



ST. PETER'S JOINS IN THE "CAMPAIGN TO REDUCE POVERTY"

By Mary Bertani

Catholic Charities has launched an ambitious program to reduce poverty in America by 50% by the 2020. That might sound too far reaching or difficult. But the approach they are taking is diverse, comprehensive, and practical. We at our parish intend to be a part of this effort.

A few weekends ago, the Pastoral Council of Ministries began an intensive drive to have as many people as possible understand and endorse Catholic Charities' Campaign to Reduce Poverty In America. They spoke first to the heads of all ministries at the Council meeting the first Monday of March. Then they spoke at all Masses the weekend of March 13 and 14th, presenting the goals of the campaign to all parishioners. Catholic Charities USA's goals are:

- † TO REDUCE POVERTY IN AMERICA BY 50% BY THE YEAR 2020.
- † TO EDUCATE POLICYMAKERS AND THE PUBLIC (THAT'S US) ABOUT THE STRUGGLES OF THOSE LIVING IN POVERTY AND THE GOOD WORK OF THOSE WHO SERVE THEM.
- † TO CALL UPON THE GOVERNMENT TO DO MORE TO SERVE THE POOR, AND TO IMPROVE PUBLIC POLICIES THAT STRENGTHEN AND SUPPORT FAMILIES.
- † TO ENGAGE THOSE MOST IMPACTED BY POVERTY TO BE ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS TO REDUCING POVERTY.
- † TO WORK WITH INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY TO ADDRESS POVERTY IN OUR COUNTRY.
- † TO CONVENE LOCAL COMMUNITIES (LIKE PARISHES) TO DEVISE PLANS AND ACTIONS TO HELP REDUCE POVERTY FOR THOSE LIVING AMONG THEM.

Speakers were quick to say that the campaign is NOT seeking money - rather it is seeking far more - first, to raise awareness about the incredible number of people in this country, the richest in the world despite the economy, living at or below the poverty level - and, second, to encourage us to do something to lower that number significantly - by 50% in the next ten years.

This campaign, blessed by the Bishops of the United States, is multifaceted. Many groups, advocates, dioceses are involved and will be for a number of years. Individuals and parishes are being asked to become involved as well, in the belief that the more of us who understand and who make some commitment to change, whatever it might be, the more we can ensure a society that values the God-given dignity of every human being regardless of circumstance, and that provides the tools that will empower the poorest among us to help themselves.

What we as parishioners were asked to do was very simple, largely symbolic, in fact - and that was to sign our name as a sign of support of the Campaign's goals. Those signatures, in turn, will allow us to publicly endorse the Campaign as a parish. Those parishioners who included their email will simply get, from time to time, action alerts from Catholic Charities about pending legislation that deals with poverty issues. That's it! Nothing more! And yet, for many of us, a lot more! This may be the first time we've ever made a "public" statement of this kind. Our faith teaches us that we must not only be compassionate to those in need, but that we must work to ensure at least basic human rights (food, shelter, safety, health care, economic security) for "the least" among us.

Given the terrible storm and its aftereffects, many of us may not have had the chance to learn about the Campaign or to endorse it. Even so, as of Sunday, March 21, 2010, we had 177 signatures from parishioners, which is a very strong showing. If you would like to sign and endorse the campaign, it's not too late. Informational materials will continue to be available in the racks and you can simply send an email with your name to mbertani@verizon.net. Indicate whether you agree to have your email address forwarded to Catholic Charities in order to receive action alerts - things that you might do to help reduce poverty in America. If you're interested in what local/parish actions you might take, email that request as well.

Catholic Charities USA's Campaign to Reduce
POVERTY
IN AMERICA

WAYS TO TAKE ACTION



There are many steps you can take to reduce poverty in America.

Ideas and information are available in the gathering space at church. Some of these we are familiar with: volunteer at a local shelter, get your Small Christian Community to take on a project, participate in the Bread for the World Letter Writing Campaign. Perhaps one you haven't heard of is to participate in a microfinance organization. Microlending is the process of lending a very small amount of money (as low as \$25) to an entrepreneur who would otherwise not have access to a loan. Two websites: www.kiva.org, and www.grameenfoundating.org, will link you with a needy person and allow you to help them start a business, or build their business, and lift themselves out of poverty. If you are interested, please check out these sites and give it a try. **Please write to me:** pambill22@verizon.net, and let me know your results. I would like to publish some stories in the next issue of the Networker.

IT'S A "GIFT": A NEW APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

By Pam Lobley and Eileen Hanrahan



Those of us with children enrolled in Religious Education have learned that, starting next year, a new way of faith formation will be offered. The program is called "GIFT" - or "Generations In Faith Together". As a mother of two boys in Religious Education,

I had a few questions. I sat down with Eileen Hanrahan, Pastoral Minister for Catechesis here at St. Peters to help me understand this better.

Pam: OK, so, why the change?

Eileen: Well, for the past ten years, throughout the country, a different approach to religious education has been taking place. Much research has been done that shows that faith handed down by families and shared in families is a faith that is more apt to be lived for a lifetime. We decided the time was right for St. Peter's to embrace this more family-centered approach for faith formation. There are lots of different ways to employ **GIFT**, and these depend upon your parish and its needs, size,

space, etc. For our purposes, the best move is a blending of **GIFT** gatherings for families and faith formation classes for students.

Pam: As a parent with children in faith formation, what will be different for me?

Eileen: One option for faith formation here at St. Peters will entail a blending of traditional classroom settings and gatherings that families will attend together. The entire family is invited to attend four different gatherings during the course of the year. The gatherings are three hours in length, and will include attending Mass, sharing a meal, and then journeying together as a parish family with activities that are centered on the gospel reading that was proclaimed at Mass. Children will stay with their families, allowing for conversation among different generations. Children of families attending these gatherings will spend less time in a traditional classroom setting, and we hope that the dialogue that gets created between children and parents will make faith a more meaningful and integrated part of everyone's life. If for some reason this alternative does not fit your family's schedule, traditional classes for students are offered on Monday afternoons for grades 1-8.

Pam: Wait - there's a meal? Like ... dinner? What I'm asking is, do I get out of cooking that night?

Eileen: Yes! You can choose to attend a lunch or dinner time, and the meal and discussion is meant to be a sharing of ideas and faith that get the whole family involved. Our goal has always been to partner with parents as you raise your child in faith. This is a way of really serving that intention. We want our children to understand that faith isn't just one hour on Sunday, and it's not just at church. Faith is anytime, anywhere, even at your own house.

Also, these gatherings are open to everyone - everyone in our parish family has something to share with another! You DO NOT have to have children in faith formation here at St. Peter's to attend. We hope that all parishioners try to attend! As the gatherings approach, information on how to attend will be found in the bulletin.

Pam: This seems like quite a change!

Eileen: We hope it will be a chance for children and their parents to make faith a more active part of their everyday life.

Pam: Thanks, Eileen.

LIBRARY EXPANDS; NEW BOOKS ADDED

Our parish library is growing. After culling some outdated materials, we've added new shelving with Father Mike's permission, and, thanks in part to Just Faith donations, we're adding new books as well.



Among the additions are books dealing with the social teachings of the Church and with some of the issues of our times that call for us to respond as people of faith. Even though most are easy reading, they're "difficult" books, challenging us to expand our horizons, to gain a better understanding of social and economic realities in light of the Church's teaching, and to live out our faith in new and deeper ways.

Here are some of our additions:

RIISING TO COMMON GROUND by Danny Duncan Collum
- A history of racism in the United States.

HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH? by Arthur Simon
- The insidious influence of consumerism and "more, more more."

THE RISING OF BREAD FOR THE WORLD: An Outcry of Citizens Against Hunger by Arthur Simon
- About the organization described as a strong and respected voice on Capitol Hill for those who suffer from hunger at home and around the world.

NICKEL AND DIMED - On (Not) Getting by in America by Barbara Ehrenreich
A first-hand account of life in minimum wage America.

CARE FOR CREATION: A Franciscan Spirituality of Earth by Ilia Delio et al
- for those concerned with the environment/planet.

Love Is the Measure: A Biography about Dorothy Day by Jim Forest
- about the respected activist for the poor and for nonviolence now beginning the steps towards canonization.

ROMERO: A Life by James Brockman
- A look at the life of the martyred Archbishop of San Salvador, on the 25th anniversary of his death.

WITNESSES TO THE KINGDOM - The Martyrs of El Salvador - The Crucified Peoples
by Jon Sobrino
- The story of the many others who died in advocating for the poor and the voiceless.

COMPASSION by Henri Nouwen
- A book written with two other pastors that challenges our notion of ourselves as a compassionate people.

DANIEL BERRIGAN: ESSENTIAL WRITINGS.
This Jesuit priest, poet, and peacemaker has lived a life of radical discipleship, beginning with his protests against the Vietnam War. Many call him a contemporary prophet.



LEFT TO TELL and LED BY FAITH two books by *Immaculee Ilibagiza*, a survivor of the Rwandan genocide in 1994, who has gone on to tell her faith story to the world and who has helped in the struggle of her nation to forgive and to heal.

PLEASE NOTE:

IMMACULEE ILIBAGIZA

is scheduled to speak here at St Peter's on June 3rd!

This is an event you
DO NOT WANT TO MISS.
Please watch the bulletin for
further information.

REAL LIFE BLOOPERS

These wonderful Church Bulletin Bloopers were sent to me via email. I laughed so hard I had to pass them on. I hope you enjoy a few good chuckles.

The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.

*The sermon this morning: 'Jesus Walks on the Water.'
The sermon tonight: 'Searching for Jesus.'*

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community. Smile at someone who is hard to love. Say 'Hell' to someone who doesn't care much about you.

Don't let worry kill you off - let the Church help.

Miss Charlene Mason sang 'I will not pass this way again,' giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

A bean supper will be held on Tuesday evening in the church hall. Music will follow.

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What Is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice

Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.

Scouts are saving aluminum cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.

The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility.

Potluck supper Sunday at 5:00 PM - prayer and medication to follow.

The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.

This evening at 7 PM there will be a hymn singing in the park across from the Church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.

Ladies Bible Study will be held Thursday morning at 10 AM. All ladies are invited to lunch in the Fellowship Hall after the B.S. is done.

The pastor would appreciate it if the ladies of the Congregation would lend him their electric girdles for the pancake breakfast next Sunday.

Low Self Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 PM. Please use the back door.

The eighth-graders will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the Church basement Friday at 7 PM. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.

Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.

The Associate Minister unveiled the church's new campaign slogan last Sunday: "I Upped My Pledge - Up Yours".

THE NET WORKER

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