

ROUNDTABLE REPORT

OF THE NATIONAL PASTORAL LIFE CENTER

APRIL 2006

THE ROUNDTABLE ASSOCIATION OF DIOCESAN SOCIAL ACTION DIRECTORS

Symposium Develops Communication Skills

Washington Archbishop **Theodore Cardinal McCarrick** and framing specialists **Beth Shulman** and **Phil Sparks** headlined the 2006 Roundtable Symposium "Words that Work: Framing the Catholic Message," held February 11-12 in Washington, D.C. The theme grew out of Roundtable Board discussions about the skills that diocesan social action directors need to be effective.

Cardinal McCarrick's talk (published in the March 2, 2006 issue of *Origins*) stressed what Catholic social teaching has to say about communicating the Catholic message, while Shulman, co-chair of the Fairness Initiative on Low-Wage Work, and Sparks, co-director of the non-profit Communications Consortium based in Washington, D.C., rooted their training in linguistics and communication theory.

After a series of affirmations of diocesan social action, for example, "You have carried out the message of salvation...and you have made a difference in the life of this Church of ours in the United States," Cardinal McCarrick offered five prescriptions for success in communicating Catholic social teaching. First, he recommended using the church's teaching on human life as the starting point for discussions of social justice. "Let that be cen-



Jack Jezreel, Founder of JustFaith Ministries, receives the Harry A. Fagan Roundtable Award from Dee Rowland, Roundtable Chair, accompanied by his wife Maggie

tral and expand from it," he said. "Our Catholic identity and our Catholic teaching is never going to be substantially well founded unless it begins with a culture of life, unless it begins with the protection of the unborn."

Second, he suggested building on "the great centerpiece of John Paul's teaching, which is the dignity of the human person." Cardinal McCarrick underscored the importance of this principle underlying the church's concern for human life. Third, Cardinal McCarrick insisted that diocesan social action directors "hold on to the bishops' document, *Faithful Citizenship*," with its clear teaching on the role of Catholics in the public square. During his talk, the Cardinal referred several times to challenges he faced defending the document during the 2004 election.

Fourth, Cardinal McCarrick stressed the need to do all social

action work prayerfully. The power of prayer, he suggested, will help us keep true to the Lord's teaching and energize the faithful through our renewed spirituality. Finally, he drew from Pope Benedict's recent encyclical, *God is Love*, to underscore the importance of adopting an attitude of love without thought of reward. This attitude is particularly important, he noted, in dealing with elected officials, with whom we should never cut off civil discourse.

From this decidedly theological and scriptural reflection, participants turned to "framing" trainers Shulman and Sparks, for a workshop on tools to help better communicate the message of Catholic social teaching. Beth Shulman suggested that whereas most people think first in terms of values, advocates on issues like to immediately talk about the details of policy. She offered a model that would speak to the values that Americans hold most dear: responsibility to care for one's family, responsibility to care for oneself, personal liberty, spirituality, honesty/integrity, fairness/equality, responsibility to care for others, personal fulfillment, respect for authority, and love of country or culture. Catholic observers would find easy connections between these values and the values of Catholic social teaching.

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DSAO Directors from Katrina/Rita Dioceses Meet

If you were to list the dioceses most affected by Hurricane Katrina, would you list only dioceses on the Gulf Coast? You'd be only half right, as a special Roundtable conference call revealed.

On January 26, The Roundtable hosted a conference call bringing together diocesan social action directors from the Gulf Coast and dioceses as disparate as Brooklyn, Winona, and Atlanta who identified as "heavily affected dioceses." The conversation revealed that relief work continues in the Gulf region on a scale never before seen in American history.

The Gulf Coast dioceses are still dealing with the effects of the storms and the other dioceses are still dealing with the needs of evacuees. Most persistent of these needs is housing. Many people still have tarps for roofs. Elevations of homes, repairs of homes, and sewerage repair are all priorities in the Gulf dioceses. A prominent issue under the housing umbrella concerns elderly and disabled people about to lose their hotel rooms. Many public assistance issues were reported on the call, particularly among people who have lived their lives on public assistance.

Volunteer Opportunities for Parish/Diocesan Groups

*Diocese of Biloxi
Construction/Demolition
Contact: Deanno Misko
scox@southernccjc.org
228-860-2105*

*Archdiocese of New Orleans
Operation Helping Hands
Kevin Fitzpatrick
504-371-7747, ext. 214
knbfitz@yahoo.com*

Several directors noted that while they are still putting a lot of time into storm relief work, they have finally turned a corner on the emergency phase of response. Yet some directors on the call continue to log significant percentages of their time doing relief work. **Simone Blanchard** of the **Archdiocese of Atlanta**, reports that she now puts ninety percent of her time into relief work with some 60,000 evacuees in the Atlanta area.

Suzanne Belongia calculates that half of her time is spent managing the new partnership between her Minnesota diocese and the Diocese of Biloxi. One asset of the **Winona Diocese**, she found, is Catholic farmers who have a lot of free time after the planting season and are willing to lend a hand in Biloxi with demolition and construction efforts. Information about volunteer opportunities in both the **Archdiocese of New Orleans** and the **Diocese of Biloxi** is located in the box below. Note that these volunteer opportunities are open to groups only. Those on the call who had sent groups down to the Gulf Coast said that the experience was a good one for adults, but it was not recommended for youth because of the toxic material involved.

Paul Thomas of the **Diocese of Beaumont** noted that it is sometimes difficult to offer relief when you're a victim yourself. He spent weeks cleaning up his own home from damage incurred by Hurricane Rita while managing Catholic Charities efforts for other victims. He also related that when the agency reopened, there were lines of people standing outside at 7:00 a.m. No program had been announced, but people had driven by, saw the sign, and knew instinctively that help would be available.

The Roundtable Board used information from this call to devise recommendations for dioceses that wish to help. These suggestions



Cajun artist George Rodrigue developed a series of posters to raise awareness of the disaster. One poster incorporates the popular Mardi Gras shout "Throw me something mister!"

were relayed at the Roundtable Membership Meeting and included:

- (1) Delivering "Come and see!" messages to members of Congress to visit the Gulf Coast.
- (2) Supporting coastal restoration legislation supported by the Louisiana Catholic Conference.
- (3) Working with members of Congress to make commitments to rebuild the Gulf Coast as recommended by Archbishop Alfred Hughes.
- (4) Taking advantage of the two volunteer opportunities highlighted earlier. □

Capacity Building through Volunteer Development

The very concept of the one-person diocesan social action office recalls **John Carr's** famous story of a woman in an elevator who noticed that he was (USCCB) director of **Social Development and World Peace**. "You're not doing a good job," she deadpanned.

Directors of one-person diocesan social action offices can relate to this story. They wear many hats. Great expectations are put on them, even as budgets are carefully limited. Typically, two responses are seen: (1) directors set priorities and have a sense of humor about what they can and cannot accomplish, and (2) they develop volunteer leaders to increase their capacity.

Several dioceses have begun to incorporate volunteer leaders into their staff, chiefly by increasing the duties of justice and peace commission leaders. In the **Diocese of Stockton** and the **Diocese of Davenport**, volunteer leadership development has become an essential part of the social action director's work.

In Stockton, **Cecilia Titizano** has built on the success of founding director Rich Fowler's "flower model," whereby each petal of the flower represents a different dimension of social ministry. She has developed over a dozen volunteers, who each take a specific petal, such as Operation Rice Bowl or Catholic Lobby Day. She explains, "The success of working with volunteers depends on your expectations. Volunteers can take the work to a certain point if you supply the support of an organizer."

Currently, Cecilia's volunteer leaders work between three hours per week and ten hours a week during peak periods, such as immediately before Catholic Lobby Day. Cecilia does not see using volunteers as a replace-

ment for hiring staff. "You get work done," she said. "But the challenge is to bring it to a higher level. It's also a model that seems limited to higher income people."

In the **Diocese of Davenport**, a shift to volunteer leadership was precipitated by significant budget cutbacks following a major clergy sexual abuse settlement. Dan Ebener had been developing leaders all along. Now, he pressed them into more extensive service. "Hardly a month goes by without me remembering something Harry Fagan said to me," he explained, "If you're not developing leaders you might as well get out of this work."

Of Dan's nine-member staff, eight are volunteers working 10-25

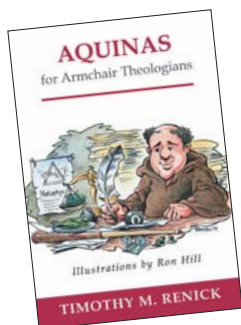
hours a week. Several of them are retired, including retired national CCHD director Fr. Marv Mottet. (There's a resource you don't find in every diocese!) A deacon coordinates the global solidarity project and CRS programs; a layman leads parish social ministry; a laywoman represents the diocese at community meetings; a retired social worker heads up refugee services for the diocese.

Dan maintains that he "should have been doing this all along," and that the office's productivity is now higher. He doesn't think that every diocese should go to a one-person office, but the only position that he thinks generally requires a professional is that of office manager. "It's the hardest position to fill," he explained. □

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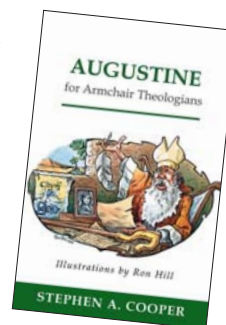


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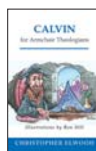


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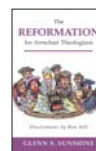
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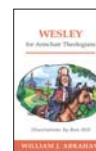
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ROUNDTABLING

WITH

FR. FRANK PAVONE

Fr. Frank Pavone is National Director of Priests for Life. nd@priestsforlife.org.

RR: How were you called to this ministry?

FP: Above all, by a growing awareness of what abortion actually is. The word is used so frequently that it loses its impact, it loses its meaning. The same thing is true with poverty. We can talk about poverty in the world but talking of poverty in the abstract is not what gets people to write checks to send to the agencies that help the poor. What gets them to do that is when they see the TV commercial or an ad with an emaciated child looking up with those big eyes saying, "Please help me." The people are moved if they are touched on a human level. That was happening with me with regard to abortion; it was just becoming more and more real to me as I not only read about it, but also made contact with women who had been damaged by abortion. All this was drawing me deeper into a clearer awareness and helping me think about the fundamental nature of life. All human rights depend on life itself and I began to see that abortion was not a disconnected individual issue, this was something that was undermining every effort that we made for peace, for justice, for human dignity.

RR: What is your understanding of the Consistent Ethic of Life?

FP: I often phrase it this way: "love is indivisible." The call to work for life, for justice in any form is rooted in the fundamental call and command of love.

When the Lord gives that to us, that command and that ability to love, he is giving it to us as a share in the way he loves. He loves without any exclusion, as he shows us in many different ways in the gospels. His is a love for every human being at every stage of development no matter what the circumstances. To begin to divide that love and to say some people deserve it and others don't, that's what breaks the consistency, that's what violates the moral order. So I speak in terms of the indivisibility of love: when we say consistent we don't mean everything reduced into one, we don't mean ignoring the special characteristics of each particular problem we deal with, but it does get back to this root of the nature of love itself.

RR: The focus of Priests for Life is on the issues of abortion and euthanasia. That focus is your mission, right?

FP: This is our focus, but that is not at all to deny the importance of the other issues. As a matter of fact. I often say just the opposite, that a person who is fighting abortion should be motivated at least in part by the fact that strengthening the right to life is strengthening all the other movements and all the other issues. I often say that we focus on abortion not because the other issues are unimportant, but precisely because they are. It all rests on this foundation of life itself. I often say to people that if we can cut up a child and throw him away, then we're putting those who won't feed him in a good light. If you can dismember him, you can also starve him. It's such a deep fundamental connection and yet it's so easily missed by people and so again we try to make that vision coherent.

RR: What would you say to someone who says that abortion and euthanasia are the only issue that the church should be con-

cerned with?

FP: I'll go back to a comment of Cardinal Bernardin. I think he said it in a beautiful way in address at Seattle University, March 2nd, 1986. He was talking about the consistent ethic but then he said, "Does this mean that everyone must do everything? No, there are limits of time and energy and competency there is a shape to every individual vocation. People must specialize, groups must focus their energies". The consistent ethic calls us to a wider witness for life than we sometimes manifest in our separate activities. The cardinal points out a delicate balance here. On the level of vision, one must never ignore, denigrate or dismiss the critical importance of the work that others are doing, even if it's not one's special calling.

In practice, different people have different special gifts given to them by God to address the different issues. That doesn't deny the hierarchy of issues, that doesn't deny that some rights are more fundamental than others. It just means that various people are given their tasks by God within the body of Christ. We have to provide a place for those people to fulfill their God given tasks.

RR: What did you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the *Faithful Citizenship* document?

FP: The *Faithful Citizenship* document is very important. I hear more criticism of *Faithful Citizenship* than I give. What I hear out on the road is that people feel that simply laying out a wide variety of issues does not give an adequate sense of the interrelationship between the issues and the hierarchy of issues. I think that this latest version *Faithful Citizenship* does a better job at that than perhaps previous versions, and it does quote from *Living the Gospel of Life*, particularly in saying that there is a starting point in our work for justice: the

The call to work for life, for justice in any form, is rooted in the fundamental call and command of love.

starting point is a commitment never to intentionally kill. So for a careful reader you do see the hierarchy there, what could be helpful is to comment on the hierarchy a little more. Overall what I do as a practical solution is urge people to read both documents, *Faithful Citizenship* and *Living the Gospel of Life*. Whenever I give out *Faithful Citizenship* and we have given out probably tens of thousands of copies of it, we give out the other one along with it. We say “these are documents from the bishops and there are many other documents as well, but if you want to start reading what the bishops say on these issues, start with these two.”

RR: Some of our members have said that in the last election, Catholic Answers was undermining the teaching of their local ordinary. If a Catholic finds a discrepancy, between what Catholic Answers is saying and what their local bishop is saying, what should they do?

FP: I think what happened in the last election cycle is that there was not a doctrinal discrepancy. The issue that often arose was more of a legal concern. We are dealing here not only with a church that teaches, but we are also dealing with an institution which is tax exempt under IRS regulations and we are dealing with an election and candidates who have some part of the message right and other parts of the message wrong on both sides of the political divide. What ends up happening when you put all those elements together, is that you have institutions who know they need to teach, but at the same time we

don't want to appear to be endorsing one or another candidate or party. Adding to that, we have overly conservative legal advice being given to the bishops, dioceses, and pastors. This is to me an extremely serious problem that we really need to put our heads together and address. Because what was happening with *Voter's Guide for Serious Catholics* that Catholic Answers published, was that some attorneys were saying, "Well, what this does in practice is that it promotes Republican candidates. We can't do that as a church because we are not allowed to endorse candidates."

Now first of all, it is absolutely correct that the church can't endorse candidates. We would never want to do that or recommend that the church do that. Secondly, however, the voter's guide that Catholic Answers wrote does not in any way endorse a candidate or a party. The legal interpretation that would say that this voters' guide is tantamount to an endorsement is an opinion with which many experts in that area of the law would not agree.

RR: Aren't there two levels to this? In Catholic teaching, the legal issue is secondary. We don't endorse candidates because the role of the church is to be prophetic on issues and not endorse particular candidates because once you get embroiled in partisanship you are stuck with individuals who may act in ways contrary to the teachings of the church.

FP: That's right. There are two levels: the Second Vatican Council stated that the Lord did not give the church a political mission; the Lord gives the church a mission of salvation and teaching. Yet that requires at times commenting on political matters, especially when, in the words of *Gaudium et spes* uses, “the fundamental rights of men and the salvation of souls”

require it. The church's loyalty, therefore, is to the message, not to a party. And being truly "non-partisan" does not mean never helping or hurting a candidate or party. It means we stay faithful to the message despite how it may help or hurt the candidate or party.

RR: Some people think that Priests for Life endorsed a candidate in the 2004 election.

FP: No, as Priests for Life, we never have endorsed nor would endorse a candidate. We are a 501(c)(3) organization also. We simply teach on the issues and reflect the teachings of the Holy Father and the US bishops.

RR: What would you like to say to diocesan social action directors?

FP: I just want to say a big “thank you” to the readers of this article and the people who work with the bishops and with the dioceses on matters of social justice and peace. I am inspired by their work, I am delighted to meet across the country with such individuals and I want to just be there side by side collaborating as closely as we can. In a few places throughout the country, and I hope that this increases, we have had diocesan and local evenings of prayer and reflection whereby we brought together people who work against abortion and people who work in other areas of social justice, praying together, meeting one another, sharing a meal together, reflecting on our common call. One of the tools that can foster that kind of reflection is the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* that came out from the Council for Justice and Peace at the Vatican. It's lengthy but it is powerful, it is beautiful and it overcomes what is a unfortunate divide within our church and that is precisely this perceived tension at times between the right to life advocates and social justice and peace advocates. That tension should not be there. We believe in the same Lord, we are following the same Gospel and we have the same wonderful mission. □



Roundtable Roundup

New York DSAO Steps Up Outreach to Seminary

George Horton of the **Archdiocese of New York** reported that he has increased collaboration significantly with **St. Joseph's Seminary**, located in the Archdiocese. After several meetings with key pastors and seminary rector **Msgr. Peter Finn**, George developed a November 11, 2005 Pastoral Study Day program for seminarians called "The Priest, the Parish, and the Community." The program began with a panel of veteran pastors including **Auxiliary Bishop Dennis Sullivan** and **CCHD Award** winner **Msgr. Neil Connolly** discussing how they have come to understand their vocation as priests as it relates to the role of the priest in the community. This reflection included discussion of the role of CCHD in the archdiocese and their own experience in working with government officials. Afterwards, the seminarians boarded buses for a tour and meeting with the North-west Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition, a CCHD-funded group.

George also reported that diocesan work with candidates for the permanent diaconate has expanded. Staff of the Department of Social and Community Development are now interviewing candidates prior to admission. The purpose of these interviews, he explained, is twofold: to get to know the candidates early in the process, and to determine their leanings toward justice and feed that information into the acceptance process.

Detroit Director Enters Seminary

In the **Archdiocese of Detroit**, Office for Catholic Social Teaching director **Michael Hovey** is also entering the seminary. But he seeks ordination as a priest. The long-time nonviolence activist returned to his hometown of Detroit three years ago to become the DSAO director. He had been a seminarian in his young adulthood, but then took a year off and was drafted into the Army. A day in Nagasaki drew him into an absolute commitment to nonviolence, and he became active in several nonviolence organizations. Decades later he found a home again in the archdiocese. Shortly after a former classmate who was a Detroit pastor died, Michael began to feel the call again. After several conversa-

tions with **Cardinal Adam Maida**, he decided to enter the seminary again in September, 2006, this time in a special two-year program recognizing the theological training he has already received. Congratulations, Michael!

Phoenix Youth Bring Posadas to the Mexican Border

Increasing numbers of dioceses are utilizing a Mexican Catholic tradition of *posadas*, reenactments of the story of the Holy Family in Bethlehem. **Tricia Hoyt** of the **Diocese of Phoenix** has developed a youth posada, with a capacity-building grant from **Catholic Relief Services**. Scores of youth traveled by bus from northern Arizona to Nogales, on the Mexican Border, meeting up with Diocese of Tucson youth. They then walked along the border fence accompanied by Mexican youth on the Mexican side of the border.

The program proceeded in this manner: At the first two stops on the posada, Mary and Joseph were rejected, as they seek shelter to give birth to Jesus. At the third stop, the innkeeper welcomed the Holy Family. To celebrate this happy ending, participants from both sides of the border began a candlelight procession to the Santuario de Guadalupe. A *convivio* followed, with food and social interactions among the youth of Phoenix, Tucson, and northern Mexico. Tricia's next event will be a joint camp-over in Mexico, also supported by CRS.

Dioceses Continue Innovations with JustFaith Process

Diocesan social action directors continue to make novel adaptations to the JustFaith program. In the **Diocese of Davenport**, for example, CCHD director Fr. Marv Mottet explained that one parish offers JustFaith for adults while their children attend CCD classes. That way, parents with small children may continue their own faith journey



6 Las Vegas Social Action Director **Ryan Hall** (center right) and Tucson Social Mission director **Joanne Welter** (center left) share a light moment at the Diocese of Las Vegas priest gathering on the U.S./Mexico border with Fr. **Bob Stoekig** (far left), vicar-general of the Las Vegas diocese and **Chris West** (far right) of Catholic Relief Services.

while their children learn the basics of the faith. In the **Archdiocese of Louisville**, JustFaith volunteer leaders now assist the DSAO staff in various aspects of the work, according to staffer **Mark Bouchard**, commenting at the Catholic social ministry gathering.

Former PSM Director for Santa Fe Named IL Respect Life Director

Bishop Edward K. Braxton of the **Diocese of Belleville (IL)** has named **Vickie Riddle**, formerly parish social ministry director for the **Archdiocese of Santa Fe**, to be the director of respect life ministries for the diocese. In that capacity, Vickie will work closely with Roundtable member **Rob Obtremniak**. Vickie is known by many Roundtable members from her frequent Summer Institute attendance.

Arkansas Director Remembers RFK, Commitment to Poverty

Diocese of Little Rock social action director **Tom Navin** met Robert F. Kennedy during Kennedy's fateful campaign swing through Indiana in April, 1968, during which the presidential candidate reacted to Martin Luther King's assassination. On the occasion of Kennedy's 80th birthday, Tom wrote an appreciation of RFK for the *Arkansas Catholic* in which he stressed his commitment to fighting poverty, "Many Americans were horrified to see the scenes shown from Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. RFK knew about poverty first hand and talked about it."

"Freecycling" Groups Promoted by Richmond Diocese

Most Americans now understand the benefits of recycling, but the **Diocese of Richmond** has taken the concept a step further by publicizing "freecycling" opportunities. In a newsletter article, **Patricia Slater** explained that the sixty-eight "freecycle" groups in Virginia facilitate the donation of unwanted items

The Good News on Immigration Justice

In the 2005 Roundtable Membership Survey, DSAO directors ranked immigration as the #1 issue facing DSAOs. At the 2005 Roundtable Membership Meeting, members listed seven bright spots in their work on immigration justice

1. The Diocese of Las Vegas held a priests' retreat in Tucson, AZ and Altar, Mexico to raise awareness among priests of that diocese.
2. The Diocese of San Bernardino has devoted 1.5 full-time staff to the issue. All parishes have been asked to participate in the Justice for Immigrants campaign; all diocesan departments have been asked to integrate consideration of immigration issues into their work.
3. The Diocese of Brooklyn (which is 60% immigrant) has been working with the Archdiocese of New York and St. John's University to develop a comprehensive approach to the issues of immigration justice in New York City.
4. Several dioceses noted that the collaborations with CCHD-funded groups have been very helpful.
5. In New Mexico, victories on driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants and in-state college tuition for the children of undocumented immigrants have been won.
6. One diocese reported that it stymied legislation to require fingerprinting of all residents.
7. Both the Miami archdiocese and the San Bernardino diocese have extensively used the "Dying to Live" film by Fr. Daniel Groody. A study guide is available from the Diocese of San Bernardino. □

to those that want or need them, from chairs, to fax machines, to doors. For more information, visit www.freecycle.org.

Three Dioceses co-sponsor CCUSA PSM Training

Three (arch)dioceses: **Springfield, Belleville, and St. Louis** came together February 24-26 to put on a regional parish social ministry training in collaboration with **Catholic Charities, USA**. Sr. Jane Boos commented that she had been inspired by Belleville DSAO director **Rob Obtremniak**. Rob had suggested doing a regional event together. "The time was right!" she said.

The agenda included a keynote

presentation by Jack Jezreel of **JustFaith Ministries** and a plenary workshop led by **Joan Rosenhauer** of **USCCB-SDWP**. A closing presentation by **Diocese of Peoria** social action director **Msgr. Stuart Swetland** sent participants into the world energized. About 50 participants attended, including a judge from the poorest county in the Diocese of Springfield.

Sr. Jane noted that one outcome of the conference has been the development of a closer relationship between her office and Catholic Charities in the diocese. "This is the first time that we've said, 'Yes, we can get more done together,'" she added. With a major education conference coming up, she sees more collaboration possibilities. □

Words that Work

(continued from page one)

Shulman and Sparks' framing model begins with articulating a problem and then talking about the problem in light of core values, such as those just enumerated. Secondly, once values are articulated, solutions can be offered. Finally, an audience needs to be given specific actions to take.

After a response by **Ralph McCloud** of the **Diocese of Ft. Worth**, Symposium participants split into four breakout groups for Sunday morning. Each tried to appropriate the values-based communications model to the problems of environmental justice, immigration, health care, and living wage/minimum wage. In a final plenary session, Shulman and Sparks responded to the posted results of each group, framing their issue in terms of problem, values, solution and suggested actions.

As part of the Symposium, **Jack Jezreel**, founder of JustFaith, accepted the **Harry A. Fagan Roundtable Award**, with almost two hundred well-wishers present. After appreciations by **JoAnne LeJune** of the **Diocese of Lafayette**, **Suzanne Belongia** of the **Diocese of Winona**, and **Jim Rademaker** of the **Diocese of Grand Rapids**, Jack offered an acceptance speech which received strongly positive evaluations from Roundtable members.

THE ROUNDTABLE

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In his speech, Jack emphasized both the challenge of discipleship and the abundant life it offers. "JustFaith has simply confirmed what I think we all know: we must be prepared spiritually, practically, and educationally to do the difficult," he said. "I am reminded that if any of us wanted to become a Sister of Mercy, a Christian Brother, or a Franciscan priest, we would presume to go through years and years of preparation, because doing any of those things is hard. It asks a lot. Well, quite frankly, so does baptism." Later, he added, "I cannot tell you how many wonderful letters and calls our staff gets on a routine basis about what a remarkable, exciting, energizing, compelling experience the immersion into the spiritual journey called compassion has been for so many people. People experience their newly discovered engagement with the wounded and the broken as new life, as a call worthy of their deepest passion, and a vision worth living for and sacrificing for." Copies of the speech are available upon request.

The Symposium concluded with the Roundtable Membership Meeting, which included discussions of how directors in dioceses less affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita could support directors in the more affected dioceses, and how work for immigration justice is going in member dioceses. A summary of the success stories is located on page four. □

ROUNDTABLE REPORT

The Newsletter of
**THE ROUNDTABLE ASSOCIATION
OF DIOCESAN SOCIAL ACTION
DIRECTORS
NATIONAL PASTORAL LIFE
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