Social Mission* publication now includes the teaching of Pope Francis. Here are links to the updated pdf handouts on Eucharist and social mission:

[Eucharist and Social Mission: Body of Christ, Broken for the World](#)

[The Eucharistic Liturgy: Formed, Transformed, and Sent](#)

The electronic (free pdfs) of the entire updated series are [here](#). Please note that the Spanish versions are still in the process of being updated but this should happen soon.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

[Click here](#) for Prayers of the Faithful.



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website