

VOICES

SUMMER > FALL 2014

The Seeds of the Gospel Sown in Good Soil, JustFaith Reaps a Good Harvest

Fiona Grant, graduate of the JusticeWalking program

“Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!”

(Matthew 13:8)

In 2009, together with a group of young people from my parish, I completed the high school JusticeWalking program. Since then I have wrestled with the call and the responsibility to address the needs of the world around me.

As so many of you who are graduates of a JustFaith Ministries program, I find myself constantly asking, “What do I do now?” The answer seems obvious. Countless people have said that if you expose people to the truth, they will act. This begs the question, how and with whom do we act?

I see my call to action everywhere. I see it as I walk through my city, crossing the boundary into those parts of town where the car doors must be locked. I see it as I make infrequent visits to the mall and observe consumer culture at its source. I even hear it buried in the words of some of my friends, in their basic assumptions and expectations.

And yes, I am also surrounded by opportunities to act. Every day I have access to increasing amounts of information, and I see countless ways to be involved in social change. Theoretically, if I made the effort, I could become active in every peace and justice community within 100 miles. “I must not be really trying,” I tell myself. Sitting in gridlock, I ask, “Why do I continue to go about my daily life – go to work, go home, spend time with friends and family – and focus on my own personal happiness?”

Tim Goldman, a 2010 JustFaith program graduate, faced the same tension. “I finished the JustFaith program and entered a process of discernment,” he told me. He, like me and many program graduates, was profoundly affected by his JustFaith program. “JustFaith shattered my notions about the poor. Prior to JustFaith, I dismissed the poor by taking Scripture out of context. I thought that because Jesus said ‘the poor will always be among us,’ I could dismiss their plight as something that was too big for me to respond to in a meaningful way.”

Tim’s words resonate with me. The world spins around me, a mix of unjust systems built before me and far too large for me to affect, let alone change, by myself. So, why not accept that the poverty around us is simply a part of the nature of humanity?



We do not do the work of the Gospel alone. This is the work of community.

Did You Know?

A UN report by the IPCC shows that “Climate Change Will Deepen Poverty, Hunger.” www.ipcc.ch

Read more on this topic, pages 5-6, and register for the JFM climate change module!

EDITORIAL CONTENT PROVIDED BY:





Tim's initial perception of poverty was transformed by his JustFaith Ministries experience: "Thanks to JustFaith, I came to the realization that the Gospel calls us again and again to take action, to know the poor among us, to ease their suffering, and to work against injustice. The JustFaith program encouraged me to get to know the people I was initially uncomfortable around, people who were different from me, and to see our commonality."

It wasn't just a shift in perspective that the program offered Tim. JustFaith left him with "the notion that I had to take personal responsibility to address social ills." **Personal responsibility**, those words strike at my core. My own JusticeWalking experience has taught me that it is both my calling and my responsibility to work for a more just world. This expectation weighs heavily on me.

Tim's discernment began slowly. "I prayed and I waited patiently," he said. He stayed involved in St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, his parish in Des Moines, Iowa, and soon got to know a parishioner, Mark Marshall. Mark had been tending a small parish garden at his church for many years. Called the "Faith & Grace Garden," the produce from the garden was freely given to church members in need of help. "I started helping Mark by doing some 'contemplative hoeing' in the garden as part of my discernment," Tim said. He was quickly drawn into the practice of gardening.

Tim began his gardening in 2009, at the onset of the financial downturn. At this time, the need for the garden was great. Many were losing their jobs and often their homes. Tim and Mark's garden work and produce fit perfectly into the community's need. In response to this need, Mark and Tim received permission to make the garden even larger. With community hands and effort, the garden grew from 2,500 sq ft to an acre in three years.

The next step involved finding volunteers to work the soil. Tim discovered that when you invite people to garden together, they feel closer to God. A community grew up around the garden, beginning with JustFaith program graduates and expanding to include members of the broader community. Local Catholic high school students, elementary students, and volunteers from 12 area churches have joined the original garden volunteers. This year a refugee gardening program has been added, and refugees from across the world have joined the gardeners. Last year more than 300 volunteers worked in the garden. Often there are more volunteers than jobs available.

The garden produces tomatoes, lettuce, asparagus, and peppers, along with sweet potatoes, cantaloupe, and corn. Volunteers tend the soil – hoeing, weeding, watering and irrigating – feeding the earth with natural "worm tea" fertilizers, and finally, harvesting. This year, the gardeners hope for a harvest of almost 16,000 lbs. This fresh produce will go

to local food pantries, a welcome addition to the pantries' usual inventory of canned good items.

So, how does someone launch this kind of project, and how are they able to sustain it for so long? After almost 15 years, how is Tim able to help this garden thrive? From the outside it may appear simple, but maintaining a garden – sustaining any project for that matter – is hard work.

What strikes me most about Tim's story is the community that grew out of this project. We do not do the work of the Gospel alone. This is the work of community. JustFaith Ministries programs form small communities, but where do we find that community when the program is complete?

Tim's experience demonstrates that one or two graduates can form new communities around the projects they undertake. This is the good soil ready for the seeds of the Gospel. As a young person now in college, I am still searching for that community in which I can root my energy. I continue to respond to the challenge of finding that communal soil and I constantly ask myself, and encourage you to ask yourself, "How am I called, and with whom?"

You may have stories to tell about the good soil that JustFaith Ministries has nurtured in your community. If so, send your stories to info@justfaith.org.



Decent Jobs and the Search for a Common Good

by Tom Malloy,
Policy Advisor, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

www.usccb.org/cchd



CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN FOR
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

As JustFaith graduates, facilitators, and supporters, we are all familiar with the seven themes of Catholic social teaching – our shared values for promoting human flourishing and building a just society. One of those themes is **the dignity of work and the right of workers**, something Pope Francis sees as vital to rejecting the “throwaway culture” that can consume us.

Catholics believe that since humans are made *imago dei* (in the image of God), work should affirm our human dignity. It should also provide workers with the resources to support themselves and live in a dignified manner, start and support families, and contribute to the common good. However, this Labor Day a lot of us probably share the feeling that decent work – work that pays a just wage with adequate protections – is increasingly out of reach for many people.

Lack of decent jobs at just wages is harming people and families. The declining unemployment rate obscures the reality that much of the decline is attributable to people giving up looking for work rather than those actually finding jobs. Moreover, a substantial number of jobs pay low wages and do not protect workers. As a result, more workers struggle to make ends meet, and family stability falters.

The crisis of decent work is especially noticeable among young adults, whose lack of economic opportunity (the youth

unemployment rate is double the national average) can lead to more, and larger, problems in the future. This alarming reality should trouble us and compel us to act, as Archbishop Thomas Wenski of Miami, chair of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, notes in this year’s Labor Day Statement (<http://bit.ly/1kOtPib>).

The common good has been breaking down. The evidence is all around us:

- Rising and excessive economic inequality
- Falling marriage rates and increased family instability
- Failure to enact comprehensive immigration reform
- Persistently high child poverty and hunger rates
- Falling median household income
- Political polarization and paralysis

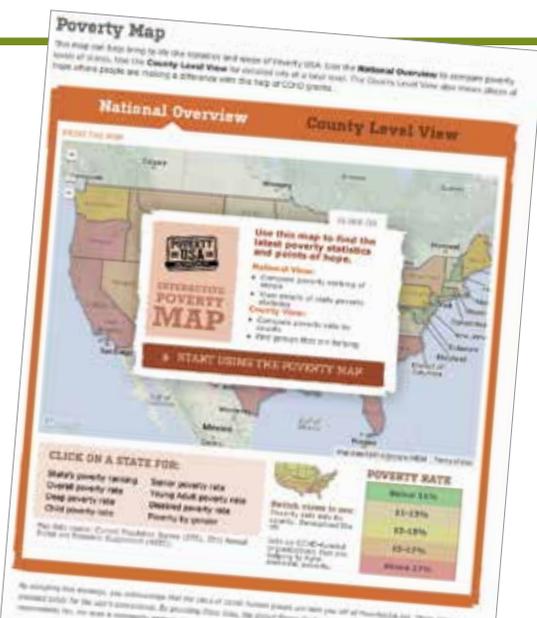
If we hope to reverse this, we must embrace the rights and responsibilities Catholic teaching says we all have in building a just society.

Our economy will not fix itself. A just economy must be built, nurtured, and protected.

Our economy will not fix itself. A just economy must be built, nurtured, and protected. This requires an active voice demanding better job opportunities for everyone, especially the unemployed and underemployed. It means standing in solidarity with our neighbors and others to ensure safe work environments and decent wages.

Getting involved in efforts to raise the federal minimum wage – as well as state or local campaigns – is one effective way to help low-income workers and build a just economy. A minimum wage is an insufficient, yet necessary, step to making sure workers are treated fairly. Catholic bishops in the United States have supported the minimum wage since World War I.

By taking this small step, we commit to genuine encounter and dialogue with our neighbors and reject the “economy of exclusion” that Pope Francis decries in *Evangelii Gaudium* (53). 



For over forty years, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development has been empowering people to claim their voices and be agents of change in their communities. Visit the interactive map at povertyUSA.org (in ‘County Level View’) to find out what CCHD is doing in your local community, and see how you can lend a hand.



CCHD Recognizes New Leader in the Fight Against Poverty

by Genevieve Mougey,

Poverty Education & Outreach Manager,
Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development

www.usccb.org/cchd



CATHOLIC CAMPAIGN FOR
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT



Dr. Bethany Welch is the recipient of the 2014 Cardinal Bernardin New Leadership Award

Dr. Bethany Welch has been awarded the 2014 Cardinal Bernardin New Leadership Award. She is the founding director of the Aquinas Center – a multicultural, multilingual immigrant parish center located in Philadelphia, PA. The center opened in January 2013 with a mission to build unity in diversity, support learning, and inspire thoughtful action. With great excitement, Bethany shares how the Aquinas Center found a home: “The adaptive re-use of a former convent for this work represents the kind of

creativity and stewardship of church property that we need to combat the effects of poverty, blight, and discrimination in our communities. The space hosts shared meals and collaborative work projects. Intentional dialogue puts people of different backgrounds side by side, creating what Pope Francis calls a ‘culture of encounter.’”

In recognition of the many young people who work to eradicate poverty at its roots, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) has honored young adult leaders for over 15 years with the Cardinal Bernardin New Leadership Award. Joseph Cardinal Bernardin (1928-1996) began his ministry at a young age and was ordained a bishop while still in his thirties. In his role as the first bishop named General Secretary of the NCCB/USCC, he nurtured the vision for the CCHD and helped to shepherd it through its first years. He remained a strong supporter of CCHD while serving as Archbishop of Cincinnati and Cardinal Archbishop of Chicago.

Bethany continues, “Cardinal Bernardin worked to build bridges across ethnic, class, and age barriers. Aquinas Center is sitting at the intersection of the very same issues Cardinal Bernardin confronted. Every day we welcome neighbors and guests from very different backgrounds and experiences who desire to be in relationship with one another.”

Bethany’s vision is a community of disciples and neighbors who recognize one another and will help to bring about transformation in her local Philadelphia neighborhood.

As she is examining both the micro and macro levels of the issues in order to combat poverty, Bethany hopes to build relationships and provide opportunities for the community. She identifies systemic injustice as being a root cause of poverty; she also cites lack of access to social services based on geography and education as a leading cause. “Leadership training and organizing efforts increase the capacity of immigrants and allies to advocate for comprehensive immigration reform. This model bears witness to our values. Everyone has dignity. Everyone has gifts to share.”

The award is designed to highlight and recognize new and future leadership against poverty and injustice, promote young people as leaders in their communities, honor outstanding young leaders and their organizations/parishes, and finally, to strengthen the Catholic community’s participation in CCHD’s anti-poverty mission.

The Catholic Campaign for Human Development is pleased to honor Bethany as a New Leader in the fight against poverty in the United States.

To learn more about how you can be involved, visit our website at

www.povertyusa.org or www.usccb.org/cchd 

*Bethany’s vision is a
community of disciples
and neighbors who
recognize one another
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Live Simply, Respect Earth, Share Abundance

by **Judy Coode,**

Communications Director, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

www.maryknollaffiliates.org
www.maryknollaymissioners.org
www.maryknollsisters.org
www.maryknollsociety.org



In September, representatives of the world's nations will gather in New York to attend the 2014 Climate Summit, which will come one year before the agreed-upon deadline for a global climate agreement. The Summit is intended to be a galvanizing event, with participating nations scrutinized on their proposed climate protection measures. (President Obama's June 2 announcement of the U.S. commitment to cut emissions from existing power plants was an opening move in this round of forward-focused actions.)

Taking advantage of this gathering of world leaders, organizers within the environmental justice movement have planned a **People's Climate March/Global Day of Action**. They expect this major public event – to be held in New York City (and in other international locations) on **September 20-21, 2014** – to be the largest environmental rally in history.

The Catholic Church has issued strong statements on the issue of climate change: "There is overwhelming evidence that human

"Creation is not a property, which we can rule over at will; or, even less, is the property of only a few: Creation is a gift, it is a wonderful gift that God has given us, so that we care for it and we use it for the benefit of all, always with great respect and gratitude."

– Pope Francis, May 2014

activities have greatly contributed to the recent warming of the earth's surface and that climate change as well as its consequences will continue into the future," Archbishop Zygmunt Zimowski, president of the Pontifical Council for Health Care Ministry, told members of the World Health Assembly in Geneva on May 21.

According to a Catholic News Service article (May 22, 2014), the archbishop noted that climate change will affect the air, water, and food supplies people depend on and aggravate "health problems that already exist," including

climate-related diseases. Furthermore, he urged us to "look beyond the purely scientific, medical, and economic issues related to climate change and come face to face with the persons whom it most affects." **People who are impoverished are the most vulnerable to climate change** because they "cannot afford protective structures to shield them from extreme forces of nature and have little or no resources to arrange for temporary shelter and other basic necessities once their homes have been severely damaged or totally destroyed."

The archbishop said that preventing or mitigating the impact of climate change on those who are most vulnerable "will require more than economic allocations and policy-setting." He said that the world must help promote a different culture guided by the values of compassion, respect, solidarity, and a commitment to justice.

Maryknoll missioners work around the world in communities where both the effects of climate change and the effects of a fossil-fuel-based economy are being felt.

In El Salvador, rural communities suffer serious health problems from routine exposure to dangerous agricultural chemicals. Farmers are ill-informed about the risks posed by these chemicals and the correct precautions to take in using them. In response to this widespread public health issue, Maryknoll Lay Missioner Peg Vamosy, a horticulturalist, trains farmers to instruct other farmers in the use of organic fertilizers, pest controls, conservation practices, and native seeds. In doing so, she helps farmers and their families become less dependent upon purchased agricultural inputs and to enjoy greater food security and healthier living environments. Next year, Peg will join another project, sponsored by the local Catholic deanery, to address additional environmental issues such as watershed preservation and the harmful effects of mining. (Read more about Peg and her work here: <http://bit.ly/1jPz03A>.) continued on next page

Find out about the 350.org
People's Climate March/Global Day of Action
on September 21-22 in New York
and other areas here:

www.peoplesclimate.org

Learn more about the
2014 Climate Summit
at its website:

[www.un.org/climatechange/
climate-summit-2014/](http://www.un.org/climatechange/climate-summit-2014/)

The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns has inaugurated a new monthly e-newsletter, Encounters, which shares stories about the challenges posed by current economic models and shines light on hopeful ways communities are responding to protect human dignity and God's beautiful Creation. Read more here:

www.maryknollogc.org/encounters



Maryknoll Lay Missioner and horticulturist Peg Vamosy (top row, far left) works with farmers in San Salvador to build a contour ditch for soil and water conservation.

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Many faith communities are actively helping their members learn to live more simply, share their abundance, and develop a sense of respect for the earth and responsibility for the use of natural resources.

Today, the dependence on extractives (metals that are used as components in so many accessories of modern life – e.g. cell phones), the reality of climate change, and the end of cheap oil demand a radical transformation of existing systems and patterns of life related to transportation, food production and marketing, water use, manufacturing,

consumption, and energy use. The impact of high oil prices has already been felt around the world, most painfully by poor people and low income communities. In many cases, food and water crises threaten their very futures. The solutions proposed thus far, including nuclear energy and agrofuels made from plants used for food, are problematic and would perpetuate an environmentally unsustainable economic model.

The Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns' Faith-Economy-Ecology project (<http://maryknollogc.org/faith-economy-ecology>) reports that in face of this reality:

Many faith communities are actively helping their members learn to live more simply, share their abundance, and develop a sense of respect for the earth and responsibility for the use of natural resources. Some religious traditions have a long history of sharing property and wealth and of promoting mutual accountability.

At the same time, many secular communities have worked to build examples

of more just, sustainable, and viable models of business and community organization. These include producer and worker cooperatives, land trusts, community-owned utilities, worker-owned firms, community development financial institutions, community-supported agriculture, local currency, and barter systems. Some of these are beginning to assume a scale that could have a major positive impact on our common future.

These and other yet-to-be-discovered forms of sustainable economic organization can make an important contribution to a future that is freed from dependence on fossil fuels, that encourages socially and environmentally responsible lifestyles, and that nurtures human security for all. Concrete examples like these can provide a solid base of experience from which to develop effective national and international policies.

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October is Fair Trade Month

by **Kimberly Mazyck**,
Relationship Manager, National Partnerships

www.catholicrelief.org



Fair Trade Month is a fantastic way for a community, parish, or school to come together in support of fair trade. There are many ways to introduce your parish to fair trade, increase awareness, and encourage activities in support of fair trade during the month of October.

One way to build commitment in your community and parish is to educate your priests and community leaders. You can do this through one-on-one meetings. You can also conduct presentations at parish outreach organizations, in classrooms, and even at parishioners' workplaces. This focus on education should help close the gap between awareness and understanding of fair trade, while empowering everyone to find ways to promote fair trade.

Let your Fair Trade Month be a time to focus on building stronger relationships with community leaders and organizations while promoting fair trade education.

Let your Fair Trade Month be a time to focus on building stronger relationships with community leaders and organizations while promoting fair trade education.

Remember CRS sees our work in fair trade as an effort in solidarity with our brothers and sisters overseas and here in the United States. Each year, CRS hosts trainings for CRS Fair Trade Ambassadors. We have trained over 150 Ambassadors who work in their parishes and communities to promote CRS Fair Trade partner products and effective advocacy.

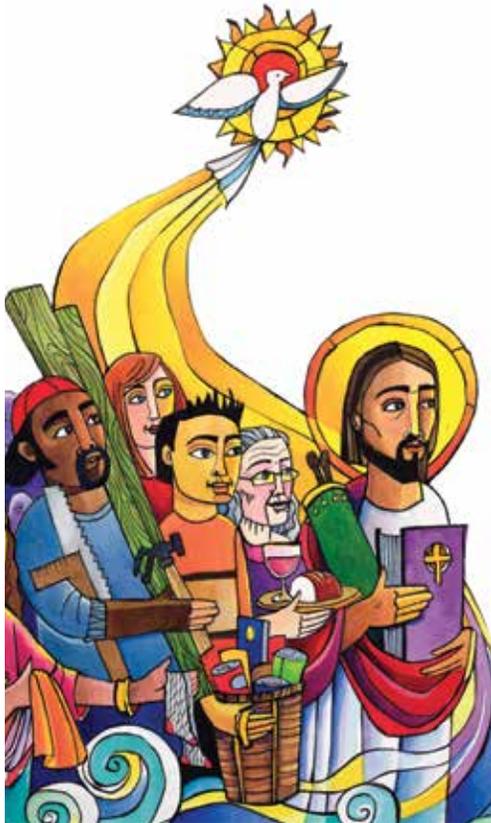
If you are looking for a way to connect with farmers and artisans overseas, CRS Fair Trade is a great avenue for this type of connection.

For all information on CRS Fair Trade, visit www.crsfairtrade.org. Some materials are available for shipping free of charge. A number of materials are also available in Spanish. *JF*

If you are planning to launch an awareness effort, CRS has a number of resources you can download and use at www.crsfairtrade.org/fair-trade-resources/print-materials/

On this resource page, you will find:

1. A template for a letter to your priest, introducing the idea of fair trade.
2. A guide to hosting a Fair Trade Event.
3. Case study materials for introducing your community to the impact of fair trade on farmers.



GoodNewsPeople

Faith, Hope, and Love in Action

We practice virtues to cultivate habits and values that draw us closer to Christ as we grow in discipleship. We can practice virtues through one-time actions, by exploring their depth in our prayers, or by integrating life-changing practices into our daily life.

Consider these words about the virtue of patience:

Let us think of our personal relationship, in this week: How patient has Jesus been with me in my life? Just this. And then the words will rise from our hearts: "Thank you, Lord! Thank you for your patience." – Pope Francis

Patience is the willingness to wait, to allow God's revelations to unfold in our lives at God's pace and not our own. It is openness to sitting in uncertainty, and it is acceptance of the unknown future ahead of us. It is the ability to move to the rhythm that God sets for our lives rather than forcing a rhythm ourselves. Patience is waiting not with frustration or annoyance, but with hope.

How might you include the practice of patience in your daily life?

Exploring virtues is a central feature of the GoodNewsPeople program.

To see what GoodNewsPeople is all about, watch the video at goodnewspeople-jfm.org.

Calling all Enthusiastic Gardeners

by **Kimberly Mazyck**,
Relationship Manager, National Partnerships

www.catholicrelief.org



As summer comes to a close, the season of autumn approaches, and those of us who savor the heat of the summer in our gardens lament the end of this time outside. We get ready for the changing foliage and the end of the harvest, and we prepare to spend the longer evenings inside. As we do so, we may

consider whether or not we have skills to offer our sisters and brothers overseas. As a member of CRS staff, I often pause when someone asks me if he or she can help with CRS programs overseas. I do not want to discourage the

honest offer and earnest desire to assist people overseas. Thanks to a partnership with USAID (United States Agency for International Development,) **there is an opportunity to work overseas: the *Farmer to Farmer* program in East Africa.**

More than just a partnership between CRS and USAID, *Farmer to Farmer* represents a cooperative exchange and partnership between farmers in East Africa and volunteers from the United States. This program is an opportunity for volunteers to provide agricultural or other

Farmer to Farmer represents a cooperative exchange and partnership between farmers in East Africa and volunteers from the United States.

technical skills to promote economic growth and ample food production overseas. By sharing their skills, volunteers will improve productivity, access new markets, and promote environmental conservation abroad.

CRS is looking for individual volunteers from farms, agribusiness, cooperatives, and universities in the United States. We expect to see our volunteers – from master gardeners, to large-scale crop farmers, to ranchers – have a range of skills. In addition, we hope to find volunteers

from the full diversity of American agriculture – processors, input suppliers, marketers, financial experts, and cooperative experts.

Currently, CRS has 500 projects in East Africa, primarily in rural areas of Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya. CRS has been working in East Africa for 60 years on a wide variety of community-based initiatives that directly impact the lives of poor communities. Our *Farmer to Farmer* volunteers will be surrounded by a long-standing network

of well-trained professionals in a variety of program areas. The *Farmer to Farmer* program supports your efforts so that you can make a difference in the lives of those you serve.

We are not looking for volunteers with Ph.D.'s or specific language skills, although some of these qualifications may come in handy. The *Farmer to Farmer* program seeks individuals who are enthusiastic about traveling overseas to share agricultural and other technical skills with farmers in East Africa. You will not be paid for your time, but your expenses (e.g. airfare, vaccinations, lodging, meals, and in-country transportation) will be covered. In addition, we expect you to share the highlights of your experience when you return.

So, as you pull on that sweater shielding yourself from the brisk fall air, visit www.farmertofarmer.crs.org to download an application and learn more about this opportunity to travel to East Africa to share your skills.

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Photos courtesy of Sara A. Fajardo, Catholic Relief Services



The Moral Scandal of Hunger

by Billy Kangas,
Catholic Relations

www.bread.org



breadfortheworld
INSTITUTE

“We shall awaken dullness and rise vigorously toward justice.” – Hildegard of Bingen

Hunger is a human reality that affects lives in every place in the world. All humans need food to live, and all societies struggle to make sure that the right to food is extended to all people within their care. One of the powerful forces in helping bring food to people all across the world is the work of the Church.

The central concern for feeding the hungry is rooted in the ministry of Jesus himself. On the hills of Palestine nearly 2,000 years ago, Jesus first gathered his disciples. When the disciples noted that those around him were hungry, Jesus had compassion on them and sent his followers to “give them something to eat” (Matthew 14:16). In fact, the table became one of the central settings for Christ’s own ministry: Around the table Jesus taught others (Luke 14). Around the table Jesus served (John 13). Around the table Jesus offered grace (Matt 26). Around the table Jesus healed (Luke 14). Around the table Jesus was revealed as risen (Luke 24).

The table has remained a central place for the life and ministry of the Church. Generation after generation, leaders in the Church would call the people to find their ministry rooted anew in gathering around the table to be fed and to share the life they found together by feeding the hungry. One of my favorite examples of this is seen in the preaching of John Chrysostom:

“Of what use is it to weigh down Christ’s table with golden cups, when he himself is dying of hunger? ... Apply this to Christ when he comes along the roads as a pilgrim, looking for shelter... Do not, therefore, adorn the church and ignore your afflicted brother, for he is the most precious temple of all.” (On the Gospel of Matthew, Hom. 50)

Similarly, Basil offers the wisdom that, “The bread that you store up belongs to the hungry” (*Homilies*). In these words the fathers instructed the Church to view what they hold as a gift to be gifted. The Christian’s bread is always to be broken and shared. The hungry are always to be viewed as icons of Christ to be cared for.

This teaching has continued into our current age and has gained new gravity. The Church of the 21st century has had to wrestle with a world that now has the resources to feed every person yet still allows millions to die each year from starvation. In Pope Benedict XVI’s encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, this moral crisis is laid out:

“Feed the hungry is an ethical imperative for the universal Church, as she responds to the teachings of her Founder, the Lord Jesus, concerning solidarity and the sharing of goods. Moreover, the elimination of world hunger has also, in the global era, become a requirement for safeguarding the peace and stability of the planet. **Hunger is not so much dependent on lack of material things as on shortage of social resources, the most important of which are institutional.**”
(CARITAS IN VERITATE, 27)

The issue of ending hunger is no longer an issue of scarcity; it is an issue of justice. The Church is now faced with addressing what Benedict calls the “institutional” shortages which keep people hungry. Pope Francis has called this situation a scandal, stating:

“It is well known that present production is sufficient, and yet millions of persons continue to suffer and die from hunger, and **this is a real scandal**... In this regard I would like to remind everyone of that necessary universal destination of all goods which is one of the fundamental principles of the Church’s social teaching. Respect for this principle is the essential condition for facilitating an effective and fair access to those essential and primary goods which every person needs and to which he or she has a right.”

In short, we are in the midst of a grave moral crisis. The world produces enough food for all people to eat, but people still starve. Christ is hungry all around the world, but our

institutions withhold our food from his hands. Each child that dies from malnutrition is a form of sacrilege. Each mother who cries out for food but finds no relief testifies against us.

I am guilty of this grave sin.

I am a member of one of the world’s richest nations and have a voice that can influence policy, yet too often I am silent. The effort of picking up the phone, or a pencil, to let my policy makers know that hunger is a priority that matters to me is an inconvenience, and so I remain inaudible and ineffective.

However, in the midst of this grave sin there is also great hope.

In 1990, 2 out of every 5 people suffered from serious malnutrition. Today that number is 1 in 5. Hunger has been halved. This amazing progress has been due, in large part, to faithful Christians who have taken the time to let leaders know that feeding the hungry is an essential value that should be pursued.

We are living in an unprecedented point in history. Experts now believe that if we can make ending hunger a priority for world leaders in the next year, we can actually see **an end to world hunger by 2030!**

All it would take is the Church to cast off the drowsiness of complacency and lift her voice toward justice. I pray you will consider lifting your voice for the hungry. Make this a spiritual discipline and an element of your discipleship this year so that we might live in a world where, for the first time in history, all are fed. AF

The issue of ending hunger is no longer an issue of scarcity; it is an issue of justice.



Bend To Benevolence

*You are not here to verify,
Instruct yourself, or inform curiosity
Or carry report. You are here to kneel.*

T. S. Eliot

*Embracing benevolence
means leaning into life
with unrestrained loving-kindness.*

*For it is good will that leads
to well-being and pursuing good for others
increases our capacity to care.*

***But love your enemies, do good, and lend,
expecting nothing in return.
Your reward will be great,
and you will be children of the Most High;
who is kind to the ungrateful and the
wicked.***

Luke 6: 35

*In the firefly glow of your brief beautiful life
will you let your pulse beat out a blessing
in the darkening day?*

*Begin with benevolence. Bend into it.
Incline your life toward the good.
and with a good will, give it away to
everything in the arc of your gaze.*

*Work your eyes and heart in pursuit of the good.
Focus not on the flaw or the lack,
but seek out the glimmer of a desire deeper
than darkness.*

*Seed the very air with breathy blessings
till your life becomes a benediction,
willing and wanting the well-being of each
and all.*

*And all shall be well and
All manner of thing shall be well
By the purification of the motive
In the ground of our beseeching.*

T. S. Eliot

Making the World Better Now and in the Future

JustFaith Ministries envisions a **vast community of faithful people**, transformed by the Spirit and leading extraordinary lives of compassion. This is the vision to which we have committed ourselves. Our work leads to engaged people, energized parishes, love-in-action, structural changes, and better lives for those who have suffered poverty and injustice.

This important work happens, in part, through the financial support of graduates of our programs. You and many other graduates make all these outcomes happen. **You inspire others to work to make a difference in people's lives.**

Thank you to all of you who sent in a gift in response to our recent spring appeal. Your gifts were very meaningful, and most of the contributed dollars were matched and doubled by a large family foundation. If you still want to respond, we have attached an envelope for your convenience.

If you are not yet a donor, **please consider joining other graduates** in support of this important work of growing compassion and commitment to meet the needs of the world.

Finally, **thank you** to those of you who have included us in your charitable bequests to help secure a future for this ministry. **It is rather simple to designate a gift from your estate.** You can designate a specific amount or a percent of your estate, stocks, or securities to JustFaith Ministries. You can also list us as a beneficiary of a retirement plan or life insurance policy. Charitable bequests are easy to establish, and you can change them if circumstances change. For more information, contact Chris Breu at chris@justfaith.org or 502-649-0126.

Thank you so much for making so much good happen!!

Become a follower of Still in the Storm. Visit the JustFaith Ministries blog site at www.stillinthestorm.wordpress.com

If you would like to receive a blog posting every other week in your email inbox, click the button that invites you to follow this blog.

The question that most of us have to answer for ourselves in prayer and for each other in conversation and community is simply this: what is my life's mission?

The language of membership – “Are you Catholic?” for example – has embedded in it the danger of a static understanding of faith. This language can speak to identity often related to a set of Sunday commitments, mostly happening on parish property. Of course, there is nothing wrong with the question itself, or with a parish owning property, or with Sunday commitments. The problem with the language of membership is the missing and critical piece – mission!

Without mission – without holding before us Jesus’ passion for a vision called the Reign of God – the language of membership and identity and Sunday commitments becomes self-preoccupied and, frankly, impotent in its ability to transform, bring life, speak truth, and bear Good News.

It’s all about mission. Faith is a verb.

The question that most of us have to answer for ourselves in prayer and for each other in conversation and community is simply this: what is my life’s mission? What is my life’s work, orientation, passion, love? In effect, what God do the hours in my day worship?

Warning: the question is not primarily about words (“I believe in God,” “I’m a Catholic,” “I love Jesus,” “I have enlightened opinions.”) The question is about how each one of us spends our time. Jesus cautions, “Not everyone who says to me ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven” (Mt 7:21).

This caution is actually a precious reminder. We face distraction and temptation when we get caught up in our heads. We know the Catechism and/or we’ve read the Scriptures and/or we attend the sacraments. Meanwhile, my life means nothing to the world. The poor and vulnerable do not know us, and we do not know them. The unemployed, the un-housed, the unfed, and the hopeless do not have good news preached to them because we are still sitting in the sanctuary – or the kitchen.

And what can happen is that those who are hungry stay hungry. Those who are starved for food and attention continue to suffer. And those who are starved for meaning and purpose keep doing religious activities, oblivious to the great and ponderous adventure that is connected with life lived on mission.

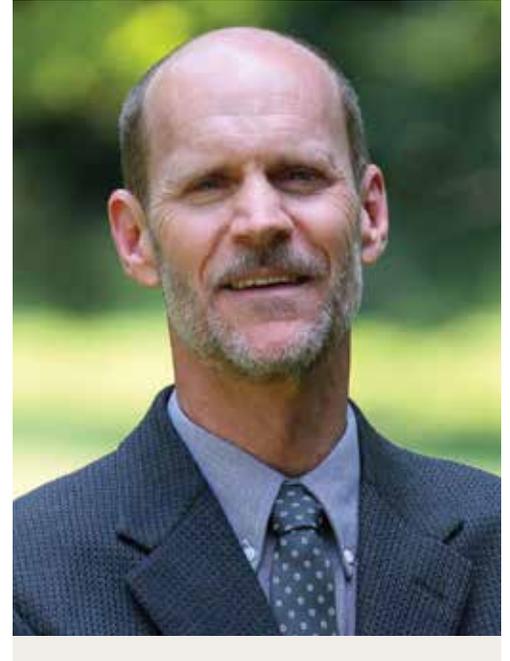
To adapt words I once heard Wendell Berry speak: Mission is like hard work and sweat; once you’re into it, it’s actually quite satisfying. It is the dread of it before you ever do anything that causes the trouble. Comfort and security seem preferable to adventure, mission, and compassion, but only when you’re staring at the Gospel from the outside. Great and holy people always seem bored by comfort.

We don’t know what we’re missing if we’re just polishing the silverware. Faith is a verb.

The challenge for our churches is that we’ve been too long satisfied to stay on campus and polish the parish silverware. Pope Francis is begging for a church that finds faith off

Notes

From Jack

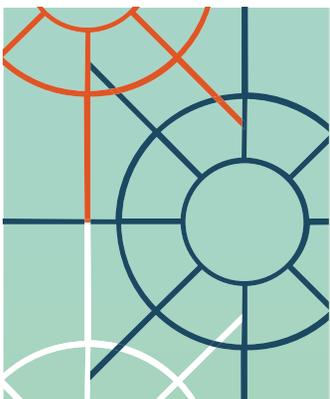


*It’s all about mission.
Faith is a verb.*

campus. In the smelly places, at the margins, and in the adventure of human engagement, embrace and care for each other.

And then, and only then, in the doing of it, we’ll know faith.

Jack



JustFaith Ministries provides graduates of our programs with timely resources through our **GradNet** email.

To join, sign up at justfaith.org/graduates

If you have comments, ideas or suggestions for an article, or if you would like to share digital pictures of Just Faith Ministries groups in action, please contact: gradnet@justfaith.org

JustFaith Ministries
P.O. Box 221348
Louisville, KY 40252
502-429-0865

www.justfaith.org

OUR MISSION

JustFaith Ministries forms, informs and transforms people of faith by offering programs and resources that sustain them in their compassionate commitment to build a more just and peaceful world.

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An Invitation to a Spiritual Journey of Compassion

Maryknoll Lay Missioners, in collaboration with JustFaith Ministries,
is offering two exciting immersion opportunities for 2015:

EL SALVADOR, MARCH 20 – 29, 2015

(deadline for signing up is November 21, 2014)

and

KENYA, JUNE 13 – 25

(deadline for signing up is December 15, 2014)

Through these trips, JustFaith Ministries program graduates have the opportunity to experience a spiritual journey into compassion and an immersion into the lives, culture, faith, and history of the people of El Salvador and Kenya. JustFaith Ministries encourages all program grads to start saving now in order to take advantage of these opportunities to discover what you could never learn through books and films.

As one JustFaith grad stated about her participation in last year's trip to Kenya, "This experience has made me more aware, more grateful, more compassionate for needy people in my community, and more loving and hopeful for all of God's great diverse human situations and challenges."

Learn more at: www.friendsacrossborders.org/trips/justfaith-ministries-immersion/