



ROUNDTABLE REPORT

OF THE NATIONAL PASTORAL LIFE CENTER

JULY 2007

THE ROUNDTABLE ASSOCIATION OF DIOCESAN SOCIAL ACTION DIRECTORS

CRS Trips Broaden Global Perspectives

Fighting global poverty and promoting peace around the world has always been part of the diocesan social action director's job portfolio, but recent **Catholic Relief Services** trips to developing countries for DSAO directors (some of whom are CRS directors, some of whom are not) have added new depth to this dimension of the work.

For **Linda Batton** of the **Diocese of San Jose**, a recent trip to Tanzania helped highlight "the concrete differences that CRS is making." Travelling with other West Coast CRS directors, she was able to compile stories of hope in the midst of extreme poverty to bring back to the diocese. The people she met said, "You've heard the story; now the burden is yours."

Rich Fowler of the **Diocese of Stockton** took that burden very seriously. When he returned, he spoke at Masses in four different parishes, four Sundays in a row. He also wrote a letter explaining the trip and what he learned to every pastor in the diocese. Second collections at the Masses more than repaid the expenses of the trip to CRS. Rich noted that the trip has built stronger connections among the West Coast CRS directors, "We've really kept in touch with each other."

Scott Cooper of the **Diocese of Spokane** also participated in the Tanzania trip. Scott was especially taken by the efforts of a woman named Maria, a mother of five,



New Roundtable Leadership: Barbara Budde of the Diocese of Austin and Suzanne Belongia of the Diocese of Austin have been elected Roundtable Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively. (More on page two)

whom he met farming near Lake Victoria. Maria farmed sweet potatoes, corn, and beans, experimenting with agricultural methods to increase her food security. Scott was impressed with her commitment to experimenting to find the best ways of providing for her family and earning extra income. "Her credentials were better than some of the agronomists I knew at Washington State University," he said.

Scott was also struck by the biblical culture he encountered. "The parables we hear in the Gospel are right in front of us. You don't have to translate them," he said. "You'll see fishermen casting nets and women drawing from wells.

Some DSAO directors who are not

CRS directors have participated in these educational trips. For example, **Kay Furlani** of the **Archdiocese of Newark** (see page three), **Dee Rowland** of the **Diocese of Salt Lake City**, and **Rob Shelledy** of the **Archdiocese of Milwaukee** recently returned from Kenya, where they toured CRS projects in that country, but also interviewed CRS staff in Darfur to gather information and stories to enhance their legislative advocacy work. □

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Roundtable Board Elects New Leaders, Sets 2007-8 Agenda

Roundtable Board members met in Washington D.C. June 7-9 to elect a new Executive Board and plot the course for the organizations new pastoral year. **Barbara Budde** of the **Diocese of Austin** was elected Chair and **Suzanne Belongia** of the **Diocese of Winona** was selected to become the new Vice-Chair. The two will replace **Dee Rowland** of the **Diocese of Salt Lake City** and **Anthony Mullen** of the **Diocese of Rockville Centre**, respectively, who completed three years in these positions.

As Chair, Barbara will represent diocesan social action directors as a consultant to the **USCCB Domestic and International Policy Committees**. She will also preside at all Roundtable Board and Membership meetings. "I'm very humbled," she said, as she accepted the position.

Decisions made at the meeting included approval of a proposal to focus the **2008 Roundtable Symposium** (February 23-24) on promoting the Catholic social teaching theme "Family, Community, and Participation" in an election year. The Symposium will help diocesan social action directors develop the skills they need to promote dialogue rather than polarization during the upcoming election season. Half of the program will include an exploration of a "virtue ethics" approach to Family, Community, and Participation which begins conversations about public issues with a discussion of virtues, for example, "What are the values that we as Catholics hold dear, and how do we bring those values to public life." The second half of the Symposium will draw upon the experience of the Catholic Common Ground Initiative in pro-

moting dialogue among Catholics on polarizing issues. This segment will include both discussion of the CCGI principles of dialogue and also an experience of a CCGI dialogue on Family, Community, and Participation.

After noting how difficult choosing a **Harry A. Fagan Roundtable Awardee** was this year (because of the strength of several nominations), the Board selected retired **Bishop John McCarthy** of the **Diocese of Austin**, a founder of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development and a leader in the Civil Rights Movement in Texas. Bishop McCarthy will receive the award at the Roundtable Symposium in February.

The Board also authorized a tenth-anniversary revision of "**Standards and Expectations for Diocesan Social Action Directors**," itself a 1998 revision of a document written by Roundtable Founder **Harry A. Fagan**. The revision will be drafted by the Standards and Expectations Committee chaired by Sr. Maureen Joyce of the Diocese of Albany and presented to the Board for further revisions at its February, 2008 meeting. In an hour-long discussion about how the field of diocesan social action ministry had changed over the decade, Roundtable Board members noted the increase of the importance of pro-life activities in their work, the growth of JustFaith ministries, the increased placing of DSAO's in Catholic Charities agencies, and the shifting of priorities following 9-11 and the clergy sex

abuse crisis, among others.

Colleagues from the USCCB-MRS and SDWP arrived on the afternoon of June 7 for conversations about immigration policy, the reorganization of the USCCB, and SDWP priorities for the coming year. Board members queried John Carr on his "Not Dead Yet" memo and found him quite optimistic about the social justice work of the conference. John announced eight job openings in the new department and asked the Board's help in filling the positions, which include a new CCHD director position.

The Board's dialogue with colleague organizations also extended to **Catholic Charities, USA**. **Rachel Lustig, Parish Social Ministry Director**, discussed the new **CCUSA Poverty in America Campaign**, and a possible Roundtable endorsement. The Board voted unanimously to endorse the campaign and discussed with Rachel what the organization could uniquely contribute. One outcome of the conversation was a commitment to distributing materials to Roundtable members who are not housed within Catholic Charities structures. The Roundtable made the same commitment to CCHD when the Poverty, USA campaign was launched and the Board was asked to make an endorsement.

The Board took a break on the evening of June 8 to attend a dinner organized by NPLC Board member **Agnes Nixon** and **Bob and Sarah Nixon** of Washington D.C. A highlight of this evening was hearing the recollections of longtime D.C. housing activist Ed Guinan □

Coming Soon!

**A 10-Year Anniversary Revision of
*Standards and Expectations for
Diocesan Social Action Offices***

Rev. David Beckmann Joins Global Poverty Book Discussion

The Roundtable sponsored its fifth book discussion in three years, as diocesan social action directors discussed *The End of Poverty* by **Jeffrey Sachs**, moderated by **Sr. Maureen Joyce** of the **Diocese of Albany**. Special guest **Rev. David Beckmann**, president of **Bread for the World**, provided commentary and background on the book.

Rev. Beckmann described the church's anti-poverty work as "the great Exodus of our time," noting "God is moving in our time to end extreme poverty. We will tell our grandchildren that we were there and what role we played." His comments came at the start of the hour-long discussion, which focused on Sach's bestselling book.

Unlike some global poverty books, which suggest that the prosperity of rich nations is built on the backs of people living in extreme poverty in the poorest countries, Sachs argues that prosperity in one place need not breed poverty in another. At the same time, he states, wealthy nations must take specific steps to end extreme poverty, such as debt relief, spreading the "green revolution" to countries which have not achieved food security, and eradicating diseases like AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. Targeted development aid works, Sachs maintains, and the Millennium Development Goals offer us a roadmap to ending poverty as we know it, not with class warfare, but with the application of the know-how we already have.

Kay Furlani of the **Archdiocese of Newark** shared that she saw evidence that this approach works on a recent trip to Kenya (see page one) with **Catholic Relief Services**. Kay toured agriculture projects aimed at increasing food production and developing drought-resistant crops. These efforts have added to the food security of these villages, the first step to develop-



*Rev. David Beckmann provided commentary on **The End of Poverty** by Jeffrey Sachs.*

Associate Member Wins Pax Christi Co-Presidency

Roundtable associate member Marie Dennis has been elected the first lay co-president of Pax Christi International. Archbishop Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya of the Congo will also serve as co-president for a three-year term beginning November 4. Marie explained that Pax Christi International had a tradition of bishop-presidents and debated whether a co-presidency should be established that would allow lay people to serve in collaborative leadership with a bishop. She noted that since Pax Christi was founded by a lay woman and a bishop in France over sixty years ago, so this model of leadership is nothing new.

Marie will continue to serve as director of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, where she has worked for eighteen years.

Not to be confused with Pax Christi, USA, Pax Christi International is an organization of affiliates and partners, including national chapters like Pax Christi, USA, but also pre-existing local organizations that do not change their names when they join. Individuals do not belong to Pax

ment, according to Sachs.

While Rev. Beckmann embraced Sachs' analysis of global poverty, he raised the concern that nowhere in Sachs' book does Sachs acknowledge the church's contribution to poverty reduction, for example, the role of faith in the lives of people like Rep. Spencer Bacchus (R-AL) who championed debt relief for the poorest countries (or the role of faith in the lives of constituents who lobbied other members of Congress on the bill). We may have the human know-how to end extreme poverty now, Rev. Beckmann suggested, but we need God's help to get it done. □



Christi International, but rather to affiliates and partners like Pax Christi, USA.

Marie's top goal is to increase the visibility of the movement. Pax Christi has seen tremendous growth in Africa, and she seeks to make stronger connections with Latin American affiliates and partners. Increasingly, Pax Christi members in the global South have turned their attention to building peace locally. Marie hopes that Pax Christi International will facilitate the sharing of these peacebuilding experiences from country to country. The sizes of the organizations range from all-volunteer operations to the fifty professionals who staff Pax Christi-Holland.

Marie also noted the threat to peace posed by global climate change, underscoring that competition for natural resources fosters conflict. She also explained that environmental problems can also be an outcome of armed conflict, another concern for all of those working for peace.

Congratulations to Marie from your colleagues at The Roundtable! □

ROUNDTABLING

WITH

DAN MISLEH

Dan Misleh is the Executive Director of the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change.

RR: Why did you decide to focus on climate change?

DM: Of all of the environmental issues, climate change seems to have risen to the surface as the one that requires urgent action. It is an issue that cries out for true solidarity: it doesn't just impact a neighborhood, it impacts the entire globe. The global warming pollutants that we're putting into our atmosphere do not discriminate.

RR: Does what you have learned about climate change make you more confident or less confident that we can address this issue?

DM: I'm more confident that we can address the issue, but I think it needs to happen sooner rather than later. In the last year, lots of things have happened: from former Vice-President Al Gore's film to Congressional hearings and legislation. States all over the country are implementing greenhouse gas emissions programs—look at California or the regional greenhouse gas initiative in the Northeast. And over 500 mayors in the United States and around the world have realized that cities have an enormous impact on climate and they have begun to speak out and act on their beliefs.

The science has also become much clearer. Since I began this work last June, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change issued three new summary reports, which give very clear indications that yes, humans are causing this and that the impacts of climate change on the poor are going to be severe.

RR: So you're convinced that we

have not yet reached the point-of-no-return?

DM: I'm convinced that we're pretty close to it. The planet has never experienced this level of concentration of CO₂ as far back as we can tell. But let me add that what this means for the planet is fairly uncertain. Most scientists believe that we have to keep CO₂ below 450 parts per million (we're at around 380 ppm now).

RR: What's the best way to respond to the skeptics?

DM: On the science, there are very few skeptics.

RR: Our members say they've met a few in parishes!

DM: Let's hear exactly why they are skeptical. Is it about the science? Is it about some other ideology? Or is it simply that they just don't know enough? I would acknowledge with them that yes, what to do about this is still very complicated and open to debate. But whether or not it's happening appears to be a closed case. The debate now is more around solutions. Still, some people remain skeptical because they have an ideological bent or simply don't know enough about the science.

RR: Who are the bishops who are leaders on this issue?

DM: Bishop Blaire of Stockton, California, and Bishop Wenski of Orlando, Florida have shown an understanding that this is a serious moral issue and that there are places where the Catholic church ought to weigh in, particularly as it relates to how poor people are going to be impacted. The three bishops of Alaska (Archbishop Schwietz, and Bishops Warfel and Kettler) are very clear about the issue since their state has been severely impacted.

This spring, Archbishop Migliore, the Representative of the Holy See

Business groups and environmental groups rarely talk about the implications of climate change for poor people in this country and around the world.

to the United Nations, offered two major addresses on climate change. The first of these was at a hearing sponsored by the Ohio Catholic Conference, the USCCB and the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change. This April 14 address was published in *Origins*.

High-profile lay leaders have also embraced action on climate change. One in particular is the Vice-President for Environment, Health and Safety for Duke Energy, one of the largest East Coast electricity suppliers. He's Catholic, from Cincinnati, and attends St. Columban Parish. He has really put his neck out on this issue as a utility industry executive and taken some heat for it among other executives in the industry. But he understands that this is an important moral issue and his faith is informing his action.

RR: Who are the people you are working with whom some might be surprised are concerned about climate change?

DM: There is a whole group of business leaders (The US Climate Action Partnership) who have now embraced mandatory federal regulation of climate change. Insurance companies, utility companies, large manufacturing companies like General Electric, the DuPont chemical company, are calling for mandatory federal regulations. These are businesses that understand that climate change creates a

great deal of future uncertainty. Businesses do not like uncertainty. They're basically saying, "Give us the medicine now, so we know what we're up against, rather than wait until things become less clear for us in the regulatory regime." Of course, there is also potential money in this too under a cap and trade program that is being debated in Congress. More and more investors are also demanding that companies disclose their "carbon footprint" and socially responsible investment firms are crafting ways to track this and make recommendations to investors.

RR: What are ways that diocesan social action offices can make a difference on this issue?

DM: Where the religious community, and in particular the Catholic community, can play an important role is with the poverty question. Business and environmental groups rarely talk about the implications of climate change for poor people in this country and around the world. If the religious community does not become a voice for those people who are left out, then the poor will suffer the consequences, even though they contribute so little to the problem. So besides the more obvious tangible things such as energy efficiency (light bulbs, insulation, driving less), diocesan directors can also engage low-income communities to partner with them around climate change related issues such as urban sprawl and public transportation (perhaps a CCHD-funded group is working on these) or work with Catholic charities agencies to find ways to ensure natural disaster assistance will assist those most in need.

RR: What do you think about using the film *An Inconvenient Truth* in parishes?

DM: I would say use it very cautiously. Overall, the message is good, but many in our community may have a problem with the mes-

senger. We need to persuade people who are not yet convinced of the need for action on climate change. Showing the film in parishes can create lots of problems. In an age where we are so politically divided (Catholics included) some will see the film as the Democrats' view of climate change. So you've potentially lost half of your audience in a parish. And it's probably the half that is less likely to embrace the notion that there needs to be public policy action on climate change.

So I would recommend other resources. The USCCB has just put together an excellent companion to the bishops' climate change statement. These materials are available in booklet form as well as on a CD. Some of our own folks have done excellent work. There's a PowerPoint presentation that was put together by the IHM sisters in Monroe, Michigan that is excellent. It is an hour long, shorter than the Al Gore film, and very Catholic. Then there is a film called *The Great Warming* that takes a much less partisan approach to climate change.

RR: What is the purpose of this new organization that you are leading?

DM: The purpose of the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change is to more fully implement the bishops' 2001 statement. We're trying to create a space within the Catholic community, particularly through diocesan social action directors and state Catholic conferences, to have a more thoughtful Catholic conversation about this issue, particularly around the three primary principles of that document: poverty, prudence, and the common good.

The CCCC has more of a focus on grassroots education and action rather than looking solely at federal legislation—that's more the role of the USCCB. We're trying to help the Catholic community carefully think through those three principles as they apply to climate change.

RR: Are there any books on climate

change that you recommend?

DM: *The Science and Politics of Global Climate Change: A Guide to the Debate* by Andrew Dressler and Edward Parson (Cambridge Press, 2006) walks through the arguments and public policy very well. If you want to understand just the poverty part of this, you have to go no further than the recent Congressional Budget Office Report of last month. It looks at, for example, what a cap-and-trade program will do to and for poor people, depending on how it's structured. There are the three Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change summary reports on the science of climate change: the consequences of climate change, and some of the ways to resolve the issue. These were released over the past five months.

RR: What's the best we can hope for and the worst we should fear?

DM: The best we can hope for is that soon-meaning in the next ten years—there will be a significant effort to shift our economy away from fossil fuels and toward alternative energy production. Scientists believe that this is within reach. So I think that with energy efficiency, with different types of energy production, with carbon sequestration, (storing CO₂ underground) there are many approaches out there that can get us in a downward trajectory.

The worst-case-scenario is that we continue with business as usual and on a path that puts more CO₂ into the atmosphere. Then there is the likelihood, the scientists think, that feedback processes will reach the point of no return. There will be huge storms and huge droughts, and huge heat waves and big floods, lots of extinctions of species of plants and animals, and this will be a very different planet than the one we are used to. And most scientists believe that it is important to start now and do this gradually than be forced to cut emissions dramatically. A big pill will be far harder to swallow than a small one. □



Roundtable Roundup

FL Catholic Conference Produces Farmworker Advocacy Guide

Sabrina Burton of the Diocese of St. Petersburg recently shared the Florida Catholic Conference's new advocacy guide for farmworkers (and others), *Yes, You Can...Be Heard!* Unlike most faith-based advocacy guides, which have been developed with the middle-class parishioner in mind, this manual is aimed at low-income farmworkers who seek to make their voice heard in the halls where decisions are made. The guide includes handouts and training outlines in both English and Spanish. A companion DVD includes a role-play of several farmworkers meeting with a state representative. *Yes, You Can...Be Heard!* is available from the Florida Catholic Conference: npowers@fla-cathconf.org.

Fall River Director Decries ICE Immigration Raids

In some respects it was the Church's finest hour. On March 6, when 500 federal Immigration, Customs, Enforcement (ICE) offi-

cialists in 300 different vehicles arrested 328 undocumented workers in New Bedford, MA, Diocese of Fall River social action director Arlene McNamee put Catholic Social Services into "disaster mode." In the basement and convent of Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe at St. James, multi-services such as rental assistance, legal services, diaper and food vouchers were offered to the 92 families affected. Staff also worked to build asylum cases for those undocumented migrants who face death in their own country.

Fall River bishop Most Rev. George Coleman also enlisted the help of Boston archbishop Cardinal Sean O'Malley in condemning the raids publicly and demanding more just policies toward undocumented migrants. Arlene credits the successful deployment of services to strong relationships within the agency and the church with New Bedford's Mayan community. She continues the response to the raids by "educating about the role of immigrants in the community."

Lenten Film Series Engages Faithful on Immigration

In the Diocese of San Bernardino, Jeanette Arnquist offered Lenten

opportunities to engage the issue of immigration through the vision of several filmmakers and the tools of Catholic social teaching offered by the bishops of the diocese. For example, on March 16, Bishop Barnes led a screening and discussion of *The Invisible Mexicans of Deer Canyon*, a film about the daily struggles, triumph, and spirit of undocumented Mexican immigrants living and working quietly in the midst of one of the wealthiest regions of America. Award winning filmmaker John Carlos Frey attended the discussion, offering his perspective on the making of the film.

On March 23, Auxiliary Bishop Most Rev. Rutilio del Riego hosted a discussion of the film *Posada*, by Jesuit Father Mark McGregor, which portrays the journeys of Densi, Johnny, and Wilber, who, as teenagers, separately left their home in Central America for the United States. They each were detained by immigration officials for months between 1999 and 2002. They relate their story to Las Posadas, a Mexican tradition that retells the Christmas story of the Holy Family's search for shelter. Previous issues of *Roundtable Report* have introduced other uses of Las Posadas to promote immigration justice.

Wilmington Director Describes Life as Secular Franciscan

Seventeen years ago, Andy Zampini, SFO, answered a call to live as a Secular Franciscan. A married layman, the Diocese of Wilmington social action director made a profession to follow the Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order, a document which encourages Secular Franciscans to observe the Gospel by following the example of St. Francis of Assisi. Andy explained that this commitment begins with a radical interior conversion which must be renewed every day. Secular Franciscans make a commitment to carefully reading the Gospel, applying its lessons to life, and then scrutinizing life experiences to bring to further



6 John Carr shares plans for future directions for the USCCB's social justice work to the Roundtable Board.

Want to contact a DSAO director featured in Roundtable Report?

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Check your listing today!



Earth Conservation Corps founder and Board reception host Bob Nixon discusses social action with outgoing chair Dee Rowland.

reading of the Gospel. Andy describes SFO's as "sisters and brothers of Penance, noting that the Sacrament of Reconciliation offers particular peace and comfort, helping him "keep on the path."

The "path" also includes a commitment to both human equality and the preferential option for the poor, Andy explained. It encompasses a respect for life that includes honoring "all creatures, animate and inanimate, which 'bear the imprint of the most high,' and a commitment to strive to move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship."

Andy develops this spirituality in solidarity with 25 members of his regional Secular Franciscan group. Secular Franciscans are a recognized order of the church and not a kind of associate membership of a priestly order. "It's a wonderful connection," he said. "It helps me be who I want to be. Catholic social teaching is a part of me because of this."

For more information about Secular Franciscans, go to the website www.nafra-sfo.org.

New Miami Director Integrates Wartime Experience

Life experiences shape the approach of any diocesan social action director. For **Gloria Luna**, newly appointed DSAO director for the **Archdiocese of Miami**, her commit-

ment to justice is fueled in part by the experience of growing up during El Salvador's brutal civil war. "I remember the bombs ; I remember the fear," she recalled. After graduating from St. Thomas University, Gloria worked organizing migrants in a number of venues, including stints in Kentucky, Texas, and Florida. She discovered similar issues among migrants and the powerful role of the church as a mediating institution during a period as an organizer with the DART network. Gloria will bring her organizing skills to the work of diocesan social action—her top priority at present is relationship building and building the capacity of the office.

Former RT Chair Receives League of Women Voters Award

Dee Rowland of the **Diocese of Salt Lake City** just completed a three and a half year run as Roundtable Chair, the longest time served of any Roundtable Chair. In recognition of her contributions to the organization, the Board presented Dee with a beautiful "Peace" window hanging, created by Work of Human Hands artisans in India.

Dee's service to the Diocese of Salt Lake City has also not gone unnoticed. On April 18, the Salt Lake City chapter presented her

with its Community Service Award, for her contributions to civil society in Utah. Dee began her non-partisan political work with the League of Women voters decades earlier. When The Roundtable chose "framing" as a Symposium topic two years ago, she circulated a 1980's League of Women Voters publication which included an article on framing to illustrate the enduring power of the idea.

Rick Doucette Takes Helm in San Antonio

After the unexpected death of **Peter Monod**, **Rick Doucette** has been asked to take over as diocesan social action director in the **Diocese of San Antonio**. Rick served as associate director for the office for several years, after a career in the Air Force, followed by a stint as a diocesan journalist. Rick received a call to social justice ministry on the return trip from covering a protest on the death penalty in Huntsville, Alabama. A voice told him to apply for the newly advertised associate director position. Rick believes that experience leading a prison religious education and rosary program had an important effect on his faith development and ultimate decision to focus on social ministry. Rick's top priority will be developing stronger relationships with parishes over the coming year. □

DSAO Directors Promote CCUSA Poverty Campaign

When the Roundtable Board endorsed the **CCUSA Poverty in America Campaign**, it came as no surprise to most observers, since many dioceses have appointed social action directors to work as lead staff on the campaign. Even those working outside of a Catholic Charities structure have been asked to play a key role in the development of strategies to promote the campaign, particularly in the areas of organizing, economic development (both commonly associated with CCHD), and public policy.

In the short time since the release of the *Poverty in America* document and the announcement of the campaign, social action directors have already found innovative ways to implement the campaign. For example, in the **Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph**, new social action director **Jerry Young** organized a breakfast with the Mayor of Kansas City, Missouri and Bishop Robert Finn. City councillors also attended. This was no ordinary prayer breakfast, however. Bishop Finn delivered a message based in biblical language about serving the city, stressing hunger, health, housing, and economic stability. Local service providers, including Catholic Charities staff, presented perspectives on local poverty and asked for the mayor's assistance in fulfilling their mission. Jerry arranged seating at the breakfast to ensure that city council members sat with service providers from their district.

In the **Diocese of Paterson**, **Joe Duffy** has worked to develop mini-bulletin inserts for each week of the year. These inserts combine information about poverty at the local, state, and county level, as well as the addresses of useful websites, drawing from CCHD materials and publicly available poverty data. Joe believes that keeping the messages

short but sustained will help engage more parishioners. Joe, also the director of Catholic Charities for the diocese, believes that the CCUSA campaign is of critical importance in helping to sustain the church's social mission. "Over the past two years, we've seen shrinking budgets for government-funded programs for the poor. That's got me alarmed. This is the first time in ten years that I had to close a program," he said. Joe believes that the additional time he and other staff put into the campaign will pay off. "It's a risk to take on a new campaign," he said, "but it's important," .

Bob Mundy of the **Diocese of Brooklyn** (and Queens) is working with colleague **Nina Valmonte** to organize focus groups of people living in poverty in each of Catholic Charities' four vicariate-based community centers. The idea is to work with low-income people to tell their stories. These stories can then be used in public awareness efforts and in legislative advocacy. Best of all outcomes, Bob said, is people living in poverty conveying their stories to public officials and in parishes in their own voice.

Bob also stressed the importance of the campaign. "Welfare reform didn't end poverty," he said. "We need people to feel uncomfortable about this." Bob noted that thirteen years (the planned length of the campaign) will be a long haul, but he thought the length of time was prudent. "It's realistic. It's going to keep poverty on the agenda." □

More information on the church's domestic anti-poverty campaigns can be found at

www.povertyusa.org

www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/poverty/

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The Newsletter of
**THE ROUNDTABLE ASSOCIATION
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NATIONAL PASTORAL LIFE
CENTER**

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For more information, contact:
The Roundtable
18 Bleecker Street
New York, NY 10012-2404
roundtable@nplc.org