

ROUNDTABLE REPORT

OF THE NATIONAL PASTORAL LIFE CENTER

APRIL 2007

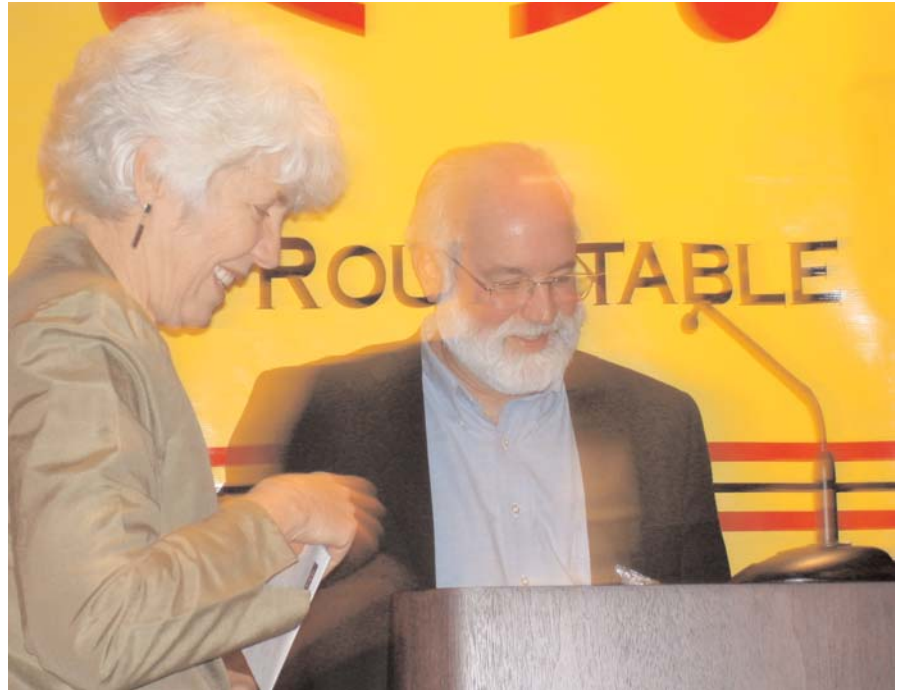
THE ROUNDTABLE ASSOCIATION OF DIOCESAN SOCIAL ACTION DIRECTORS

Louisiana Dioceses Convene Pro-life, Pro-justice Leaders

Hurricane Katrina may have delayed Louisiana's pro-life/pro-justice **Dialogue Retreat**, but nothing could ultimately stop the two-day meeting, held in Grand Coteau, Louisiana March 27-28. Jointly sponsored by the state's **Catholic Conference** and its **Jesuit Province**, the retreat convened about forty Catholic pro-life leaders and forty social justice leaders for conversations about their lives, ministries, and their perceptions of one another.

Process was key to the success of the retreat. After an overview of Catholic moral theology by **Fr. Keith LaBove** of the **Diocese of Lafayette**, **Msgr. Doug Doussan** of the **Archdiocese of New Orleans** (formerly involved in The Roundtable's turn-of-the-century leadership project **Public Discipleship**) led the group in small group discussions. After attaining agreement on ground rules (use active listening, don't interrupt, lighten up), **Msgr. Doussan** explained the difference between articulating interests (for example, protecting human life) and positions (the issues that participants focused on).

The results of the conversations indicated that most participants held the same interests, surprising more than a few in attendance. Such interactions provided a common experience of solidarity and launched a more challenging conversation of questions like



Roundtable Chair Dee Rowland of the Diocese of Salt Lake City presents Rev. Greg Boyle, SJ with the 2007 Harry A. Fagan Award. More on The Roundtable Symposium on page two.

"What separates us?"

Sr. Mary Bordelon of the **Diocese of Alexandria** noted that the most important learning that she observed among participants was "We all want abortion to go away and we all want poverty to go away." Such realizations provided a context for discussions of what divided the group. Although some participants appeared unmoved, most said, "I hadn't thought of it that way."

Rob Gorman of the **Diocese of Houma Thibodaux** offered a similar assessment. "This is the first time these conversations happened! We weren't trying to convert; we were trying to have a dialogue," he said. "We left in dialogue."

Partially funded by a **Lilly Foundation** grant secured by The Roundtable, the Dialogue Retreat was also funded by the Louisiana Catholic Conference and the Jesuit Province of Louisiana. Staff from the **USCCB's SDWP** and **Pro-Life** offices also attended. For more information about the Dialogue Retreat, contact **Danny Loar** at the Louisiana Catholic Conference: 225-344-7120. □

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Roundtable Symposium Focused on Peace

The 2007 Roundtable Symposium attracted the largest crowd in the history of the event: 140 diocesan social action directors, their staffs, and invited national partners and religious order social action directors attended the February 10-11 event in Washington, D.C. Most who attended cited the timely topic: "Peacemaking in a World of Conflict" and presenters: **Rev. David Hollenbach, SJ** and **Rev. Drew Christiansen, SJ** as the main reasons for their coming.

The two Jesuits did not disappoint. Presenting within the context of a process led by **Ralph McCloud** of the **Diocese of Ft. Worth**, **Fr. David Hollenbach** opened the Symposium by noting the tensions in Catholic teaching between an ethic of peace, on the one hand,

and the just war tradition, on the other, which allows for the use of force under specific circumstances. "War is always understood as an evil," he explained. "But we have certain exceptions. The presumption is against the use of force." Fr. Hollenbach said his 1996 visit to Rwanda confirmed for him the necessity of acting to save innocent life. As he walked among the piles of bodies, he recalled thinking "maybe someone should have come in and stopped this."

In reviewing the criteria of the just war tradition, Fr. Hollenbach suggested that diocesan social action directors use the term "just and unjust war tradition" because so few wars truly meet the criteria. He also cited the importance of working for "just peace" by eliminating the causes of war, noting that this idea is also part of Catholic teaching on peace and war.

Fr. Christiansen followed on



Joan Harper of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles delivers a tribute to Rev. Greg Boyle, S.J. at the Harry A. Fagan Roundtable Award Banquet. Two former gang members followed Joan in offering tributes to Fr. Greg.

February 11 with a look at global hotspots, analyzing the likelihood of conflict erupting in each. In addition to places like North Korea and Iran, he added regions where global climate change is bringing about water scarcity.

Evaluations were strongly positive except for demands for a larger meeting place, which the USCCB staff has secured for the next meeting in 2008. □

Membership Meeting Discussion: Immigration Justice Successes and Challenges

(full list available upon request: jkorgen@nplc.org)

Successes-- a Sampling

Advocacy training followed by immigration advocacy event-- effective and energizing.

Partnerships with community organizations led to house meetings and action.

Strong parish interest in "Strangers No Longer" and "Dying to Live" DVDs.

A bishop brought all of his priests to Tucson for Border immersion experience.

Used CCHD money to hire an organizer to generate support for a day laborer center.

JustCoffee grown in Chiapas, roasted in Agua Prieta and sold to parishes changed immigration patterns.

When immigrants share their own stories the results of educational activities are much greater.

Local bishops took strong stands and held town meetings and press conferences to explain their positions.

Process to celebrate entire immigrant experience united new and older immigrant communities.

Challenges-- a Sampling

How do we help the Catholic community "see the faces" and "hear the stories"?

Vocal anti-immigrant Catholics.

Engaging pro-life leaders on these issues.

Labor laws exclude farm workers from many rights.

The trend toward "get tough" legislation, including, in some places, local ordinances restricting services.

Making time in one's schedule to stay in direct touch with immigrant communities.

Latent racism has been validated by local radio.

Bishop vacancies in several dioceses.

Providing accurate, concise information.

Sharing the best educational and liturgical resources.

Keeping *all* immigrants in focus, not just Hispanics.

Large demonstrations caused backlash.

Roundtable Discusses Immigration, Adds Membership for Religious Orders

Several years ago, The Roundtable Board redesigned the Roundtable Membership Meeting to allot at least half of the time to a generative discussion of issues facing diocesan social action directors locally. In short, the Board decided that the association needed more Roundtabling at its annual meeting. This year, the organization focused on immigration, with members articulating both the successes and challenges that they are facing in the field.

Selected items posted by the table groups are listed at left. The full list is available upon request (jkorgen@nplc.org). **Leo Anchondo** of the **Justice for Immigrants Campaign** of the USCCB offered closing remarks of encouragement and highlighted specific resources after the presentation of each group's conclusions.

After the discussion, the Board presented its decision to create a special form of membership: Associate Member, for religious order social action directors. For years, religious order social action directors have been attending Roundtable events and working closely with diocesan social action directors at the local level. Some have even asked if they could join The Roundtable. In recognition of this interest, while noting that the continued identity of the organization is diocesan, the Board created the Associate Member designation.

A second reason for the change was the recognition that diocesan social action directors have much to learn from the experiences of religious order social action directors. Many sisters, brothers, and priests have both a personal and community charism to work for peace and justice. Offering Associate Memberships to our colleagues is a concrete way to bring that wisdom into a seat at The Roundtable

Among those joining The Roundtable

as Associate Members are: **Sr. Diana Oleskevich, CSJA** of the **Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet**, **Rev. Mark Halinan, SJ** of the **New York Province of the Society of Jesus**; **Steve Herro, O.Pream**, the **Diocese of Green Bay's** social action director who moonlights as social action director for **St. Norbert's Abbey**, **Myles McCabe** of the **Marianist Province of the United States**, **Rev. Chris Promis** of the **Eastern USA Province of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit**, **Rev. Tom Joyce** of the **Eastern Province of Claretians**, **Bro. Richard Daly** of the **Southwest Province of the Congregation of the Holy Cross**, **Rev. Francis Gargani** of the **Redemptorists**, and **Rev. T. Michael McNulty, SJ** of the **Conference of Major Superiors of Men**.

Roundtable members will recognize many of the new associate members from previous positions and collaborations at the local level. For example, **Bro. Richard Daly** led the **Texas Catholic Conference** for many years before his recent retirement. Bro. Richard is consequently well-versed on the issues ("I know a little bit about a lot of things," he said). One of his greatest passions of late has been children's health,

an issue that has drawn him into working with many groups outside his religious order.

Myles McCabe is also well known to longtime members of The Roundtable, having served in archdiocesan social action offices in **Louisville** and **Atlanta**. The former Roundtable Board member sees many opportunities for collaboration between dioceses and religious orders on social justice issues. He views the institutions that religious orders run, such as hospitals and schools, as potential allies for diocesan social action directors. The religious order social action director, he explained, can be an important link to those institutions.

A Roundtable associate member who has built a strong relationship with his archdiocesan social action office is **Rev. Mark Halinan, SJ**. Fr. Mark credits former Roundtable Chair **George Horton** with "opening a lot of doors for me." Fr. Mark has worked most closely with the archdiocese on issues of housing and participation in Bread for the World's Offering of Letters. He asks Roundtable members if they find that parishes are sometimes reluctant to get involved in social action. *Louis, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship.* □



Joanne LeJune of the Diocese of Lafayette, Jeanette Arnquist of the Diocese of San Bernardino, and Scott Cooper of the Diocese of Spokane discuss voter guides at a Breakfast Roundtable at the Roundtable Symposium.

ROUNDTABLING

WITH

MOST REV.

THOMAS WENSKI

Most Rev. Thomas Wenski is the bishop of Orlando, Florida, and Chair of the International Policy Committee of the USCCB.

RR: You've had a lifetime commitment to Haiti. What can diocesan social action directors do to help the poorest country in this hemisphere?

TW: There are a lot of ways to offer assistance to Haiti, especially through CRS which has a large presence in Haiti. We had some success in the waning days of the last Congress. We got the Hope Act included in the appropriations bill, which can be an important help to Haiti because the Hope Act gives trade preferences to certain textiles that are assembled in Haiti so that they can be exported to the United States without any hindrance. That's what the country needs: a jump start to the economy.

Then we have to follow the Hope Act. A lot of it now depends on the Haitians themselves and the companies that might go down there to set up factories. Certainly there were people who were not in favor of that legislation and some of the protectionist types did not want to go through it. So we have to keep an eye on it, observe it and watch legislation that could affect Haiti.

RR: The Florida Bishops recently issued "Honoring the Dignity of Work" in solidarity with Florida farm workers and other vulnerable workers. How can social action directors in other dioceses support farm worker justice in Florida and in their own communities?

TW: One of the things that will help farm workers is comprehensive immigration reform. I think that's one of the top priorities right

now--to get legislation passed that will provide an avenue for legalization for those millions of workers, many of them farm workers, who are in this country without documentation. That's the first priority. The other thing is to be aware of initiatives that help farm workers, for example, the **Farm Workers Association of Immokalee** was very active in getting McDonald's to pay more for the vegetables and tomatoes that they bought from that area so that the farm workers would get a raise in their earnings. At the same time they are doing something with Burger King. Burger King is resisting.

RR: Were there any formative moments for you as a pastor or bishop that influenced your efforts for worker justice?

TW: I worked 20 years in the Haitian community of South Florida as a parish priest before I was a bishop. Most of those years were with very poor people--the Haitian refugees. Back then I didn't say Mass in English, only in Haitian Creole in South Florida. These were people who were struggling to survive to take care of their families, who were struggling to get their foot in the door here in the United States, struggling against lack of immigration status, against lack of respect and discrimination at the work place and schools, etc., etc. That was quite an interesting experience of my life. Basically my parishioners were my constituents, and I advocated on their behalf.

RR: You currently chair the USCCB International Policy Committee. What is the most challenging part of the job and the most rewarding part?

TW: The most challenging part is reading through all the documentation and then getting those nasty letters from people from all over the country. Bishops get nasty letters mostly from within their dio-

[W]e continue to resist those who would try to force us out of the public square and into the sacristy.

ceses. I get them from a rather larger attachment because our statements get national coverage. So that's challenging. It is also a rewarding thing because you are making sure that the church remains in the public square and that we continue to resist those who would try to force us out of the public square and into the sacristy. That's not our tradition. Our tradition is, as John Paul II said, to manage the way of the church so that anything that touches human dignity or the rights of the human person is an area that the church is involved with. The most rewarding part is to make the Church present in the marketplace of ideas.

RR: How do you respond to disgruntled Catholics who take issue with a position of the USCCB that has your signature on the bottom?

TW: I try to write a conciliatory letter explaining again the issue that they perhaps did not fully understand. Oftentimes what happens is that they don't read our statements; they read other people's comments about our statements, and the media often times does not accurately reflect what we are saying. That angry letter gives me the opportunity to set the record straight with them. But I often have to remind them that I am not a Congressman. Oftentimes they say, "I am a Catholic, but you don't speak for me." So I say, "That's fair enough, but I am not a Congressman, I am not a Representative, and I don't speak for you. I am supposed to be speaking for the Lord and the Church, for the Church's teaching. You know I am not a representative of the people; I am a representative of Christ." □

Puzzle Solving 101

By Paul Simoneau
Diocese of Knoxville

The world's first televangelist, Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, once recounted the story of a young boy who was given a jigsaw puzzle of the world by his father. In a very short amount of time, to the father's amazement, the boy put the puzzle together. The father asked his son how he so quickly, with so little knowledge of geography, assembled the puzzle. The boy replied simply, "On the other side was the puzzle of a man. So I put the man together, and the world came out all right."

How beautifully this simple story illustrates the essence of Catholic social teaching and the "source and summit" for living it: the Eucharist. The story emphasizes that love of neighbor should, first and foremost, find its source in the love of the new Adam, Christ, who "brings to completion the image and likeness of God in man" (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, No. 121). According to *Gadium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World), "Christ the new Adam... fully reveals man to himself" (No. 22) and "Whoever follows Christ the perfect man becomes himself more a man" (No. 41). Called to be one with Christ as members of his body, we are enabled to share in the gift of his saving work. In his apostolic letter, *Mane Nobiscum Domine*, Pope John Paul II said that "we walk 'with Christ' to the extent that we are in relationship 'with his body'" (No. 20).

Pope Benedict, in his 2005 encyclical, *Deus caritas est* ("God is Love"), warned that "Practical activity will always be insufficient, unless it visibly expresses a love for man, a love nourished by an encounter with Christ" (No. 34). He further says, "People who

pray are not wasting their time, even though the situation appears desperate and seems to call for action alone" (No. 36).

The epiphany of the insufficiency of my own charitable efforts and inability to more clearly see Christ in others occurred several years ago while living in West Africa. Finding myself one morning before a blind and severely disfigured leper begging for alms, I reached into my pocket and drew out two currencies of paper, each of the same monetary value, though with a difference. One bill was brand new, crisp, and clean. The other had been in circulation so long that it was filthy and deteriorating, its printed value almost unreadable. I decided to rid myself of this dirty, crumpled bill and promptly dropped it in the leper's coin bowl. As his leprosy had left him without fingers, he struggled to pick up the money. I watched in horror as he managed to lift the foul wad of paper to his mouth, anchoring it between his toothless gums so he could better unroll it with the stumps of his hands.

I met Christ that day in this leper and saw my action for what it was—empty of true love. I realized that there was such a thing as "uncharitable charity." How many other times in the course of my life—in my marriage, with my children, with my neighbor—had my seemingly charitable acts lacked the divine love that we were created in the image of?

How was it that Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta could go out into the fetid streets of poverty each day and provide such dignity and care to the poorest of the poor, so beautifully proclaiming God's love with only a gentle touch and smile? What was it that made Archbishop Sheen's eloquent voice and words resonate in our hearts as if Christ himself were speaking to us? What was it that enabled Pope John Paul II to bear the crosses of war, communism, an assassination attempt, and the sufferings of age with such courage, love, and dignity? Where did they learn such great love?

Not a day went by when they did not give, as did so many saints before them, primacy of attendance to what Pope John Paul II called the "great school of charity, justice, and peace" (*Dies Domini*, No. 73)—the Eucharist. They never viewed the time devoted to daily Mass and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament as time wasted or a distraction from attending to their responsibilities. As Pope John Paul II once wrote in a letter to the bishop of Liège, Belgium, "Through adoration the Christian mysteriously contributes to the radical transformation of the world and to the sowing of the Gospel." □

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Roundtable Roundup

Bishop Solis first Auxiliary to Serve as DSAO Director

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles has a new social action director-- Auxiliary Bishop Oscar Solis. Not only is Bishop Solis the first bishop to serve as a DSAO director, he is the first Filipino-American bishop ordained in the United States. Previously, Bishop Solis served as co-rector of St. Joseph Co-Cathedral in the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux, Louisiana and was ordained by Cardinal Mahony in 2006. Bishop Solis will be missed by Rob Gorman, social action director for that Louisiana diocese. "Bishop Oscar has always supported the social mission of the church and was especially involved in the 'Justice Way of the Cross' that we held in Thibodaux for many years, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, our CRS Work of Human Hands craft sales and the St. Joseph "Gumbo Gang" Lenten Gumbo sales to raise money for our Thibodaux Good Samaritan Food Bank," he said. In Los Angeles, Joan Harper hailed the appointment of Bishop Solis, saying "Bishop Solis has dedicated his priesthood to

serving the "least of these." He is focused on building up the reign of God, and he does this with a joy of life that is both infectious and inclusive. Our office is blessed."

Roundtable/U. Dayton Certificate Program Boasts First Graduate

The Roundtable's partnership with the **University of Dayton** has yielded its first graduate. **Lisa LaLiberte** of the **Diocese of Phoenix** completed the five online courses at the **Virtual Learning Community** of the **University of Dayton**. Lisa's work for the Diocese of Phoenix served as her internship. Lisa was initially skeptical of the idea of building community on the Internet. "I really thought it would be all in the head--but it wasn't!" she said. Lisa cited the national perspective created by the classes of fourteen students from around the country as one of the chief benefits of the program. "It's easier to feel positive when other people are doing what your doing," she added.

The Roundtable launched the Social Justice Certificate Program in partnership with the University of Dayton to respond to members' requests for an academic certification for leaders who wished to seek such a credential in the absence of a local Catholic university. Most par-

LIVING GOD'S JUSTICE

reflections and prayers



The Roundtable Association of Diocesan Social Action Directors
FOREWORD BY BISHOP MICHAEL J. MCGRATH

The Roundtable's prayer book sold half the copies printed in the first three months of release.

ticipants have come from rural or historically Protestant areas. A dozen people have taken multiple courses and appear to be certificate-bound. To sign up for courses, log on to the website: <http://campus.udayton.edu/~vlc>

Roundtable Prayer Book Nominated for CPA Award

The Roundtable's social justice prayer book *Living God's Justice* has been nominated for a Catholic Press Award. The awards are the Oscars of the Catholic publishing world and will be decided in May. The book was nominated in the category of "social concerns." It is possible that the book will be out of print by the time the awards are announced. In a year-end sales statement, St. Anthony Messenger Press revealed that in the first three months of the book's release they sold over 2,500 copies of the 5,000 printed. Among the book's fans is First Lady Laura Bush who, after receiving it as a gift during a tour of New Orleans, wrote a thank-you note to Tom Costanza at the archdiocesan Office for Justice and Peace. Many of the prayer books have been sold to Roundtable members intending to give the books to key social justice leaders within their dioceses. If you are considering doing so in the next year, you might consider making a bulk

Certificate of Completion



The University of Dayton
In collaboration with



THE ROUNDTABLE ASSOCIATION OF DIOCESAN SOCIAL ACTION DIRECTORS

awards this certificate of recognition on March 8, 2007 to

Lisa LaLiberte

for successful completion of the required courses for the Social Justice Certificate

Angela Ann Zukowski
Director
Institute for Pastoral Initiatives



Jeffery Odell Koenig
Secretary of the Roundtable Association of Diocesan
Social Action Directors
Jeffery Odell Koenig

The first graduates of The Roundtable/University of Dayton Social Justice Certificate Program will soon receive their certificates of completion after finishing five courses and a practicum.

order immediately. There is a very good chance that the book will be out of print by the Fall of 2008. Bulk discounts available from The Roundtable are 15% for 50 and 25% for 100.

Florida DSAO Offices Redouble Worker Justice Efforts

With the publication of *Honoring the Dignity of Work: A Call for Solidarity with Florida's Farmworkers and Other Vulnerable Workers*, the bishops of Florida renewed their commitment to low-income and vulnerable workers, particularly farmworkers. Florida's diocesan social action directors have been on the front lines of implementing the pastoral: before, during, and after its publication.

For example, **Neil Michaud** of the **Diocese of Venice** was deeply involved in the successful efforts of the **Coalition of Immokalee Workers** to secure contracts for higher wages from Taco Bell and McDonald's. Neil's role was to engage parish leaders in the campaign, ultimately generating over 300 letters on behalf of the Immokalee Workers. He also worked with Catholic Charities in the diocese to develop more dignified farmworker housing. Neil noted that the highlight of the campaign for him was the "Truth Tour" in which sixty workers toured the country telling the stories of the farmworkers who harvest produce for the big fast food chains. The Truth Tour originated in Venice, with **Bishop John J. Nevins** blessing the workers as they left.

In the **Diocese of Orlando**, **Deborah Stafford-Shearer** has been busy supporting parishes battling local ordinances with an anti-immigrant worker flavor. In one community, Palm Bay, anti-immigrant forces proposed additional fines and eventual banishment for businesses that employ undocumented workers. The diocese, working closely with parish leaders, successfully stopped the proposal from becoming law. Deborah had high praise for the new statement. She said that the document "gives us more of a framework for what we do.



Bishop of Venice (FL) John J. Nevins Blesses farmworkers involved in the Coalition of Immokalee Workers prior to their "Truth Tour."

It's very readable--it's not academic. It gives a good rationale for why we're doing what we're doing and shows it to our Catholic constituency."

New York Archdiocese Engages Religious in Public Policy Day

New York State's Public Policy Forum Day has typically been attended by a delegation of about 200 laypeople and clergy from the Archdiocese of New York. This year approximately fifty religious joined the existing constituency in Albany with the other dioceses. What drew them in, explained social action director **George Horton**, was outreach to religious communities focused on human trafficking legislation. Many of the orders had been working on human trafficking issues for years, he explained. The Public Policy Forum Day gave them a vehicle to influence state policy on this troubling issue, with implications for Roundtable members interested in reaching out to religious orders.

Border Diocese at Epicenter of Immigration Conflicts

Despite El Paso's reputation as a bi-lingual, bicultural crossroads, discussion of immigration issues remains quite contentious. Sr. Kathleen Judge of the Diocese of El Paso finds

herself quite often in the midst of conflicts between anti-immigrant hard-liners and pro-immigrant advocates. Most recently, the diocese came into conflict with hard-line **Sherriff Leo Samaniego**, who set up identification checkpoints on El Paso roads, purportedly to check driver's licenses. **Bishop Armando X. Ochoa** has come out strongly against the policy, saying that the sherriff overstepped his bounds. County commissioners affirmed the bishop's judgment, voting to censure Sherriff Samaniego.

Minnesota Farming Diocese Takes on Climate Change

In the Diocese of Crookston, Bernadette Dunn has recently seen a groundswell of interest in global climate change. "I was not sure that parishioners would be passionate about it," she said, "but as an agricultural community, they realize that something must be done on this issue." Bernadette has been working closely with the National Catholic Rural Life Conference and an interdenominational conference on global warming to address the issue from a Christian perspective. Staff and leaders from the three largest parishes in the diocese have been integral to developing a Catholic presence at ecumenical events

Common Ground Conference Spotlights Immigration Policy

It's well known that the U.S. Bishops speak with one voice on the issue of immigration, but the positions they espouse on the issue are not always shared by the people in the pews. In recognition of the need for dialogue among Catholics on immigration policy, the **Catholic Common Ground Initiative (CCGI)** held its eleventh annual **Cardinal Bernardin Conference** March 9-11 in Jacksonville, Florida on this topic. Catholics representing citizens groups skeptical of church-endorsed measures like the McCain-Kennedy immigration bill sat down for dialogue with Catholic representatives from business and labor, academics, an immigration judge, the leader of the Border Patrol agents union, and four Catholic bishops, with two staff from the Justice for Immigrants campaign also participating.

As with many CCGI meetings (the Initiative is a sister project with The Roundtable at the National Pastoral Life Center), the first achievement was getting people with the various perspectives together in one room. Then a process led by facilitator Peg Garvey-Mitchell, led participants to hear various reflections on immigration policy from the perspective of Catholic social teaching, global patterns of migration, business and labor, legal, and pastoral/parish perspectives. Each segment included one panelist who told a "story" on immigration, such as Auxiliary Bishop of Boston Robert Hennessey's recollection of working with parishioners who married people they did not know in order to come into the United States, but whose true families were not now recognized by the state.

Bishop Thomas Wenski opened the conference with reflections on Catholic social teaching and immigration policy, stressing, "It's sin that divides us, not diversity." Bishop Wenski took on the "law-

breaker" or "illegal" label applied to undocumented migrants, stating "When laws fail to advance the common good, they need to be changed."

Panel discussions were followed by small group discussions, and both CCGI director **Sr. Catherine Patten, RSHM** and facilitator Peg Garvey-Mitchell encouraged participants to air the core values and even the fears driving their opinions. The result was a level of candor and listening rarely seen in discussions of immigration policy. Presentations bringing the immigration issue into context helped foster that openness. For example, **Mary Delorey** of **Catholic Relief Services** shared that the Mexican minimum wage has recently fallen in value by 70% and the insight that trade agreements have a measurable impact on immigration patterns. Spiritual insights helped deepen the conversation and elevate it above "talking points." **Fr. Rick Ryscavage, SJ**, director of the Center for Faith and Public Life at Fairfield University suggested that the Biblical narrative of migration is more helpful than Catholic social teaching in discussions of immigration policy and also St. Augustine's insight, "We are all aliens on this planet. Our citizenship lies elsewhere."

Hearing labor and business perspectives side by side helped upend stereotypes as the perspectives of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and those of the AFL-CIO seemed not so different. "There must be a path to citizenship," said Randy Johnson of the Chamber. At the same time, representatives of groups which disagree with positions advocated by the USCCB engaged in respectful dialogue, enjoying meals and socials together as well. If nothing else, as business cards changed hands, one could not help remarking that these relationships will serve all participants well when the time comes to forge new compromises that will pass muster in the new (yet still divided) Congress. □

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The Newsletter of
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NATIONAL PASTORAL LIFE
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