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THE OFFICE FOR CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE MINISTRY

Of the Archdiocese of Hartford

April 22, 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

Contributing to the Common Good

As I read the newspaper and listen to the news these days, I can't help but think of the themes of Catholic social teaching and how they can guide our thoughts and response to COVID-19.

Catholic social teaching is the opposite of individualism. It calls us to a sense of **solidarity** - that we belong together and have a responsibility to aggressively serve each other. Catholic social teaching points to the obligation and necessity of all of us to make significant sacrifices for improvements that will bring broad benefits to society.

In *Mater et Magistra*, Pope John XXIII defined the **common good** as "the sum of those conditions of social living whereby men are enabled more fully and more readily to achieve their own perfection" (no.65). More simply defined, it is the concern for the well-being of the wider community. The church proclaims the right of all to the common good and the right to contribute to the common good. It is more than a right. Living a life of solidarity is a moral obligation to make whatever contributions are necessary to improve the lives of others.

An example which illustrates the common good is the shutdown of the economy. The economy serves the common good. We did the right thing morally and economically to shut down. If we didn't there would have been greater economic stress on our health care system.

On a more macro level, contributing to the common good involves sharing our knowledge and resources with the global community. We see this with the many nonprofits which minister in other countries.

On a personal level, wearing facemasks and practicing physical distancing contributes to the common good. By doing so we are protecting those more vulnerable than us.

Not being able to attend Mass and receive Communion is a sacrifice we are making to contribute to the common good. Personally this is becoming more and more of a challenge,

and as much as I might scheme in my head about how "we could creatively manage this", I know that the common good must prevail over my individual desires.

I pray that you will find strength and peace in the days ahead as we continue to love our neighbors by contributing to the common good.

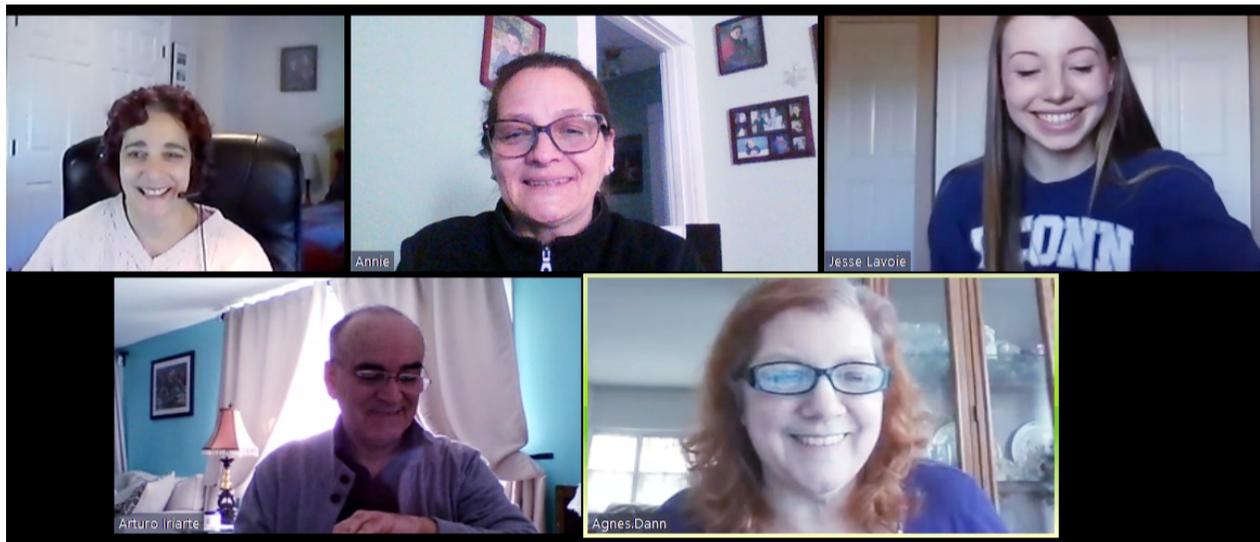
Blessings,



A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lynn".

Lynn Campbell, Executive Director

Staff Meeting



Here we are at one of our weekly staff meetings. It's so wonderful that we are still able to connect with each other and keep working for justice.

Pray with Pope Francis



During these stressful times, Pope Francis is offering prayer to the Virgin Mary for protection from the Corona virus. You can go to the [Vatican News site](#) to hear his words of encouragement and pray along with him. You can also [visit our website](#) where we provide

Prayer from *Creative Communications for the Parish*



For Healing

Gracious Lord, remember in your mercy those who suffer today. Give strength and encouragement to those who minister to their needs. Remember your promise not to let them be tested beyond what they are able to bear.

Above all, give them the reassurance that you are with them as they walk through this valley of the shadows of death. And in your good time send healing of body and spirit. [Name those who need healing or help in their suffering.] In Jesus' name, Amen.

For the Sick

God of mercy, when I'm sick I often find it hard to pray. So I offer this moment of prayer when I'm well for all those who may now be too weak, too tired or too depressed to pray and to believe at this time in your goodness and mercy. May this be a healing moment for them, as it was for the woman in the Gospel who touched the hem of your garment. Amen.

Sr. Marguerite Zralek, OP

For Confidence in Prayer

O Jesus, your disciples often found you at prayer, and so they asked you to teach them how to do it. Help me to pray in confidence to the Father, just as you did. When I am facing my own agony of doubt and fear, pray with me so that I find courage and hope. When my life leads me to the cross, take my hand so that my heart stays strong. Most of all, strengthen my resolve to pray: Not my will, but yours be done. Amen.

For Confidence in the Future

Lord, you have been with me from the very beginning, and you will be there at the very end. Looking back over my life, I can see that you were with me even when I was unaware of your presence, guiding me and drawing me closer to you. Give me courage and confidence in my future, believing that your hand is upon me every day. Amen

A thought to ponder on Earth Day

A warmer world is a sicker world.

Climate change brings the risk of an increase in the severity of respiratory diseases like asthma and the frequency of intestinal diseases like cholera. The World Health Organization estimates that in the coming decades, climate change will cause 250,000 deaths per year. The majority of them will be among "the least of these."



Matthew 25:45: "what you did not do for one of these

least ones, you did not do for me."

Making Hope Real in Christ



We must put our faith in action, making hope real for others and for ourselves through Jesus Christ.

In today's pandemic, we see so much more of the needs of families for food and jobs; parents seeking to find resources anywhere so that they can feed their children. Many single immigrant men, who came to support their families overseas are now in dire need. In some cases these families are our very own neighbors.

Flor Ossa, during OCSJM Hispanic weekly zoom meeting, said, "Everything is changing, Arturo, when I called last week to one of Casa of Nazareth food donors, and said, 'Dear Flor, I cannot help you now, because we both lost our jobs and I feel embarrassed to say that I need help at this moment!'".

We are continuing to connect with parish leaders, priests and deacons throughout the dioceses. Using technology of "WhatsApp" we are providing over 400 families, individuals, and ecclesial ministers within the Hispanic community with educational and spiritual messages.

Parish social ministry leaders are in turn supplying those in need with all available community food resources in each town and school district, "Grab & Go" services, and food pantries. In some cases they are providing families with food, gift cards, and homemade bread. In other cases they are being referred to [Catholic Charities Emergency Assistance Fund](#).

We are grateful to be able to help Parish Social Ministry leaders bring hope through Christ.

Arturo Iriarte, Parish Social Ministry Coordinator



Ana Landskron, OCSJM volunteer, "the only thing that hurts me the most is that I am not able to do more than just making bread for people!"

Amplify offers resources to our vulnerable communities during the COVID-19 Pandemic



[Amplify](#) is a Connecticut based group that helps communities assess their behavioral health needs, identify gaps in services, and develop their plans to advocate for the most effective resources available. This group receives a social justice grant from the **Catholic Campaign for Human Development**, helping them to offer a wide network of connections that include tailored assessment, planning, strategies and resources for preventing substance misuse and promoting behavioral health. During this COVID-19 pandemic Amplify is readily engaged with members via email and phone correspondence, and is offering valuable resources such as this [Coronavirus fact-sheet](#) available in multiple languages. During this time, it is especially important to advocate and listen to the vulnerable communities, including our brothers and sisters involved in the mental health and substance abuse community. Amplify is certainly upholding the dignity of those who are commonly marginalized in society, as they confirm that "Creating change starts with deep listening."

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"Your support helps keep social ministry a vital part of the Archdiocese"