

ROUNDTABLE REPORT

OF THE NATIONAL PASTORAL LIFE CENTER

JULY 2006

THE ROUNDTABLE ASSOCIATION OF DIOCESAN SOCIAL ACTION DIRECTORS

Immigration Tops DSAO Agendas

Brother Steve Herro's workday on March 27 began at 6:00 a.m. with an interview with the independent Catholic radio network **Relevant Radio** on the topic of immigration reform. It continued, for the **Diocese of Green Bay** social action director, with phone calls and emails to ensure a good turnout for Green Bay's immigration justice march. The day concluded with an evening screening and discussion of **Fr. Dan Groody's** migrant film, *Dying to Live*, for a church adult faith formation group.

Such was the experience of scores of diocesan social action directors across the country in the months of March and April. According to The Roundtable's 5-year survey, immigration justice rose from the number eleven public policy priority for diocesan social action directors in 2000 to number one in 2005. It could be argued that it squeezed out *all* other issues in March and April.

When Did We See You, Lord? *A Parish Leader's Reflection*

When my eight-year-old daughter carefully finished coloring the letters of our sign that proclaimed, "Welcome the Stranger!" I quickly added "Matthew 25:31-46" for those who might not recognize the scripture quote or did not read the USCCB statement. Then I packed up my three light-
(continued on page eight)



Marchers gather outside the Cathedral of St. Paul after the Twin Cities march for immigrant justice.

Each diocese responded in its own way, most in conjunction with the USCCB Justice for Immigrants campaign. According to **Elena Segura**, associate director of the **Office for Justice and Peace** in the **Archdiocese of Chicago**, the archdiocese's Parish Outreach Initiative connected with thousands of Catholics in their places of worship. Staff trained two hundred speakers, mostly Latin American and Filipino immigrants, to tell their stories in a variety of settings. Some of the speakers possess documents allowing them to stay in the United States, some do not.

The presentations have included a strong public policy message, encouraging parishioners to back federal immigration reform legislation supported by the USCCB. In all, 150,000 postcards were collected supporting the legislation then known as the McCain-Kennedy bill.

In the **Archdiocese of Kansas City, Kansas**, new director **Bill Scholl** held his first major event, drawing 250 people to listen to **Archbishop Naumann**, several immigrants, and an employer of undocumented migrants speak in a "town-hall" style meeting.

The gathering was a collaborative effort, drawing on the expertise of the archdiocesan Catholic Charities, a local community organization, El Centro, and the Hispanic ministry staff of Holy Cross parish in Kansas City. The employer described his undocumented employees as model workers and Archbishop Naumann asked participants to offer immigrants the same warm welcome that he received as a new archbishop, for "each immigrant has something much greater than being an archbishop, for each migrant possesses the image of God and each immigrant is of such worth that Jesus Christ gave His life on Calvary for them. How can we ignore the plight of those who are so precious in the eyes of the Lord?"

In the **Diocese of Pueblo**, **Bishop Tafoya** has declared 2006 "Migration Year," encouraging a steering committee led by DSAO director **Larry Howe-Kerr** to develop programs and events throughout the diocese to educate Catholics about the issue and
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Sr. Helen Prejean Joins RT Book Discussion

Sr. Helen Prejean joined twenty members of The Roundtable for a discussion of her book *The Death of Innocents* on March 28, led by **Tom Costanza** of the **Archdiocese of New Orleans**. Whereas Sr. Helen's first book, *Dead Man Walking*, focuses on two men that she believed to be guilty, this second book looks at two men she believed to be innocent, Dobie Gillis Williams and Joseph O'Dell. She accompanied both of the men to their executions.

In *The Death of Innocents*, Sr. Helen takes the reader through both murder cases, presenting evidence never heard by the juries in question "either due to the incompetence of the defense lawyers or the rigid formalities of court procedure." She uses these stories as a springboard to a general indictment of the death penalty system as so flawed as to inevitably lead to the execution of innocents.

During the book discussion, Sr. Helen praised the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops for its recent death penalty statement. "The bishops are right on," she said. "Even the Knights of Columbus are taking stands against the use of the death penalty," as a result.

Sr. Helen encouraged diocesan social action directors to continue taking incremental approaches to the abolition of the death penalty. "It's good to be incremental," she said. She described Catholics as a "moral wedge" on this issue and cited successes in Missouri and New Jersey as signs of hope that people of faith are getting their pro-life, anti-death penalty message across.

When participants asked her how they might better engage parishioners, she suggested a total cate-

SISTER HELEN PREJEAN

Author of the #1 New York Times Bestseller
DEAD MAN WALKING

The Death of Innocents

An Eyewitness Account of Wrongful Executions

"Luminous, undevoted, angry and very moving. . . [It] tests our conception of human decency." *The New York Times Book Review*



chesis approach, with a special emphasis on victims. Specifically, she suggested an annual Mass for victims of violence tied to advocacy against the death penalty.

In assessing the state of the aboli-

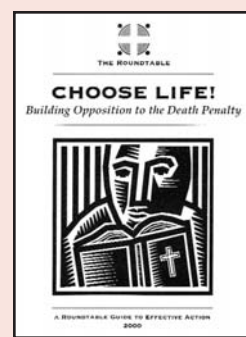
tion movement, Sr. Helen stated that she was most impressed with the numbers and commitment of young adults working to abolish the death penalty. She has worked with many university journalism students on several campuses on The Innocence Project, which has freed several death-row inmates, and she has helped them start victims' support groups for those victimized in these crimes in which an innocent person was convicted.

Sr. Helen did respond to one criticism of her book. Answering a question about her treatment of Pope John Paul II's landmark change to Catholic teaching on the death penalty, Sr. Helen referred to suggestions from some sources that she takes too much credit for these refinements in Catholic teaching, expressed in John Paul's encyclical *The Gospel of Life*. "We're all bubbles in the pot," she said, "Many people contributed to this. And we all need to keep working together." □



Emil Antonucci Designer, Artist, Conscientious Objector, Friend 1930-2006

Emil's artistic sensibilities permeated The Roundtable, from its logo to the design of Roundtable Report, to the Summer Institute brochure artwork, to the Public Discipleship books. We will miss him.



Roundtable Board Approves Peace Symposium

The Roundtable Board met in Washington D.C. on June 15-17, to discuss pressing issues facing diocesan social action directors and plan the next year's programming.

Chief among the Board's business was approving a Symposium topic for 2007. After much discussion, the Board approved a "peacemaking" theme, bringing together a session on the theological evolution of Catholic teaching on peace with a discussion of future threats to peace which derive from conflicts over natural resources. More details and speakers will be shared during the coming months. The Roundtable Symposium will be held February 10-11, 2007, immediately prior to the Catholic Social Ministry Gathering.

The Board meeting included a report from Roundtable Chair **Dee Rowland** of the **Diocese of Salt Lake City** on her activity with the **USCCB Domestic and International Policy Committees** and meetings with USCCB staff. The latter meetings included a discussion with **Leo Anchondo** of **MRS** on the current status of the **Justice for Immigrants Campaign** and local initiatives for immigrant justice. The traditional meeting with SDWP included discussions on the impact of the bishops' Plans and Priorities process on the various organizations that resource diocesan social action directors and the status of the various USCCB issue campaigns.

The Board also met with JustFaith founder and executive director, Jack Jezreel, to discuss the successes and challenges of implementing JustFaith in the dioceses. Jack affirmed that JustFaith is strongest in those dioceses where a social action director has integrated the program into her or his workplan, taking care to identify opportunities for JustFaith graduates to take action. He also announced that JustFaith is developing eight-

week modules for groups to study particular social justice issues, like racism and the environment. The Roundtable Board affirmed that decision, seeing an opportunity for those who could make an eight week commitment but not a thirty-week commitment to get involved. Jack also shared the results of a massive quantitative evaluation of JustFaith, funded by the SC Foundation.

The Board also considered a proposal to allow and encourage religious order social action directors to join The Roundtable as associate members. The Board encouraged its membership committee to develop the proposal further, for consideration at the February Board meeting.

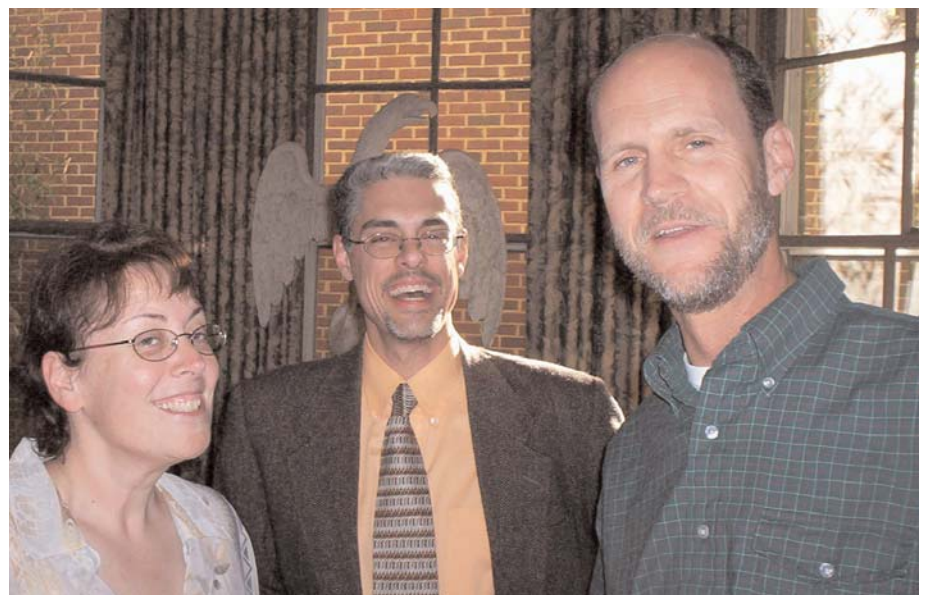
In addition to organizational business, Board members engaged in three substantive discussions about how to strengthen the work of diocesan social action. The first occurred on the opening night and focussed on how social action directors can build bridges between pro-life and pro-justice Catholics. One conclusion was that perhaps a bridge doesn't need to be built but rather walls of separation need to be knocked down,



Kay Furlani of the Archdiocese of Newark listens intently as Leo Anchondo of the USCCB updates the Board on immigration legislation before Congress.

as the teaching is already unified.

Fr. Gene Lauer, director of the **National Pastoral Life Center** led a theological reflection on **Pope Benedict's** new encyclical, *Deus caritas est*, and **Dr. Maryann Cusimano Love** presented and facilitated a discussion of "Resurrection Politics" at a special dinner hosted by **Agnes, Bob, and Sarah Nixon** at **Bob and Sarah's Georgetown home**. **Maryann** explained that her term, "Resurrection Politics," derives from the church's success in raising issues like debt relief and land mines from political oblivion through the exercise of imagination. □



Suzanne Belongia of the Diocese of Winona and Scott Cooper of the Diocese of Spokane share a light moment with JustFaith founder and executive director Jack Jezreel.

ROUNDTABLING

WITH
**DEIRDRE
MCQUADE**

Deirdre McQuade is the National Pro-Life Spokeswoman for the United States Bishops.

RR: How did you first get involved in this ministry?

DM: High school kick-started my involvement when I participated in the March for Life with my youth group. It made a big impression on me that people traveled so far to express their solidarity with women and their unborn children. I was also struck by the wide variety of religious perspectives represented.

Then, at Bryn Mawr College, I co-founded a pro-life student organization. As a non-sectarian women's college, it is very feminist and, on the whole, reflexively pro-abortion. We were a voice on that campus saying that you need not be pro-abortion to be pro-woman. If anything, abortion harms rather than enhances women's lives.

Our views were received coolly in the spirit of tolerance, but there was very little honest engagement with our pro-life perspective. Classmates and faculty assumed we were only concerned about unborn children, and not their mothers or their healthy upbringing. It served as a training ground to articulate why we don't need abortion to be free. True liberation can never be at the expense of those more even vulnerable than we are.

RR: How did your career build on those early experiences?

I later counseled for several years at a pregnancy help center. Through hundreds of face-to-face

conversations, I came to understand the web of issues that women in poverty and the working poor wrestle with every day. Our counseling work was holistic. We sought to empower women to make life-affirming choices both during pregnancy and after delivery — to have a healthy pregnancy, give birth and raise a family, or place the baby for adoption in a way that respects the woman's dignity as a human person. Making such choices requires a rich network of resources. If that network is missing or compromised it is much harder for a woman to make healthy decisions. In addition to helping women avert the tragedy of abortion, being pro-life also meant to me providing a wide spectrum of supportive services, such as affordable transportation and educational programs and part-time child care.

More recently, I worked with Feminists for Life as an advocate in Washington, DC. Being pro-life is perfectly compatible with being a feminist. All of the early feminists were pro-life. They spoke about abortion in the strongest of terms. In addition to seeing it as a crime against unborn human beings, they saw it as exploitation of women. They wanted the right to vote partly to pass or maintain laws protecting women and their children from abortion. It's quite ironic that the feminists of the late 20th century broke with their own heritage to fight for legalized abortion.

The best civil rights tenets of the feminist movement also apply to protection of the unborn: non-violence, non-discrimination, and justice for all. So long as the most vulnerable, voiceless members of our human family lack the basic right to life, all other appeals to civil rights have a weak, if not arbitrary, foundation.

RR: What is your understanding of the Gospel of Life?

All of the early feminists were pro-life. They spoke about abortion in the strongest of terms.

DM: The Gospel of Life is grounded in Christ's coming "so that we may have life and have it abundantly." Fundamentally it is the person of Jesus Christ, who came into the world to give us the gift of eternal life – in light of which this mortal life has inestimable value.

The Gospel of Life speaks a word of hope to a world where life is discarded, destroyed, and exploited in far too many ways. In this "culture of death," life is not valued for its own sake. People are valued only instrumentally and not because life has inherent dignity. Though we live in this deadening context, I also believe in the basic goodness of people's hearts because everyone is created in the image and likeness of God. If we speak the truth in love, the Holy Spirit will use us to renew the face of the earth.

RR: How does the death penalty fit into your view of the Culture of Life?

DM: The Gospel of Life affirms the inviolable dignity of all humans from conception to natural death. Speaking from a moral theological perspective, there are offenses against innocent human life that we believe are inherently evil: abortion, euthanasia, embryonic stem cell research that requires the destruction of the embryo. Such offenses against human life are never justifiable, and commitment to them is non-negotiable since *all* social justice work is necessarily based on this fundamental right to life.

The U.S. bishops recently reaffirmed their commitment to end the use of the death penalty in *A Culture of Life and the Penalty of Death*. This is a vital step to build respect for human life in our country. The bishops acknowledge that the state may impose death penalty if there is no other way to protect the public, but it is a right we can, and should, forego exercising in this country. In our age it is virtually unnecessary to protect society. It's a sign of backwardness that we still avail ourselves of the death penalty when we can impose the sentence of life without possibility of parole. Personally, I have protested the death penalty because I don't want the state executing in my name with my tax dollars.

RR: What about issues like health care and nutrition programs? Where do they fit into the Culture of Life?

DM: There are many public policy issues that we must focus on to build a Culture of Life. We can all agree there is a need to eradicate hunger and ensure access to affordable health care, even though people of good will can disagree about how to best accomplish those goals. It is important for those who are building the Culture of Life in different ways to be in fellowship with each other: to eat together, talk together, exchange ideas, and pray for each other. That's my hope for the overlapping pro-life and social justice movements.

RR: In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the right to health care is described as a human right. How we get specifically to the point of all people having health care is a matter of prudential judgment. Is that what you're saying?

DM: Absolutely. Let us pray for wisdom and creativity as we move toward that goal.

God calls different people according to their talents, experiences, and particular bishops to address the systemic brokenness in our society.

RR: How would you suggest that our members work with Catholics who think that abortion is the only issue that anyone should be working on?

DM: As Catholics we are both pro-life and pro-justice. As my USCCB colleague, Joan Rosenhauer, puts it, "they are essential and complementary reflections of the teaching of the Gospel and the doctrine of the Church."

We must cooperate to build a world in which abortion and euthanasia are unthinkable, where all human life is affirmed, embraced and celebrated. Many members of the Body of Christ are called to concentrate their efforts on abortion, the most common direct attack on defenseless humans. In doing so, they also provide a stronger foundation for other justice work.

But there is so much work to do to make abortion unthinkable! There are "many gifts but the same Spirit." God calls different people according to their talents, experiences and particular bishops to address the systemic brokenness in our society. There are different kinds of legitimate culture-building roles and, I trust, sufficient resources of time, money, and personnel to do what God calls us to accomplish. We are called to cultivate trust in God's providence, foster mutual regard for each other, and work as strategically as possible with the resources and opportunities we've been given.

RR: What do you think of groups like Catholic Answers that make endorsements of candidates by distributing voter guides that stick to five of the life issues, calling them "non-negotiables?"

DM: We do not comment on election-related materials distributed by others. Every four years, the bishops publish *Faithful Citizenship*, a comprehensive resource for Catholic voters.

Again, it is important to be informed and thoughtful about moral priorities, and to assess political options in light of them. Unfortunately, in our two-party system neither political party is adequate — which isn't to say that they are equivalent to each other. Neither party offers a complete ticket to the Culture of Life, so it requires making wise decisions based on principle. Respect for the most vulnerable members of the human community — including frozen embryonic humans, children *in utero*, gravely ill people of all ages, and our dying elders — is fundamental. It forms the basis for honoring the rights of all other vulnerable populations, including prisoners, victims of trafficking, and our brothers and sisters living in poverty.

In addition to talk of voting behavior, I would love to hear sustained reflection on encouraging new leadership more in tune with our moral values and priorities. Are we inviting young people to embrace an integrated view of the human person and community based on the fullness of Catholic social thought? What are we doing now to raise up faithful, creative Christian leaders for cultural and political renewal? Are we praying for them and equipping them with the tools to be faithful in their vocations? The "JP II" generation is starting to invest themselves in shaping public engagement in all sectors of the culture, including business, science, law, the media, higher education, and family life. My hope is that they will also help reform both parties in service to our country and the Kingdom of God. □



Roundtable Roundup

Michael Hovey to Stay at Archdiocese of Detroit Post

In the previous issue of *Roundtable Report*, we reported that **Michael Hovey** of the **Archdiocese of Detroit** would be resigning his post during the summer and enrolling in the seminary to prepare for priestly ordination. In late April, Michael withdrew his application and offered this reflection to Roundtable members:

After further prayerful consideration and discussions with my spiritual director and other friends, I have decided to withdraw my application to the seminary at this time. As much as I have been excited to move toward priesthood, I was also experiencing a growing regret about leaving the work I had really just begun, two years ago, in my role as "chief promoter" of Catholic social teaching in the Archdiocese of Detroit. In addition, in the past year, I have become extremely involved in our diocesan ecumenical and interfaith efforts, and already serve on several boards of directors/trustees with our Muslim, Jewish and fellow Christian partners. In short, I felt like I was kind of "abandoning ship" at a very crucial

time, just as many things "get off the ground" (to mix metaphors). So – I will continue to be a VERY happy and active member of the Roundtable!

West Virginia Director Compiles History of Environment Victims

Carol Warren of the **Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston** is well known for speaking on behalf of the victims of environmental injustice. But in the past year, she has made a name for herself as an oral historian, coaxing citizens of the West Virginia coalfields to speak for themselves. The result is the booklet *Like Walking onto Another Planet*, a compilation of seven interviews with residents deeply affected by mountaintop removal mining and its accompanying environmental destruction and health issues.

Many of the residents have no clean drinking water due to toxic pollutants from sludge impoundments. They live with daily jolts and noise from blasting and air quality problems caused by clouds of dust produced by the blasts. Kentucky native Joel Futrell's illustrations accompany the interviews. The booklet will be available soon from the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, in hard-copy and electronic format on their website: www.ohvec.org.

CARITAS Peacebuilding Effort Engages DSAO Directors

"Peacebuilding" is a phrase more diocesan social action directors have been using in the past few years. Several Roundtable members have been involved in the peacebuilding efforts of CARITAS Internationalis, through affiliations with Catholic Relief Services, Catholic Charities, USA, and Catholic Campaign for Human Development.

Brian Corbin of the **Diocese of Youngstown** is one such director. He stressed, "It's an area that all of us in social action and Catholic Charities should be talking about." Peacebuilding, in this initiative, is not about "bringing the troops home." Instead, Brian explained, it is an effort to use the tools of anthropology and sociology to determine effective ways to mediate and defuse crises and help the church become a safe haven. The peacebuilding model has been applied in North America to case studies of gang activity and border justice.

Seminary Connections Grow Stronger in Cleveland DSAO

Roundtable members have, at times, expressed concern about a perceived lack of interest in Catholic social teaching and action among current seminarians. **Tom Allio** and **Jeff Campbell** of the **Diocese of Cleveland** have taken action to build relationships between the social action office and diocesan seminarians to ensure that justice remains constitutive to the preaching of the Gospel among newly ordained priests.

One of their initiatives enlists **Fr. Don Dunson**, a moral theologian at Borromeo Seminary in the diocese. Fr. Dunson is well known to many Roundtable members for his book *No Room at the Table: Earth's Most Vulnerable Children*, published by Orbis. In *No Room at the Table*, Fr. Dunson Chronicles his travels to meet the children of the poorest of



6 **Bishop Gerald Kicanas** addresses a crowd during a Tucson demonstration for immigrant justice.

the poor around the world. Cleveland's diocesan social action office sponsored a trip in 2006 in which seminarians travelled with Fr. Dunson to retrace the path of his travels. The seminarians had the opportunity to meet with some of the children profiled in Fr. Dunson's book and conduct in-country social analysis sessions with the author.



Tom Navin Breaks Top Speed Record for a DSAO Director

Diocese of Little Rock social action director **Tom Navin** broke the speed record for diocesan social action directors when he clocked a 112 mph lap at the **Memphis Motor Speedway**, an official NASCAR racing site. Tom won a forty-lap racing experience at the racetrack in a raffle. In his final lap, he reached a



Marchers in Santa Fe prayed in Our Lady of Guadalupe Church prior to an April immigration reform rally.
Pholoby L. Marisol Nygart.



Marchers in an April, 2006 demonstration in Fort Worth, Texas shelter a baby stroller with the American flag.

speed of 112 mph. While he enjoyed the experience, Tom noted that auto racing is more physically demanding than most people understand. "Those cars don't have power steering," he said. "And you really feel the G-force."

San Francisco DSAO Announces Major Conference

George Wesolek of the **Archdiocese of San Francisco** has announced "a landmark gathering to mobilize against global poverty." The conference, titled "Point 7 Now," is cosponsored with five other organizations, including **Catholic Relief Services** and the **University of San Francisco**. Over ten organizations, including The Roundtable, have signed on as partners.

The phrase "Point 7 Now" refers to **Pope John Paul II's** call for developed countries to offer 0.7% of their Gross National Income to poor countries in the form of aid. Several major speakers have been confirmed including economist **Jeffrey Sachs**, **Cardinal Renato Martino** of the **Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace**, **David O'Brien** of the

College of the Holy Cross, and **Margaret O'Brien Steinfelds** of the **Fordham Center on Religion and Culture**.

New Chicago Director Brings Special Interest in Commerce

Nicholas Lund-Molfese took the helm at the **Archdiocese of Chicago Office for Justice and Peace**, replacing Roundtable Board member **Bill Purcell**, who recently took a position at the **University of Notre Dame**. Nick brings to the job a concern for the many players in economic life. He is a strong believer in lay Catholics promoting justice through their work lives. "The message is about personal vocation: What's God calling you to today," he said.

Nick cites **Peter Maurin** of the **Catholic Worker** as one of the main inspirations for his work for justice and the personalism of the **Catholic Worker** as a guiding force in his life. "The people working on my house, as soon as I see them I care about them," he explained. "We have to have a real relationship with the people we do commerce with." □

When Did We See You, Lord? (continued from page one)

skinned, blond and red-headed children to join the sea of brown-skinned, dark-haired people at the immigration rally. Stories of our own immigrant ancestors, from Ireland, England, France, Germany, Poland and Italy, had been long lost through the generations. Yet I felt the need to stand in solidarity with these newer immigrants at the historic April 10 rally on the National Mall.

As we neared the turnstile at the Vienna Metro, a woman passing in the other direction noticed my sign and said, "I'll welcome them if you'll pay for them!" Never the master of the quick-witted reply, I struggled to answer the economic challenge her question posed. How much in social security do illegal immigrants contribute? What percentage of the construction industry or agricultural industry relies on their labor? I'd read the numbers, but couldn't spout them off in the two-minute encounter with this challenger. Later, I realized I should have tossed aside economics and stuck to the spiritual question. I wish I had replied, "Is that the way you plan to answer Jesus at the Last Judgment?" I could imagine a re-writing of the scene, where a third group is present who says, "I did see you a stranger, but it would have cost too much to welcome you." □

*Terry Angelotti, Parish Leader
Submitted by Anne Murphy,
Parish Social Ministry
Diocese of Arlington*

Immigration Justice (continued from page one)

encourage them to contact their legislators. The diocese has also encouraged Catholics to join the "white ribbon campaign" against "the use of violence, intimidation, threats, and the spread of fear, hatred, and divisiveness as tools and tactics on immigration or any other issue."

Many dioceses participated in the massive rallies that sent millions of migrants and their allies into the streets of most American cities. In general, social action directors reported a positive spirit to the rallies and larger turnouts than expected. Marchers at the earliest rallies tended to carry Mexican flags, but marchers in later demonstrations carried American flags. The change came in response to concerns expressed by many, including Cardinal Roger Mahony, that their message was being misunderstood. Some observers had questioned the commitment of marchers to United States citizenship because many carried Mexican flags.

Roundtable members reported that generally, feedback on their immigration justice work has been positive. One director reported being "targeted by a local 'shock jock' for our prophetic stance," and some said that hostile phone calls outnumbered supportive calls to their office, but most DSAO directors reported a much more supportive response from the faithful.

Whether the compromise bill favored by the church will pass the House remains to be seen. It is clear, however, that this campaign has helped DSAO directors to build new alliances within and outside of the church, spurred new connections between DSAO offices and migrants, led us to the edge of an important public policy victory, and energized a cohort of "John Paul II" bishops to act for justice in new ways, staffed by the membership of The Roundtable. □

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OF DIOCESAN SOCIAL ACTION
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NATIONAL PASTORAL LIFE
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