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THE OFFICE FOR CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY

Of the Archdiocese of Hartford

May 2020

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

From the Director

Dear friends,

As mentioned in our past issues, COVID-19 has affected our physical and economic well-being, most especially the elderly, people of color, and those of low socioeconomic status. It also compromises our mental health. The COVID-19 pandemic is pushing us into a mental health crisis. Think of the impact of unemployment to our mental health. What are the social and emotional impacts of social isolation?

While many of us are quarantined from participating in our usual parish ministry, we still have the opportunity to minister from our home. God's power works through you! There are many ways in which we can bring the love of Christ to those living with mental illness, and who isn't facing some degree of anxiety these days? We can do this through prayer, direct service such as checking in with friends and relatives, or through advocacy efforts such as those of the [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#) .

May is Mental Health Month. In this newsletter, we bring you resources to support your mental health and the health of others.

On behalf of the staff, volunteers, and board members of OCSJM I wish you peace,



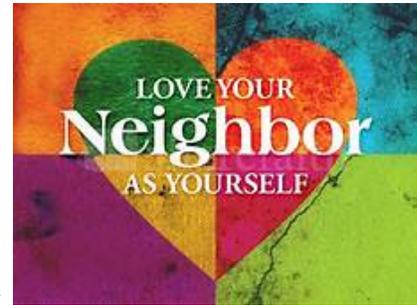
Lynn

Lynn Campbell, Executive Director

Bible Quote

"The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these"

Mark 12:31



Register Now



Bishop Peter Rosazza Social Justice Conference

*Rooted In Faith,
Opening Wide Our
Hearts*

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE SERIES ON THE US BISHOPS'
LETTER AGAINST RACISM

BEGINNING JUNE 6TH, 2020



Registration is Now Open!

"Rooted in Faith: Open Wide Our Hearts", will be offered as a year-long "online conference" in response to the recent US Bishops' Pastoral Letter on Racism. The topic is too important, and too timely, to let it go.

We will begin on **Saturday, June 6th** with 2, 60 minute webinars (1 in English and 1 in Spanish) featuring our scheduled keynote speaker, Alejandro Aguilera-Titus.

Alejandro will provide an overview to the pastoral letter and will address these

questions:

- * Why did the bishops write this letter? Why now?
- * How is the letter different from past letters?
- * How is the Church complicit in racism?
- * What is the letter calling us to do?

The virtual conference will continue throughout the year with monthly webinars and events. This special opportunity to learn and grow together will culminate, hopefully, in our regular gathered event in June of 2021.

To learn more about this webinar series, our presenters and to register please visit our website:

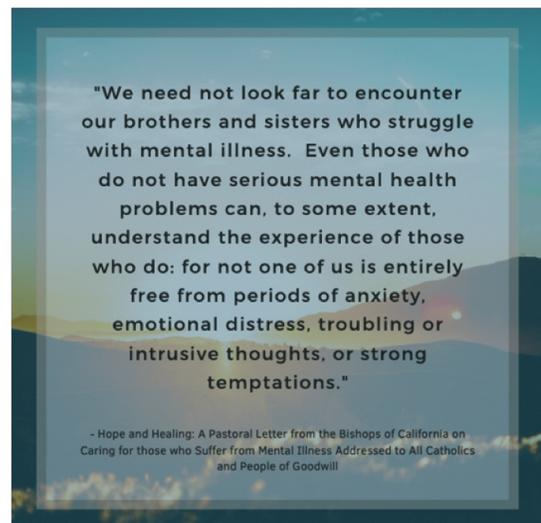
[Learn More and REGISTER Here](#)

May is Mental Health Month

We have 3 challenges for you this month

1. Do at least one thing to care for your mental health - each day!
2. Pray for persons who live daily with mental concerns.
3. Do something to care for the mental health of someone in your parish. Write a letter, make a phone call

Source: The National Catholic Partnership on Disability



Check out [our website](#) for new prayer resources

Pope Francis Invites You to Celebrate Laudato Si' Week



Laudato Si' Week honors the fifth anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*. The theme of Laudato Si' week is "Everything Is Connected."

Laudato Si' week, May 16-24, 2020, launches a year-long journey of transformation, as we grow through the crisis of the current moment by praying, reflecting, and preparing together for a better world to come tomorrow.

Laudato Si' teaches us how to build a better world-together. People everywhere

are crying out for hope, and our faith is urgently needed to light the way. During Laudato Si' Week, join Catholics from around the world in solidarity for a more just and sustainable future. Stand united with our brothers and sisters in faith as we grow through the crisis of this moment to build a better tomorrow.

- Reflect and prepare through online trainings during May 16-23, 2020
- Join the worldwide day of prayer on May 24, 2020
- Put preparation into action during the Season of Creation, this September

Build a Better World Together: [Register](#) for Laudato Si' Week.

Pope Francis Invites You to Celebrate Laudato Si' Week. [View video](#).

Laudato Si' and the Coronavirus

As we honor the encyclical during Laudato Si' Week (May 16-23), our world is deeply affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

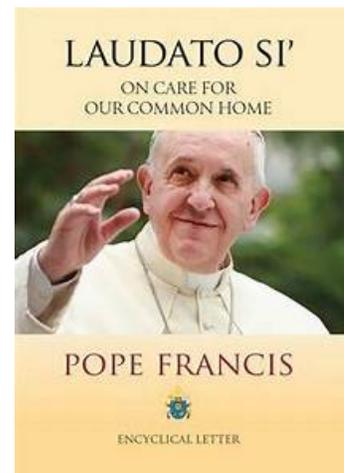
Laudato Si' Week helps us reshape the world that will arise after the pandemic has passed. The present crisis is an opportunity to start anew, and to make sure that the world that arises after this crisis has passed is sustainable and just.

Laudato Si' tells us that "everything is connected" and tragically, this health catastrophe has much in common with the ecological catastrophe.

- Both are global emergencies that will affect many people, both directly and indirectly.
- Both are experienced most deeply by the poor and vulnerable, and both expose the deep injustices in our societies.
- Both will be solved only through a united effort that calls on the best of the values we share.

As we prepare for Laudato Si' Week and the journey beyond, let's reflect together on how the encyclical's lessons guide us through the current crisis.

[Continue Reading](#)



Creating Virtual Spaces to Fulfill Our Social Mission

Since we began this quarantine and transitioned to a virtual work space, we have seen our parish leaders rise to the challenge. Our Social Justice Conference committee meets on a regular basis in order to transition their very well planned conference into a virtual webinar series. Our Hispanic ministry leaders have embraced this virtual workspace and drawn in several new leaders to join them in their ministry.

We were blessed to be able to create two regular video conferences in two vicariates, with eleven parishes doing weekly video conference meetings since



March. This allows our Hispanic parish ministry leaders to be in touch, share information, and learn from each other's stories.

During the last nine weeks, we have heard stories hard to swallow: such as not having money to pay rent, threats to be evicted, hunger, fear, illness. Some people don't know how to do video appointments with their doctors, others are diabetic

and can't access a podiatrist. Very little information about the pandemic has been available in Spanish.

Through these video meetings we were able to direct the parish leaders on where to find food pantries, help six families apply for emergency funding, and advocate for their rights. We connected them to a webinar offered in Spanish by the US Dept. of Health and Human Services Center for Faith and Opportunity Initiatives which provided valuable information about preventing the spread of the virus. Our parish leaders have also been advocating for relief packages that leave no one behind and everyone is safe (previous packets have reached several vulnerable populations). Please join them in this effort by participating in this [Action Alert to Congress on Further COVID-19 Actions](#).

It has been such a joy being a bridge between God, the Church and the community in the midst of this greater danger. Sometimes it felt like we weren't making enough progress, but there is joy if we look back and watch how much the Church has done with money, service, and spiritual support. It is a privilege to be working with our brothers and sisters at this time.

Prayer for Peace in Anxiety during the Coronavirus Pandemic

Loving God, we come to you full of anxiety about what may happen in the coming days and weeks. Shower us with the peace Jesus promised to his disciples, and make us into steady pillars for those around us. In this time of uncertainty and epidemic, wake us up to the reminder that we are not alone.



Even as we are asked to keep our distance from others, help us to find ways to reach out to those who need our support. We pray especially for those whose incomes and livelihoods are threatened. For the children who will miss meals due to school closures. For those already isolated, lonely and scared. Loving God, give them your peace, and through our hands ensure they have what they need.

Sustain, strengthen and protect all caregivers. Bless them as they offer compassionate care and show selfless courage in the face of risk.

Remind us, each time we wash our hands, that in our baptism you call us to let go of our fears and live in joy, peace, and hope.

Amen.

This and many other prayers can be found at [Catholic Health Association of the United States website](#).

Resources

Laudato Si' Week (May 16-24)

To commemorate the fifth anniversary of the encyclical Laudato Si', Pope Francis has invited Catholics to participate in Laudato Si' Week, a nine-day global campaign taking place May 16-24, 2020. [Sign up](#) to receive daily reflections with ways to pray, learn, and act to care for God's creation.

New and updated bilingual resources at usccb.org/environment can also help you observe the fifth anniversary of Laudato Si'. They include:

Laudato Si' Study Guide:

English: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment/upload/laudato-si-discussion-guide.pdf>

Spanish: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment/upload/laudato-si-discussion-guide-spanish.pdf>

Laudato Si' 1-pager

English: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment/upload/Laudato-Si-Bulletin-Insert.pdf>

Spanish: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment/upload/laudato-si-bulletin-insert-spanish.pdf>

Laudato Si' postcard (also available other formats include jpg, png, and social media sharing formats. Visit usccb.org/environment for the other formats)

English: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment/upload/laudato-si-postcard.pdf>

Spanish: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment/upload/laudato-si-postcard-sp.pdf>

Liturgy and Preaching resource

English: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment/upload/ecology-resource-all.pdf>

Spanish: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment/upload/ecology-resource-all-spanish.pdf>

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