

# *Tidings of Hope: The Social Concerns Newsletter of the Diocese of Green Bay*

Volume 14, Issue 4  
December 2009

Dear social concerns ministers:

We have decided to change practices in order to utilize existing diocesan publications and Websites and be more conscious of environmental and financial costs. *Tidings of Hope* will continue as a triannual newsletter for those interested in parish social ministry and Catholic social action in the diocese of Green Bay, but we have decided to limit the newsletter to four pages. If you are not already receiving the newsletter by email, and are able to, please contact our department and state your preference ([pastserv@gbdioc.org](mailto:pastserv@gbdioc.org)).

This newsletter will no longer feature a calendar of upcoming events. You may keep abreast of this calendar by consulting *Pastoral Perspectives*, the newsletter of the Stewardship and Pastoral Services Department. If you don't already receive *Pastoral Perspectives*, please phone 920-272-8295/877-500-3580 x8295, email [pastserv@gbdioc.org](mailto:pastserv@gbdioc.org). It is also available on the Web at <http://sites.google.com/site/stewpastserv/Home/pastoral-perspectives>. The calendar of upcoming events is also available at <http://sites.google.com/site/cdgbpsm/Home/calendar-of-events>

*Steve Herro, O. Praem*

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## *Catholic Church responds to national health care debate*

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic Charities USA, and the Catholic Health Association have worked hard to lobby on behalf of Catholic interests during Congress' debate on national health care reform. As of November 7, 2009, the House of Representatives passed a comprehensive national health care bill. On November 30, the Senate will begin debate on its own health care bill. If the Senate agrees on a votable bill, and it passes within its own house, the Senate and House bills will have to be merged to a single bill that can garner the support of the majority of both houses.

The Church advocates for affordable and accessible health care that protects the life and dignity of all persons, from the unborn to our infirm elders; protects the conscience clause of health care providers; guarantees diversity in delivery methods; and upholds a particular priority for the health and welfare of the poor in the United States, native born and immigrants.

All are asked to contact our federal legislators to insure the inclusion of these priorities in national health care reform. **Contacts to U. S. Senators is particularly important in December 2009.** You may call the U.S. Capitol Switchboard, 202-224-3121 and ask to be connected to the offices of Sen. Russ Feingold, Sen. Herb Kohl, Cong. Steve Kagen, Cong. Tom Petri, or Cong. Dave Obey. You may also determine their postal and email addresses by connecting to "Who are My Legislators?", <http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov/waml>.

For more information about the Catholic Church's position on health care reform, please see United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Health Care Reform (<http://www.usccb.org/healthcare/>), Catholic Charities USA (<http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?pid=1782>), and Catholic Health Association (<http://www.chausa.org/Pub/MainNav/Advocacy/Issues/uninsured.htm>)

JustFaith Ministries (<http://justfaith.org>) aspires to enable people of faith to develop a passion for justice, to express this passion in concrete acts of social ministry, and to expand the work of social ministry in their faith communities. JustFaith Ministries creates and supports faith formation processes and resources that emphasize the Gospel message of peace and justice, theological reflection, Church social teaching and the intersection of spirituality and action. Its national partners include Catholic Charities USA, Catholic Relief Services, Catholic Campaign for Human Development, and Bread for the World.

JustFaith's newest program offering is Engaging Spirituality. Engaging Spirituality is a spiritual deepening process that invites small groups of adult Christians to explore the intersection between contemplative presence and social action, as it is lived out in their own lives. Engaging Spirituality focuses on the practical challenges of following Jesus into the broken heart of our world, inspired by the urgency and spirit of the Gospel message to our lives, to our relationships, and to our times.

In August 2009, several of our parishioners journeyed to St Mary's Catholic Parish, Hales Corners, WI to receive training as Engaging Spirituality facilitators. St Matthew Parish, Green Bay, is the first host of an Engaging Spirituality program in our diocese. Jackie Thiry, a JustFaith graduate and current participant of Engaging Spirituality, reflects on her experience in the group:

*Currently there are seven of us from four different parishes going through the program called *Engaging in Spirituality*. It is being offered by JustFaith Ministries as a process designed to open up space in our lives; quiet space for listening, space for community, space for God, and promotion of a grounded spirituality for living the Gospel today.*

*Engaging Spirituality is an invitation into mystery that clarifies our sense of self, reinforces our link to God, deepens our connection to others, and demands a commitment to become compassionately involved in this world. There are 21 weekly sessions, two retreats, and two immersion experiences. Resources include books, videos, and *Bearing letters* written by spiritual teachers from around the world, reflecting on their struggles, practices, and challenges they encounter. They are called *Bearings* since the authors bear witness to their personal and practical struggle to live a Christian life in this complex world.*

*I accepted the invitation to participate because I missed the support of our 2008 JustFaith group. I found having companions on the journey of conversion makes the struggle to change much easier. The call to go deeper as people of God in our journey of spirituality and activism is made to each of us. We have only met four times but already it has been reinforced how crucial community is to sustain us on our path of faith formation and social ministry. New prayer forms have been introduced as well as advice on making space sacred. We hopefully will create the space in our lives to live our faith more fully as we journey together these 21 weeks.*

**The Diocese of Green Bay is hosting a training session for those interested in becoming Emerging Spirituality small group facilitators on March 13, 2010, 9:00 am-3:00 pm, St Raphael Parish, Oshkosh. For more information, please contact Dr. Kristina DeNeve, Catholic Diocese of Green Bay, 272-8304, 877-500-3580 x 8304, email [kdeneve@gbdioc.org](mailto:kdeneve@gbdioc.org).**

*Just*  
FAITH

## Response to questions regarding Catholic Campaign for Human Development

Many persons contacted the diocese in fall 2009 regarding the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) program Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD). CCHD was founded by the USCCB in 1969 as the U.S. Church's response to fighting structural poverty in our country. Calls, letters, and emails were mostly based on questions raised about the connection between CCHD and ACORN and CCHD funded groups, nationally and in our diocese, that oppose the USCCB position on abortion.

Bishop Roger P. Morin of Biloxi, Miss., chairman of the USCCB Subcommittee on CCDH, stressed in a November 17, 2009 report to the U.S. bishops at their fall general assembly in Baltimore that accusations CCHD is "providing funds to groups that are pro-abortion or groups that are not in support of the family . . . and other untruths" are "outrageous claims." In a report to their brother bishops, the Subcommittee pledged "ongoing efforts to ensure that all CCHD funds are used faithfully, effectively and in accord with Catholic social and moral teaching."

In regard to CCHD funded groups in our own diocese, *The Compass* reported in its November 20 issue that JOSHUA and ESTHER had aligned themselves with Health Care for America Now (HCAN), a national coalition of organizations seeking national health care reform in the U.S. After the House of Representatives approved a health care bill that would restrict federal funding for abortions, HCAN called for defeat of that restriction in the Senate health care bill. ESTHER and JOSHUA (and their parent state organization, WISDOM) immediately dropped out of HCAN. JOSHUA, ESTHER, and WISDOM have always been neutral on abortion, though recognizing that their individual congregation members have specific positions.

If persons have any questions about CCHD, they may contact Br. Steve Herro, Diocesan Director for CCHD, 272-8299/877-500-3580 x8299, email [sherro@gbdioc.org](mailto:sherro@gbdioc.org).

## Pope Benedict's first social encyclical examines global development issues

Pope Benedict XVI released the first social encyclical of his pontificate, *Caritas in Veritate*, in July 2009. As a social encyclical, the letter addresses a wide range of public policy issues, including globalization and the environment, unions, and the welfare state. The letter has great relevance for us today as Catholic Christians living in a country that houses the world's largest national economy. I suggest that a study of the document would be a great New Year's Resolution!

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has developed a four session study circle for the document (see <http://www.usccb.org/jphd/caritasinveritate/>). St Patrick Parish, Menasha is planning to host the study circle in Advent 2009 and the Norbertine Center for Spirituality (920-337-4315, email [norbertinecenter@yahoo.com](mailto:norbertinecenter@yahoo.com)) will host a study circle in Lent 2010. The study circle is a wonderful opportunity to examine *Caritas in Veritate* with other socially committed Christians in the context of prayer and today's social milieu. Consider joining a planned circle or forming one in your community today.

The letter is available on the Web; see <http://www.usccb.org/jphd/caritasinveritate/>. There are several helpful essays and articles to round out your understanding of the document. See "Pope defines real social development by drawing on Paul VI" ([www.catholicnewsagency.com/utiles/myprint/print.php](http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/utiles/myprint/print.php)); "How can we live out *Caritas in veritate*?", Sam Lucero, *The Compass*, August 7, 2009 ([http://www.thecompassnews.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=542:putting-popes-words-into-practice&catid=48:editorials&Itemid=104](http://www.thecompassnews.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=542:putting-popes-words-into-practice&catid=48:editorials&Itemid=104)); "The Audacity of the Pope," Ross Douthat, *New York Times*, July 13, 2009 ([http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/13/opinion/13douthat.html?\\_r=1&adxnnl=1&adxnnlx=1259356032-ICHl9GcW6P+3vRhOkHeyrQ](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/13/opinion/13douthat.html?_r=1&adxnnl=1&adxnnlx=1259356032-ICHl9GcW6P+3vRhOkHeyrQ)); and "Papal correspondence," *America Magazine*, November 30, 2009, ([http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article\\_id=12021](http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=12021))

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Social Concerns Newsletter

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*Seeds of Hope invites the community to study and address poverty in northeastern Wisconsin*

Staff from seven community organizations, including Bobbie Lison, Catholic Charities, have established Seeds of Hope, an initiative to engage the community in the elimination of poverty. Seeds of Hope works to eliminate poverty by building awareness of the causes and conditions of poverty in Brown County, by educating the community about the impact and complexity of poverty and by facilitating collaborative action. Seeds of Hope is a cooperative effort of providers, supporters of social services, businesses, community members and all others who need to advocate for the needs of people living in poverty in Brown County. It is not itself a provider or funder of services to the poor.

Seeds of Hope will have a community kickoff on January 12, 2010 (time and location to be determined). The kickoff will introduce tools of the campaign, including community book reads of *Nickle and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*, diversity circles (study circles of topics related to community social concerns), "Just Neighbor" workshops, and *Shelter from the Storm*.

For more information about Seeds of Hope, contact Bree Decker, The Salvation Army, 920-884-3078, email [bree\\_decker@usc.salvationarmy.org](mailto:bree_decker@usc.salvationarmy.org), 884-3078 or Bobbie Lison, Catholic Charities, 272-8234/877-500-3580 x8234, email [blison@gbdioc.org](mailto:blison@gbdioc.org).