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# THE OFFICE FOR CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY

Of the Archdiocese of Hartford

**April 14, 2020**

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*Advancing Catholic social teaching by educating and preparing parishes  
to work for social justice*

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## From the Director

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

On behalf of the OCSJM Board of Directors and staff, I wish you a happy Easter. We pray that you are healthy and safe.

The public health crisis of COVID-19 reveals and exacerbates the depths of inequality in our state, country, and world. Consider those who can work-at home compared to those who are now without a job. Communities of immigrants and people of color are being most devastated by the virus. Those who are already vulnerable and marginalized (think low-wage workers, the elderly, the homeless) become more so.

A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. In a society marred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, our tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgment (Mt 25:31-46) and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first. Our most vulnerable brothers and sisters deserve dignity and hope. This newsletter provides many ways in which you can share that hope.

Let us be Easter people - full of hope!

Blessings,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynn".

Lynn Campbell, Executive Director

## Pope Quote



"God's love constantly impels us to find new ways forward."  
*(Pope Francis, Laudato Si', 245)*

## Time to turn in your Rice Bowl

Thank you to all who participated in CRS Rice Bowl this Lent. Many CRS Parish Ambassadors launched significant efforts to engage Catholic schools and parishes in this Lenten practice. We are sincerely grateful for their efforts.



Here's the [link to CRS Rice Bowl](#) with information on how to send your remittance directly to Catholic Relief Services.

CRS will return the 25% allocated for our Archdiocese, so that we can continue to offer support to food pantries, community kitchens, and other food assistance and poverty alleviation programs in our Archdiocese. Thank you for bringing Lent to life!

## CT Domestic Worker Justice Campaign

For several years we have been working with allies in the CT Domestic Worker Justice Campaign to improve domestic workers' rights. The coronavirus highlights how much domestic workers need protections, just like everyone else. Nannies, house cleaners and other domestic workers are not entitled to severance pay, paid sick leave, health and unemployment insurance.



We have been hit hard in CT. Many workers are now without jobs for a month or more. These are people who were already in a vulnerable state before, with low income, not much job security, and no benefits to guarantee help in difficult times.

The [CT Domestic Worker Center](#) is raising money to support domestic workers who have lost their jobs because of the coronavirus. Many do not qualify for the federal stimulus that is sending out checks to workers because they are not United States citizens. Catholic Social teaching reminds us that everyone, no matter their immigration status, has a right to a life of dignity. When the CT general assembly reconvenes we will again be advocating for domestic workers rights. We hope that you will join us now in charity and later in justice.

## JustFaith Program

Just before we were all sent home to "social" distancing, we managed to get in two presentations with Jack Jezreel, founder of JustFaith Ministries. If you ever participated in a JustFaith program, you know that they are transforming. They offer a strong community building component while deepening your faith and desire to love and serve others.



Now is the perfect time to start one of the [JustFaith](#) programs. They are designed for small groups. They help people stay connected in a meaningful way. Just Faith is offering tips and tools for facilitating all of their current programs through videoconferencing (including a Zoom training on April 16th at 7 pm ET). Check out their [website](#) to learn more, or contact [John Ryan](#) our Archdiocesan JustFaith volunteer coordinator.

## Volunteers and Donations Needed

**FOODSHARE** Area foodbanks and community kitchens rely on volunteers. A large percentage of our parish and community volunteers are over the age of 65.

Those 65 and older are at high-risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

If you normally volunteer, but cannot do so, we encourage you to support these organizations with a financial contribution. If you typically organize these outreach activities for your parish, we encourage you to stay in contact with the organization. This could be an opportunity to engage new, younger, volunteers from your parish.

Foodshare is one such organization that is in need of volunteers and donations. Foodshare is the regional food bank serving Connecticut's Hartford and Tolland counties. [Click here](#) to see where and when they need volunteers to collect and distribute food.

## Serving others in need, keeping faith alive

Last week we shared that through our conversations with parish leaders we learned that many in the Hispanic community have psychological, spiritual, and economical concerns. They are expressing general concerns about personal anxiety, stress, and safety, and are seeking food support and legal guidance. In response, we are connecting them with our volunteers and other Archdiocesan staff. These individuals are offering the gift of their time to listen, provide connections, and pray with others.



We are blessed to have these volunteers who embody the Catholic Social Teaching principle "Call to family, community, and participation".

"The family is thus an agent of pastoral activity through its explicit proclamation of the Gospel and its legacy of varied forms of witness, namely solidarity with the poor, openness to a diversity of people, the protection of creation, moral and material solidarity with other families, including those most in need, commitment to the promotion of the common good and the transformation of unjust social structures, beginning in the territory in which the family lives, through the practice of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy."

*(Pope Francis, On Love in the Family [Amoris Laetitia. . . ], no. 290, quoting the Final Report of the Synod of Bishops, 10/24/15)*

## CCHD and COVID-19



In response to the Coronavirus pandemic, **Keep the Promise (KTP)** has continued to show support to members and staff. KTP is a locally funded Catholic Campaign for Human Development coalition that advocates for those living with a mental illness or addiction, family members, and healthcare professionals to ensure that a sustainable mental health community is developed in Connecticut.

Staff of KTP have reached out to members by checking in via calls and emails, while also helping to deliver meals and essential items. When speaking to the Co-Chair of Keep the Promise, she stated, *"I want to let our members know they are thought of and we miss them and look forward to the coming months when we can get back together and continue to advocate."*

One of the key themes of Catholic Social Teaching is acknowledging the life and dignity of every human person, since we are all made in the image of God. Keep the Promise puts Catholic Social Teaching into action by providing meetings and workshops to members that enable them to learn valuable leadership values that help them advocate for their rights and make their voice heard. With the Easter season upon us, let us remain hopeful and generous during this difficult time.

## Lockdown - A Covid-19 Poem

Brother Richard Hendrick - a Capuchin Franciscan living in Ireland -reminds us to find goodness in his touching poem about Covid-19.



## **Lockdown**

Yes there is fear.

Yes there is isolation.

Yes there is panic buying.

Yes there is sickness.

Yes there is even death.

But,

They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise

You can hear the birds again.

They say that after just a few weeks of quiet

The sky is no longer thick with fumes

But blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi

People are singing to each other

across the empty squares,

keeping their windows open

so that those who are alone

may hear the sounds of family around them.

They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland

Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.

Today a young woman I know

is busy spreading fliers with her number

through the neighborhood

So that the elders may have someone to call on.

Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples

are preparing to welcome

and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary

All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting

All over the world people are looking at their neighbors in a new way

All over the world people are waking up to a new reality

To how big we really are.

To how little control we really have.

To what really matters.

To Love.

So we pray and we remember that

Yes there is fear.

But there does not have to be hate.

Yes there is isolation.

But there does not have to be loneliness.

Yes there is panic buying.

But there does not have to be meanness.

Yes there is sickness.

But there does not have to be disease of the soul

Yes there is even death.

But there can always be a rebirth of love.

Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.

Today, breathe.


Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic  
The birds are singing again  
The sky is clearing,  
Spring is coming,  
And we are always encompassed by Love.  
Open the windows of your soul  
And though you may not be able  
to touch across the empty square,  
Sing.

*March 13th 2020*

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