

ROUNDTABLE REPORT

OF THE NATIONAL PASTORAL LIFE CENTER

JANUARY 2008

THE ROUNDTABLE ASSOCIATION OF DIOCESAN SOCIAL ACTION DIRECTORS

Second “.7 Now” Conference Draws 500

In October, the **Archdiocese of San Francisco** offered a local follow-up to its 2006 regional “Point Seven Now” conference focused on increasing U.S. foreign aid to 0.7% of Gross Domestic Product. Public policy director **George Wesolek** reported that this year’s follow-up conference sharpened the focus to legislative advocacy.

Over five hundred parishioners from the archdiocese attended the conference, held at **St. Mary of the Assumption Cathedral** and co-sponsored again with the **University of San Francisco**. With the focus on legislative advocacy, participants learned about proposed legislation calling for the Executive Branch to make reports to Congress on its progress toward meeting the Millennium Development Goals, farm and trade bills, and bills pertaining to debt cancellation for the world’s poorest countries. The Millennium Development Goals are eight development goals drafted by the United Nations which include cutting world poverty in half and slowing the spread of AIDS by the year 2015.

Providing background on the political climate pertaining to global poverty were **Dr. Stephen Colecchi** of the **USCCB** and **Alexander Baumgarten**, International policy analyst for the **Episcopal Church**. George explained that the archdiocese has worked closely with the Episcopal Church on these issues and that several participants represented Episcopaleans during the conference.



Among them were **The Most Rev. Njongonkulu Ndugane**, Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa. Archbishop Ndugane joined **Bridget Chisenga**, HIV/AIDS specialist for **CRS-Zambia** and **Marc D’Silva**, CRS Country Representative for India, who presented “The Call of the Poor,” stories and insights designed to help participants focus on the lives at stake in the recommended legislation. Bridget, an HIV-positive teacher who takes U.S.-funded antiretroviral drugs, made the point directly when she stated “Because of you, I have my life”

This focus on making the data real for participants continued during lunch, with an elaborate “gallery walk” featuring displays about successful poverty initiatives developed by local parishes and schools. Participants both contributed to and learned from these displays, offering and embracing good news about the church’s anti-poverty activities.

After workshops for both adults and youth on legislative advocacy, “Prayer and Worship as Advocacy,” “Linking Charity and Justice,” “What Can Parishes Do?”

and “Making a Difference Through Microfinance,” attendees participated in a “Legislative Town Hall Meeting” to which the archdiocese invited local U.S. senators and representatives. Natural disasters in southern California intervened, drawing the entire California congressional delegation to the Los Angeles and San Diego areas and away from the “.7 Now” conference. An aide to Speaker Pelosi nevertheless attended, affirming the conference aims.

The advocacy, George underscored, will not end with the conference. Groups of core lay leaders are currently meeting to discuss next steps, weighing in at crucial moments on recommended legislation. The Catholic Campaign on Global Poverty, through the **USCCB** and **CRS**, continues to serve as an important source of information and updates as action in Congress develops.

But the battle to increase U.S. foreign aid, cancel debt, promote fair trade, and meet the Millennium Development Goals is a national struggle. George suggested the possibility of other regional conferences aimed at promoting these efforts across the United States. Roundtable members interested in exploring developing such conferences should contact George at 415-614-5572. □

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NY DSAO Connects with Youth Sports

Most DSAO's connect with youth through two channels: issues that have particular resonance with youth (e.g. sweatshops, border crossings) and educational venues like schools and CCD/PSR classes. **George Horton** and **Tom Dobbins** of the **Archdiocese of New York** have found a new channel: youth sports. George explained that this outreach had its roots in the 1998 USCCB document *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching*. The Department of Social and Community Development began an intensive outreach to Catholic schools that continues to this day. In reflecting on the tenth anniversary of the document, George saw an opportunity to enlarge that outreach to youth.

"Our Catholic Youth Organization coaches play a vital role in the formation of Catholic youth," he said. "Helping coaches understand how the principles of Catholic social teaching can apply to both sports activities and service projects provides a significant opportunity to further integrate the social teaching into the life of our faith."

Aided by an organizational structure that places CYO as a sister department to the Department of Social and Community Development, George worked out a training plan with CYO leaders and asked Tom Dobbins to lead several trainings.

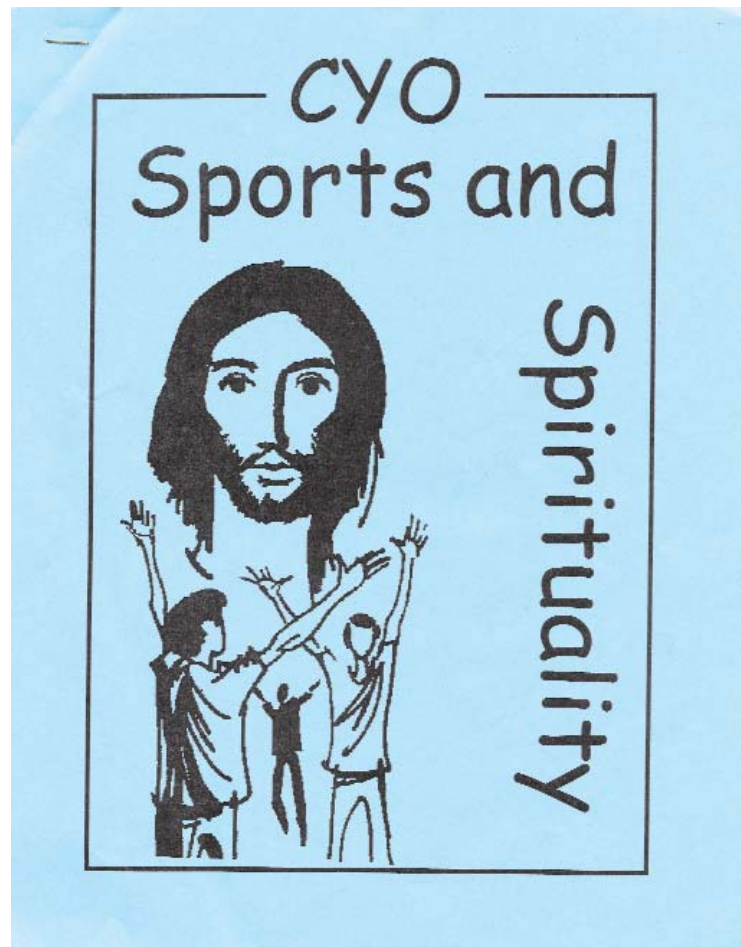
"So far, I've trained 400 coaches," Tom explained. "At the first training, on Staten Island, there were 100 coaches." He reported that while a few were skeptical, most were engaged and even appreciative of the training. For Tom, the most interesting aspect of the training came through the discussion of how to apply the principles. For some groups it might mean a team service project, for others researching where their uniforms are made could be an outcome, followed by

investigating various responses of solidarity, for another it might mean looking at how they treat weaker players and opposing teams. Tom also sees the CYO teams as another venue through which to promote Operation Rice Bowl and explore new global solidarity ventures through sports around the world.

A nine-page publication entitled "CYO Sports and Spirituality" articulates the (USCCB) seven themes of Catholic social teaching and spells out the connection to individual and team behavior. The document encourages teams to

look at these connections through four new categories: Huddles and Handshakes, Prayer and Sacraments, Service to those in Need, and Involving the Whole Family

At a time when parish social ministries are mainly led by women, the outreach to CYO coaches provides an opportunity to reach large numbers of men, much as **Tom Garlitz** of the **Diocese of Joliet** has drawn men into the global solidarity work of the diocese through construction missions to Bolivia. Such strategies help DSAO directors counteract an apparent gender gap in our ministry, reaching men in the context of other interests. □



The Archdiocese of New York developed this publication, "CYO Sports and Spirituality" to help coaches apply seven themes of Catholic social teaching to the realities of team sports within the Catholic Youth Organization structure.

Symposium to Focus on Election Year CST

Among diocesan social action direction, one view on the 2008 election season is widespread: we must do what we can to ensure that the polarization which occurred in many dioceses during the 2004 election is avoided, even as we remain faithful to sharing the church's teaching on family, community, and citizenship.

The Roundtable Symposium Committee, chaired by **Rob Gorman** of the **Diocese of Houma-Thibodeaux**, sought to offer Roundtable members the tools they need to best promote this teaching in an election year. The committee members determined that developing theological skills in the area of virtue ethics and drawing from the experience and toolbox of the **Catholic Common Ground Initiative (CCGI)** would most help diocesan social action directors respond to this challenge.

Dr. Lisa Fullam of the **Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley** will apply the tools of the rapidly expanding field of "virtue ethics" to challenges faced by diocesan social action directors in election years. Extracting the virtues emphasized by the teaching of the magisterium and the statements of the U.S. bishops. Dr. Fullam will introduce the tools of virtue ethics and model their application to the promotion of "family, community, and participation."

In the second half of the Symposium, Longtime CCGI Board member and former USCCB Associate General Secretary **Sr. Sharon Euart, RSM, JCD**, and CCGI facilitator **Ms. Peg Garvey, MSW**, will offer concrete lessons drawn from a decade of CCGI dialogues and offer us an experience of dialogue on the pressing issues facing Catholics in this election year.

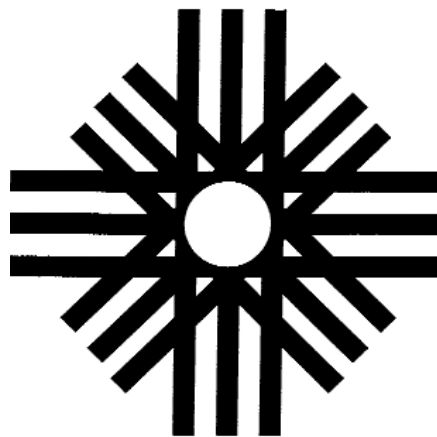
This approach stems from the reali-



Dr. Lisa Fullam is an specialist in the field of "virtue ethics" and an Assistant Professor of Moral Theology at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley.

ty that U. S. Catholics span the political spectrum. Wherever they are politically, Catholics must be able to talk about the church's teaching on public issues and electoral choices. Charity and civility are essential as diocesan social action directors work to promote Catholic teaching on "family, community, and participation" during this election year, and committee members felt strongly that our efforts ought to promote dialogue more than debate as we lead those discussions.

With the publication of *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, the U.S. Bishops have crystallized



**CATHOLIC COMMON
GROUND INITIATIVE**

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for the
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and the
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at
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their own thinking on these issues. The statement has been widely applauded by diocesan social action directors for its clarity in teaching on voting questions and its assertive language encouraging Catholics "to seek those resources that are authorized by their own bishops, their state Catholic conferences and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops." The document passed with only four dissenting votes. The summary "church bulletin" version garnered only one "nay."

Symposium participants are invited to a special strategy session on Wednesday morning, February 27, during the Catholic Social Ministry Gathering on implementing *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* in dioceses. This interactive working session, designed with Roundtable input, will be limited to CSMG participants representing dioceses and will cover material not discussed at the Symposium.

The Roundtable Symposium will also include the **Harry A. Fagan Roundtable Award Banquet** honoring retired Austin bishop **Most Rev. John McCarthy** and the **Roundtable Annual Membership Meeting**, which includes member discussions of key issues facing diocesan social action directors. The Standards and Expectations Committee will also unveil its ten-year revision of *Standards and Expectations for Diocesan Social Action Offices and Directors*, first published in the 1980's and updat-

ROUNDTABLE SOAP BOX

Reflections on Pacifism and Just War Tradition by Barbara DiTommaso

Second in an occasional series of opinion pieces written by Roundtable Association members. Responses are welcomed and will be considered for publication.

Some Christians opposing the US military response in Afghanistan to the attacks of September 11, 2001 stated that Jesus rejected war, that fidelity to the gospel requires nonviolence, even that "He (Jesus) commanded us not to bomb our enemies." Nowhere in Scripture do these statements appear. While a case for pacifism can be based on the New Testament it can't be done by 'citing' something that simply isn't there.

These claims are usually derived from a single line or phrase in the gospels, such as 'love your enemies' or 'blessed are the peacemakers.' Pulling a line out of its scriptural context and attempting to base a theology or a public policy on it is called proof-texting. It is the method of fundamentalists. But let's suppose that Scripture must be interpreted literally. We see Jesus praising a Roman military officer, for believing that Jesus can heal his servant without being physically present to the sick man. Jesus praises his faith as greater than any of his Jewish disciples, but he doesn't tell him to leave military service.

Jesus tells a mini-parable about a king preparing for battle first calculating whether, with the troops he has, he can defeat his enemy's larger army. But Jesus doesn't condemn war, which would be the more important point if, indeed, that were Jesus' position. And neither does he anywhere affirm war.

Jesus enjoins us to turn the other cheek. Clearly this is in response to personal injury, since nations and governments don't have cheeks to be struck or to turn.

Taking this passage as an imperative for governments fails to make the necessary distinction between the personal and the institutional dimensions of life, which is the basic distinction that must be grasped if a person is to understand and act for social justice. Which other injunctions of the gospel would we be willing to take literally? Cutting off a hand? Leaving the dead unburied because the work of the Reign of God is so urgent? When confronted with the woman taken in adultery, Jesus' own example of finding a third way between literal interpretation of the Law and complete disregard for tradition points to the need to go deeper than literal interpretation as a moral guide. Jesus commands us to love our enemies, but he doesn't spell out how. All this saying tells us is that first, we will have enemies, and second, there must be a way of having enemies without hating them. He makes a whip of cords and drives the merchants and moneychangers from the Temple. Would anyone dare imply that, because he used force, this was not a loving act?

Moreover, what is maintained in one verse of Scripture is often contradicted by another: Judge not - and yet - by their fruits you will know them. Keep your deeds of mercy secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you - and yet - your light must shine before all so that they may see goodness in your acts and give praise to your heavenly Father. Thus, revelation is both more subtle and more demanding than literal interpretation.

Perhaps the reason most strongly advanced for Christian pacifism is that, as Jesus was being violently put to death, he didn't strike back.

Again, this section of the gospel cannot be taken out of context. Up to a point, Jesus disputed with those who wanted him out of the picture, and even eluded them when they tried to harm him. But when the opposition to him reached such a pitch that he was betrayed by a friend, then for him to have resisted further would have hidden the real nature of the conflict. It wasn't about points of the Law, but about his unconditional love setting free those who were oppressed. His enemies were spending their time and energy - that is, their lives - trying to hold onto power at all costs. In the face of such opposition, if Jesus had used all of his time and energy - that is, his life - to maintain his position, he would have become like his enemies. When that point was reached, his 'hour' had come and it was time to let go. Of course, Jesus' death can't be reduced to a psycho-socio-political analysis, but such is intended here only to respond to the psycho-socio-political claim that Jesus' refusal to use force at the end of his life says something which it does not.

As a human person, Jesus lived at a certain time in a particular place where he didn't have to deal with weapons of mass destruction, free trade and global warming. The gift of the Spirit is given so that we might be guided as to what to do in our time and place with the wisdom gained both through our personal experience and the experience of our faith community. Such discernment won't always yield the same results, since in a particular situation conditions will be different from any other situation. Those who undertake this discernment probably won't experience the satisfaction of someone who approaches questions of war with absolute certainty that all use of force is wrong.

However, even when force is necessary, it should be used reluctantly, and in as limited a way as pos-

sible, and with remorse for the lives lost, the terror and havoc inflicted, and the destruction caused. It is this painful acceptance of the difficult obligation that reality can place upon us that the Just and Unjust War Tradition expresses in its regrettably dry language. Underneath its conditions is a simple recognition: If the choice were between good and evil, it would always be clear what must be done. But what do we do when the only choices we have are both evil - evil because they both will result in killing, maiming, trauma and destruction? We must choose the lesser of two evils. A clear examples was the 1944 plot to assassinate Hitler, in which the theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer participated. An article about him in the National Catholic Reporter elicited some letters to the editor in which writers opined that it is never permissible to kill, yet did not explain why they believed that the torture and deaths of millions because of Hitler was equivalent to preserving his life.

Every adult has to deal with conflicting moral obligations. Teenagers must both be allowed increasing freedom to make their own decisions and still be protected by their parents' restrictions from making fatal mistakes. Medical decisions that confront most of us at some point simultaneously involve weighing how much pain is bearable, the probability of improvement if a certain treatment is undergone, costs, impact on the rest of the family and drain on the finite services available in the system. Most of us daily must discern how to spend our time - that is, our lives - amid competing demands. If by not opposing an aggressor in a given situation, it can be expected that more killing, death and destruction might result, obviously that would be a greater evil than using some force to stop the aggressor.

In the 1990s, for example, if the

international community had not allowed the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina to go on for so long before intervening - that is, if the Serbs' large artillery had been destroyed early on - much brutal suffering, killing that amounted to genocide, and destruction could have been prevented, and perhaps today there would be less acrimony in that multiethnic region.

But the use of force almost always tends to go beyond what is needed to stop aggression. In 1945 Allied forces destroyed Cologne and Dresden when, for all practical purposes, Germany was already defeated. Some argue that using atomic bombs against Japan had motives other than defense (see *A World Destroyed* by Martin J. Sherwin, professor emeritus of history at Princeton University).

While refraining from all use of force may allow an individual to feel relief from not having to discern what to do in the specific conditions of each situation, and perhaps to feel personally more pure for not having used or supported violence, that's not much comfort to the people who are the victims of aggression. I used to be a pacifist. Or at least I thought I was. Then I went to tiny Nicaragua (pop. 3 million) being attacked in a proxy war by the greatest military power in history. I realized that what I opposed was not self defense, but any government's imperialism and repression of another people's legitimate right to self-determination.

An anecdote from that time as told by a Witness for Peace volunteer illustrates the lesson I learned. WFP volunteers, mostly US citizens, went to border regions where the contras (counter-revolutionaries) operated from bases in neighboring countries. It was hoped that the presence of North Americans might deter attacks on the local civilians. She was sitting in a cooperative with one old man and a few women and children. On a nearby hill, an intense battle raged between the

local militia and the contras. As the fighting came nearer, the old man picked up his gun, leaned against a fencepost, and with no aggression in his heart, positioned himself to shoot if necessary. The volunteer said that her overwhelming feeling was that "In this cooperative, at this time, I have nothing to offer these people."

When asked whether her own understanding of nonviolence had been challenged, she replied, "I think seeing this day-in and day-out would challenge any North American's conception of nonviolence."

Was the old man no better than the contras in his willingness to use force? The key is that he acted without aggression. He did not look forward to hurting others, perhaps even killing them, but this was a situation not of his choosing. In his stark, concrete circumstances, he understood that loving our enemies doesn't absolve us from loving those who aren't our enemies. Somehow he had to balance loving his enemies with loving his friends - in this case, his family and neighbors - the people whom God had made his first responsibility.

We believe that the Reign of God is both here and yet-to-come. Anything other than God's Reign that is held as an absolute is thereby an idol. Those who make an idol of war, seeing it as the only solution to conflicts, deny that the Reign of God is here. This partial presence of the Reign of God means that, in a particular situation, there may be better ways than the use of force to relate to other human beings here and now.

On the other hand, those who make an idol of nonviolence by regarding it as the only solution to conflicts, deny that the Reign of God is yet-to-come: that is, it is now incomplete in an imperfect world populated by imperfect people such as ourselves, who must sometimes use
(continued on page eight)



Roundtable Roundup

Tucson JustFaith Grad Promotes Justice with DSAO on Blog

Joanne Welter of the Diocese of Tucson has been working closely with JustFaith graduates to find vehicles for these leaders to promote justice on the border with Mexico. Katie Hirschboeck is one such leader, who developed a social justice blog in partnership with the diocesan social action office. The blog, named "Psalm 85: Justice and Peace Have Kissed," is located at psalm85.blogspot.com. Postings include notices of local events sponsored by Joanne's office and local parishes, but also resources that would be helpful to local Catholic social justice leaders, such as various internet resources on Catholic social teaching. A sidebar indexes postings according to which theme of Catholic social teaching they fall under. For example, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* is located under "Family, Community, and Participation."

Archdiocese of New Orleans Implements Racism Pastoral

On the eve of Hurricane Katrina, Archbishop Alfred Hughes' new pastoral on racism sat on Tom Costanza's desk awaiting publication. The hurricane delayed release of "Made in the Image and Likeness of God" for two years. The aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita confirmed the need for such a pastoral statement, but presented new challenges which had to be met. The statement was completely reworked to account for the new social justice issues the city faces, as well as the events of the flood and initial recovery period.

Now, Tom is focused on the implementation phase of the pastoral, which includes workshops for the principals and DRE's of the archdiocese as well as diocesan staff. The lead trainer is a former principal at St. Peter Claver Church who has designed the training in three movements: (1) presenting the pastoral statement and its history, (2) discussing its content, and (3) looking at the varied kinds of racism, in church and community.

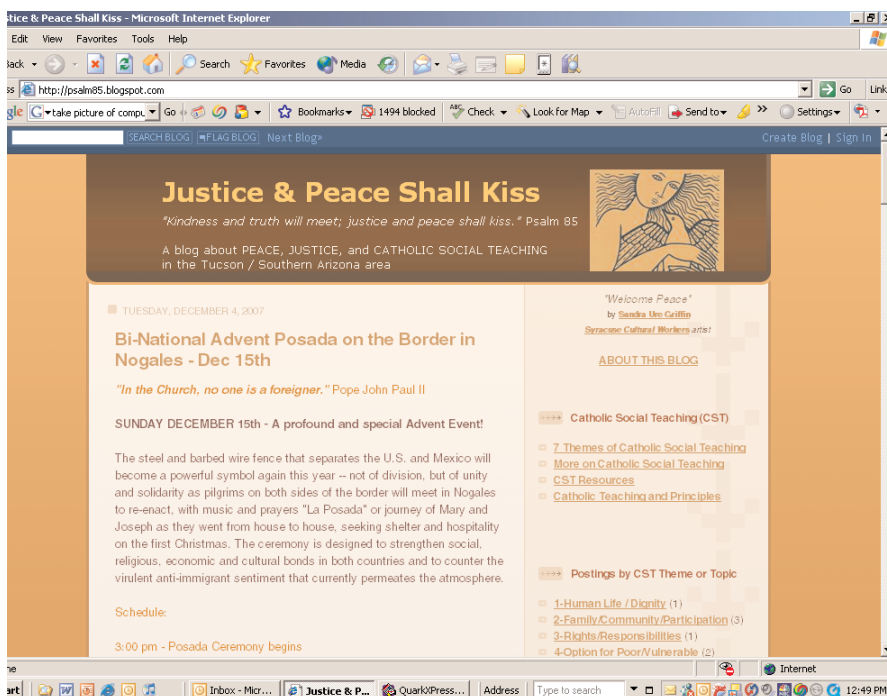
Roundtable Member Named Chancellor of Boise Diocese

Anyone who knows Marcie Wilske would say that she is at the same time compassionate, direct, and efficient, not to mention productive. When Bishop Michael Driscoll of the Diocese of Boise considered whom to invite to become the next diocesan chancellor, he did not have to look far. This fall he asked Marcie to lead the operations of the diocese as chancellor. She will succeed Sr. Arlene Ellis, SSC who will be retiring. Marcie is grateful for the long window of time, because it will give her the opportunity to prepare. "I just have to say thanks for the bishop's trust and confidence in me," she added.

Impact of Foreclosure Crisis Studied by DSAO

When Michael Hovey and Joyce Hyttinen of the Archdiocese of Detroit began to put together information about the "rolling thunder" of mortgage foreclosures, job losses, and the loss of health insurance, they became alarmed. Just how severely were these economic factors, which seemed to be roiling the Motor City and its metropolitan area, affecting parishes and Catholic charitable agencies?

They devised a survey which was sent to parishes and agencies throughout the archdiocese. To date, 90 completed surveys have been received. They reveal a clear pattern of increased requests for assistance, especially requests for cash to help stave off mortgage foreclosures. Michael explained that all of the parishes and agencies will be invited to an archdiocesan summit in February, 2008. He stated that some solutions will go beyond simply providing low and moderate income homeowners with cash, citing an ACORN model in which mediating institutions step in and negotiate interest rates on adjustable mortgages with banks. Such strategies have been recently featured in national media.



6 The creation of a JustFaith graduate, psalm85.blogspot.com is one of the newest Catholic social justice blogs.

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Former Diocese of Ft. Worth social action director Ralph McCloud will become national CCHD director in January.

local legislators and poverty commissioners could meet face-to-face with people living in poverty. The tours have proved popular with the commissioners. All other Minnesota diocesan social action directors have hosted such visits, he added.

Los Angeles Archdiocese Adopts Regional Approach

The **Archdiocese of Los Angeles** is the most populous diocese in the United States. Its size suggests a regional approach to social action, believes **Sr. Gail Young, SSS**, who assists **Bishop Oscar Solis** in leading the archdiocesan peace and justice office. Sr. Gail, working with Joan Harper, now assists regional peace and justice commissions in 4 of the 5 regions of the archdiocese. Each region of the archdiocese contains about 60 parishes, with its own regional bishop. Some of these regional commissioners also serve on the archdiocese's storied peace and justice commission. Sr. Gail stated that the regional commissions help keep the work focused. With so much social need and only part-time staff, there is ample opportunity to become scattered. The regional commissions also surface new leaders, who can be offered training and vehicles for action by

the peace and justice office.

New "Social Action Summer Institute" for Youth Founded in Arkansas Diocese

Tom Navin and Rebecca Spencer of the **Diocese of Little Rock** had such positive experiences at recent Social Action Summer Institutes that they founded one of their own. Thirty teenagers from all parts of Arkansas traveled to Little Rock in the summer of 2007 for a week of learning about Catholic social teaching and building relationships with people living in poverty while helping out in various **Catholic Charities** ministries throughout Little Rock. During the mornings, the youth studies scripture and Catholic social teaching, moving onto their placements in the afternoon. These volunteer opportunities included family homeless shelters, food pantries, and an ESL teaching site.

Springfield, IL DSAO Engages Diaconate, Places Deacons

Sr. Jane Boos of the **Diocese of Springfield in Illinois** sees the future of her office as tied to the diaconate. Her office leads the nation with two deacons working in the office and a third considering joining her team. The deacons come not with a specific assignment but to try different social ministries and discern God's calling. One of the deacons, for example, will be heading up a staff task force on racism. Sr. Jane has also been involved with the diaconate formation program, bringing Jack Jezreel of JustFaith Ministries into the diocese to speak. In addition to his prophetic talk on social ministry, Jack gave the deacons homework: to spend an hour outside of their "comfort zone" (such as a prison, for example) and then return in a month to discuss what happened. Such experiences offer the deacons a taste of the "border crossings" popularized by JustFaith. □

The economic problems in Michigan go beyond the current home-loan crisis. Michael pointed to the loss of 100,000 auto industry jobs in the last two years and the 8% unemployment rate as indicators of a "single-state recession." One of the consequences of this localized recession is that parishes have lost an average of \$40,000 in annual income, prompting staff layoffs and program closures. The job losses have also added impetus to archdiocesan legislative advocacy on access to quality health care, he added.

Poverty Tours Uncover Host of Needs in New Ulm Diocese

In the **Diocese of New Ulm**, **Chris Loetscher** leads a DSAO with a specifically rural flavor. One of the consequences of ministering in a rural area is that the priest shortage hit early. As a result, the Diocese of New Ulm has become a leader on the issue of multi-parish pastoring. Chris works with eighty parishes, but they have been organized into 23 "area faith communities." Chris served on the planning committee that developed this model over a period of years.

Education about rural poverty continues to be a top priority for Chris. When Minnesota's state poverty commission expressed interest in learning more about poverty outside the main metropolitan areas, Chris developed a stop on a poverty tour at a parish food shelf, where

Roundtable Soapbox

(continued from page five)

imperfect means. If war is sometimes the lesser of two evils, someone must wage it.

What could be a New Testament basis for pacifism? In Scripture there is a dynamism that leads to an ever more humane, equitable, inclusive approach to people and institutions. While we do not find in the gospels that Jesus condemned slavery, when the first slave was accepted for baptism, the eventual elimination of slavery among Christians was guaranteed. Women weren't present among the Twelve, but the inclusion of women among the disciples was the death knell for patriarchy.

Our baptism sets us on a path whose direction is towards the peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Some people will feel more intensely that this goal will be reached only by making it the means as well. That is, that the all-encompassing peace of the fullness of the Reign of God will only come about through the refusal to use force now.

Others will feel more strongly that justice is the means to peace, and therefore that unjust aggressors must be stopped or peace will not be attained.

For both, their stance is visceral, a gut reaction to what seems obvious. Let us pray that between these two approaches, possibly represented in your family and certainly in your parish, respect and dialogue will prevail as an act of faith in the transcendent God who is beyond all our human differences.

Barbara DiTommaso is director of the Commission on Peace and Justice of the Diocese of Albany NY. □

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