

Resources for the Stewardship of Service

Spring 2003

As the Father has sent me, so I send you.

John 20:21

In addition to existing parish efforts, you may wish to consider one of the following suggestions for service. The list is not meant to be all inclusive but provides examples of the type of opportunities that are available.

Contact a local homeless shelter. Inquire about needs for donated items or for volunteer activities. Some homeless shelters have groups take turns preparing and serving a meal for the residents. Contact your county human services office for information on homeless shelters in your area.

Support those making the choice for life rather than abortion. The New Life Fund of Catholic Charities assists women who are pregnant or have infants and require assistance. Contact your local CSS office to donate to the fund or to inquire about other respect life programs in your area needing assistance with their programs.

Discuss current issues within your family and select one or two on which to take a position. Review the position on issues of Wisconsin Bishop's at the Wisconsin Catholic Conference website at wisconsincatholic.org. There are many legislative issues requiring input from individuals and groups. Write your legislator to express your opinion on the issues.

Drop a note of understanding or forgiveness to an estranged relative or friend.

Contact a local domestic abuse shelter. Inquire about needs for donated items or for volunteer activities. Most domestic abuse shelters rely on periodic fund drives to meet operating expenses. Make a donation or volunteer to assist with fund raising efforts. Contact the county human services office for information on domestic abuse shelters in your area.

Collect food to donate to a local food pantry. Food is needed throughout the year. Contact your local pantry to find out what they need.

Provide transportation for those who are elderly or disabled to church, shopping, doctors appointments, etc. Contact your county commission on aging services for information on how you might volunteer.

Support activities that celebrate and affirm cultural or ethnic diversity within your community. Welcome and invite a newcomer family to Mass on Sunday. Participate in multicultural festivities or events.

"Adopt" someone in your local nursing home and commit to regular visits and remembrances. Nursing home residents sometimes have few regular family visits because of having no remaining family or because of long distances which relatives must travel to visit. Contact volunteer services or the pastoral care office at a nearby nursing home or care facility.

Promote recycling in your parish. Agree to buy recycled products when possible and encourage environmental cleanup projects. Take a stand for preserving and improving the environment. Consider having your family take part in the "adopt a highway" program, where three times a year you pick up trash from a section of highway. For more information or to apply for this program, contact the local district office of the Division of Highways in the Department of Transportation listing in the yellow pages under state government.

Sponsor a refugee family. Contact Refugee, Migration and Hispanic Services at the diocese for more information. (920) 437-7531, ext. 8247.

Collect fans and distribute to the elderly during the hot, humid days of summer.

Join a neighborhood or community organization that is working to change social policies or institutions that violate human dignity.

Protect the common good of the environment this week by car-pooling, properly disposing hazardous waste from your household, or purchasing products with environmentally friendly packaging.

Think about a workplace situation that could improve the common good of all employees at your company. Begin to take steps to work toward that improvement.

Write a letter to your legislator advocating for an increase in affordable housing in your area.

Research and organize a letter-writing campaign on an international policy issue. Go to www.usccb.org/sdwp for information on possible issues on which to focus.

Call your local county or private service agencies to find out what opportunities are available for you to assist someone who is struggling to fulfill their responsibility to work.

If you don't know the cost of child care, call a local center or family child care provider and find out the cost of infant and toddler care. Write or call the Governor's office to suggest more funding for child assistance so that low income working families can continue participating in the economy.

Volunteer your time to help those who are poor. Call the local Volunteer Center, St. Vincent de Paul, or other groups serving low income persons.

Ask your parish adult education coordinator to consider convening parishioners by career groups (health care providers, teachers, construction workers, etc) to talk about their work and the social obligations of their professions. Organize a neighborhood or church effort to clean up a portion of the highway or riverway.

Attend a meeting of your region's land development planning body. Note the values driving the discussion. Meet with your council representative about your concerns regarding the development of your city. What do you think will most benefit the common good?

Contact your state and federal legislators to promote support for fair and equitable farm policies to benefit the family farm.

Create a list of websites to **be distributed to people on charity and justice** issues. Go surfing to explore the possibilities. Include Wisconsin Catholic Conference at www.wisconsinatholic.org and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops at www.usccb.org.

Include *Catholic Social Teaching: Important Themes and Basic Principles* (an educational series from Wisconsin Catholic Conference) in your bulletins as a series of inserts. Copies available from Pastoral Services.

Organize a group to do an outreach project for the annual Make a Difference Day. Information at www.usaweekend.com.

Develop transportation services in your parish to take older adults, low-income persons, those who are ill or disabled, or others to get to doctor appointments and shopping.

Promote the various "walks" in your area (e.g. hunger walks, Take Back the Night, Roe vs Wade anniversary, etc) or organize a walk where there is none.

Organize a back to school collection of clothes and school supplies for low income families. Have youth sponsor a car wash as a fund raiser for necessary school supplies.

Establish an intergenerational service group to do chores for those who are homebound or unable to do the tasks themselves.

Initiate a "Giving Tree" program at Christmas to provide gifts for those in need.

Collect baby supplies, clothes and furniture to give to groups working with women having difficult pregnancies and who are in need of support and assistance.

Start planning an alternative gift fair for the holidays following the suggestions in *Called to Global Solidarity*, available through the USCCB Office.

Establish a program to send cards and letters to inmates in jails and prisons, those who are homebound and those in nursing homes.

Conduct a parish mission, with an emphasis on the importance of charity and justice in our lives.

Identify ways in which your school and parish can be a peacemaking community. Start a parish library of resources addressing justice, service, respect life and charity topics and resources. Promote the use of materials by parishioners, parish committees and groups, and education programs.

Evaluate your parish liturgies to determine whether charity and justice themes are incorporated, when appropriate, within the choices of music, the intercessions and the homilies.

Each year, World Mission Services of the diocese sends a "Projects Available Booklet" to all parishes that lists a variety of opportunities to take part in mission projects. Pastors and Parish Directors, Christian Service Chairpersons, and Parish Council Chairpersons all received copies. Ask to review the "Projects Available Booklet" and select a project to take part in as a family.

Read the U.S. bishops' recent statement *A Call to Solidarity with Africa* or the section on "The Call to Solidarity" in *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us*, available through the USCCB Office.

Child labor abuses and sweatshops are a concern. Raise the consciousness of business owners through a letter, asking the management whether their products are made by children or workers in sweatshops. Inquire as to whether they guarantee that their products are made under humane conditions.

Souper Bowl Sunday--Following mass on the weekend of Super Bowl Sunday, men, women and children ask for \$1.00 from parishioners as they leave mass. The money, which is collected in "Soup Bowls," is then given to a helping charitable organization chosen by the congregation that takes the collection. For more information call 1-800-358-7687 or see their web page at www.souperbowl.com.

Check out what organizations in your community promote solidarity and promote them.

Join the Catholic Campaign to Ban Landmines coordinated by the United States Catholic Conference. Brochure available from Diocesan Social Concerns staff or contact USCC directly at: phone 202-5413199; fax 202-541-3339; or email landminesknccbuscc.org.

Contact the Diocesan Department of Total Catholic Education for ways to engage and involve young people in social justice.

Write a letter to the newspaper about some violation of human dignity that is reflected in a current economic or social policy.

Review the U.S. bishops' statement *In All Things Charity* and identify one social concern that will become the focus of your group's attention and efforts through the Christmas season.

Choose an international justice issue from the USCCB website and encourage your group to contact their elected representatives.

Identify the ways in which you are called to build a culture of life as articulated in Living the Gospel of Life, especially within the current climate.

Promote and support the various collections that benefit others - Campaign for Human Development, World Missions, Catholic Relief Services, Our Own Poor, etc. Provide information to parishioners on the programs provided.

Food Fast - Catholic Relief Services - A 24-Hour Fasting Program that includes activities, learning experiences, prayer, and games. A retreat-like experience that provides a vision of world hunger and a vehicle to contribute to the alleviation of such hunger. The materials are free from CRS www.catholicrelief.or.

Read the newspapers with an eye to identifying human concerns issues and determining who might be in need of advocacy. Select an issue of the month to have people write letters to their legislators to become a voice for those who are voiceless or who have a limited ability to take action on their own behalf.

Write a short note of thanks to someone in the missions. (Haiti, El Salvador, Guatamala, etc.)

Become involved in an immersion experience, either within this country or in a third world country, that will provide an opportunity to acquire an in-depth understanding of another culture and the needs of those outside your own experience.

Reflection

Find an occasion during the next week to pause and reflect on the sacredness and the special dignity that is evident in those around you.

Pray regularly for greater peace and justice.

Promote the living of a simpler life style. Take inventory of the "things" which you have. Do you own things or do they own you? Determine what you can do without to simplify your life. Encourage others to do likewise.

Make a list of three things you enjoy in life. Thank God for each and let your joy show.

Be conscious of water. Water is abundant here. Pray for those who yearn for it.

Examine your own personal, family, and work life to identify specific ways in which you might become more involved in the work of justice and charity.

Ask yourself: How does the Consistent Life Ethic apply to my personal life? Reflect on the challenges of *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us*, a statement of USCCB, especially when the "stranger" is our neighbor, friend, or colleague.

Inform yourself on world hunger. Begin today. Reflect on the relationship of world hunger, to the arms race, racism, world population, sexism.

Take a day to observe and critique the popular press: television, radio, and print media. Make a list of the times that political rights are discussed, debated, or defended. Compare that list to occasions where economic and social rights are discussed, debated, or defended. Which list is longer?

Ask yourself: How do the activities and programs of our parish help or hinder our involvement in the Church's social mission?

Learn more about the Church's social teaching by reading *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions - reflections* of the U. S. Catholic Bishops from United States Catholic Conference. Order toll-free at 1-800-235-8722.

Take some time this week to think about how your work reflects your Catholic values. Commit to three simple actions you will take to your workplace that will advance the Reign of God.

Increase your knowledge of our justice role in the world by reading "Called to Global Solidarity: International Challenges for U.S. Parishes", a statement of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Discuss as a family and consider one of the suggested action options from NCCB. Order from United States Catholic Conference by calling (800) 235-8722. Ask for publication No. 5-118 (English) or No. 5-119 (Spanish).

Take a reflective drive, fanning out from the center of the city to the edge of the city's developed land. Really look. Compare the benefits and drawbacks of our city's patterns of development. Make a commitment to read one book during the year on the subject of Catholic Social Teaching. (*Doing Faith Justice* by Fr. Fred Kammer is one example.)

Resources

Asian and Pacific Presence: Harmony in Faith, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Bishop's Pastoral Letter on Stewardship, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Called to Global Solidarity, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Communities of Salt and Light - Parish Resource Manual, Department of Social Development and World Peace, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Faithful Citizenship: Civic Responsibility for a new Millennium, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Parish Involvement in Welfare Reform, Wisconsin Catholic Conference

Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities: A Campaign in Support of Life, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Principles, Prophecy, and a Pastoral Response: An Overview of Modern Catholic Social Teaching, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Service Projects for Teens - 20 Plans that Work, Hi-Time Pflaum

Stewardship: A Disciple's Response -A Pastoral Letter on Stewardship, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Social Concerns Committee Guidelines, Diocese of Green Bay

Stewardship: A Disciple's Response, bilingual edition, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Stewardship: Disciples Respond -A Practical Guide for Pastoral Leaders, International Catholic Stewardship Council, 1-800-348-2886

Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

Diocese of Green Bay
1825 Riverside Drive
PO Box 23825
Green Bay, WI 54305-3825
920-437-7531 or 877-500-3580 x 8310

Hi-Time Pflaum
330 Progress Road
Dayton OH 45449
1-800-53-4383
www.HiTimePflaum.com

International Catholic Stewardship Council
1275 K Street, Suite 980
Washington DC 20005-4006
Phone: 202-289-1093 Fax: 202-682-9018
Email: orders @ catholicstewardship.org Website: www.catholicstewardship.org

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Publishing Services
3211 Fourth Street NE
Washington DC 20017-8722
1-800-235-8722 Fax: 202-722-8716
Email: publications @ usccb.org Website: www.usccb.org

Wisconsin Catholic Conference
131 W Wilson St, #1105
Madison WI 53703-3245
608-257-0004 Fax: 608-257-0376
Email: office @ wisconsinatholic.org

Assistance Available

Need assistance locating resources? Looking for information? Want consultation on a social concerns action idea or volunteer projects? The diocese has consultants available to assist you. Contact: **Pastoral Services, Green Bay Diocese, 1825 Riverside Drive, PO Box 23825, Green Bay, WI 4305-3825** Telephone: 920-437-7531 Ext. 8310 Toll free: 877-500-3580 Fax: 920-437-0694 E-mail: pastserv@gbdioc.org or **Resettlement and Immigration Services, Catholic Charities Volunteer Coordinator**, Telephone: 920-437-7531 Ext.8202 Toll free: 877-500-3580 Fax: 920-437-0694