

Focus on Life ~ Justice ~ Peace

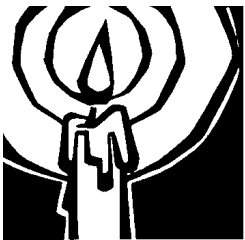
Office of Peace, Justice / Respect Life

June/July 2009



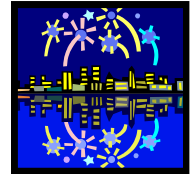
Office of Peace, Justice,
& Respect Life
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*"You were once in darkness,
but now you are light in the
Lord. Live as children of
light, for light produces
every kind of goodness and
righteousness and truth."
Ephesians 5:8-9*



*Did you know you can cut and
paste any item in this newsletter
for placement in your parish
bulletin??*

St. Paul, Fourth of July and... An Opportunity to Learn about Faith, Justice & Love



On the Fourth of July, most Americans have their minds on picnics, fireworks ("light"), and other ways of celebrating American independence... We should also be reminded during these final months of the Year of St. Paul about the other "light" which we find in baptism.

Our baptism breaks us free of the prison of the fallen world and we become members of the body of Christ, the real "light" of the world. We are freed from original sin and now living with Jesus. So how are we acting as a part of that body of Christ? How are we respecting the dignity of persons, both those here in our fine country and across the entire world?

On the calendar of the universal Church, July 4th has a different meaning. July 4 is also the memorial of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, an Italian man beatified in 1990 by Pope John Paul II. Though only recently brought to the attention of the faithful in this way, Pier Giorgio has quickly taken a place as a popular patron of young people. In fact, his remains were transported earlier last summer from Italy to Sydney, Australia, to be present there for this month's celebration of World Youth Day.

He was born in 1901, into a rich and influential Italian family. His parents had little interest in religion or in fostering any kind of faith in Pier Giorgio and his sister.

Somehow, by the working of grace, he managed from a young age to develop a faith and an attitude toward life that was very different from the environment in which he was being raised. Though his family was rich and blind to the struggles of poverty, he became interested in caring for the poor. Despite his parents' indifference to religion, even as a child, he found himself on fire with faith and love for God.

So as we prepare to celebrate July 4th- the Independence Day of our Country and the memorial of Pier Giorgio Frassati. What can we learn from his life?

- He saw God in the Poor- On one occasion, one of Pier Giorgio's friends asked him how he could walk into the homes of so many poor people, when there was so often such an unpleasant smell inside. Pier Giorgio said that approaching the poor was approaching Christ. "Around the poor I see a special light, one that we do not have," he said.
- He saw God in the Eucharist- He wrote in a letter to a friend of being "consumed with Eucharistic fire" that brought a happiness that nothing else in the world could offer.
- He saw God in Creation- He wrote once in a letter to a friend that he enjoyed the mountain climbing expeditions because they were an opportunity for "contemplating the Creator's greatness in that pure air."

As we celebrate Pier Giorgio's feast on July 4, as well as our country's independence, it's a great opportunity to become better acquainted with this remarkable witness of faith, justice, and love. Let's reflect upon our responsibilities to live as children of the light as St. Paul suggests in the verses to the side. Do we see a special light surrounding people? And as we watch the beauty of fireworks, let us also recall the Eucharistic fire referred to by Pier Giorgio Frassati. Does it offer us happiness unlike anything else in the world? And finally let's ask ourselves are, "Am I a witness to faith, justice, and love?"

**See inside this newsletter to find out many ways you can truly become
LIGHT to our world!**

Respect Life Updates

The theme for this year's Respect Life Program is "Every Child Brings Us God's Smile"!

This theme is taken from the words of Pope Benedict XVI when he said, "Every child... brings us God's smile and invites us to recognize that life is his gift, a gift to be welcomed with love and preserved with care always and at every moment."

October Respect Life Resource packets will be sent directly to parishes in August. Parish Respect Life Leaders should contact Pastors, pastoral Administrators/secretaries toward the end of August to see if they have arrived. Please use these resources to plan your parish respect life activities.

Be sure to see the calendar on page 5 for more upcoming events!

Moratorium on the Death Penalty in North Carolina

Now is the time to contact your state representatives on this respect life issue. Visit www.pfadp.org and find out more. Click on "Take Action" to learn and join your voice in solidarity with a growing list of city governments, agencies, people and organizations. The Holy See has reiterated its long-stated opposition to capital punishment, this time calling it "not just a negation of the right to life, but also an affront to human dignity."

North Carolina Racial Justice Act: An Opportunity in Advocacy

We have an opportunity to express diocesan our support for the NC Racial Justice Act, Senate Bill 461 and House Bill 472. We appeal to you to support this act as it was originally filed (not the 3rd version which passed the Senate in mid-May). It is one step in reducing the use of executions in our state.



"The dignity of life must never be taken away,
even in the case of someone who has done great evil.

Modern society had the means of protecting itself,
without definitively denying criminals the chance to reform.

I renew the appeal I made... to end the death penalty, which is both cruel and unnecessary."
Pope John Paul II, Homily at Mass, St. Louis, Missouri (January 27, 1999)

Background:

- The Racial Justice Act would allow a person accused of a capital crime the opportunity of a court review of whether race played a part in the prosecutor's decision to seek the death penalty.
- If a defendant has already been sentenced to death, he may present evidence, if available, that his death sentence was improperly obtained on the basis of race.
- The act would allow a defendant to present statistical or other evidence to support such a claim. If a defendant succeeded in establishing his claim that race was a basis for his death sentence, the court could impose a sentence of life without the possibility of parole.

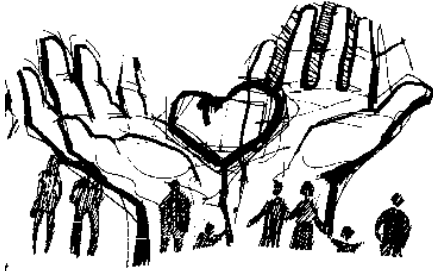
Action:

- Go to <http://www.ncleg.net/GIS/RandR07/Home.html> and enter necessary information to attain your legislators' information.
- Call or e-mail your legislators using the talking points below.

Talking Points:

- Race continues to play an undeniable part in North Carolina's use of the death penalty.
- A defendant in the state of North Carolina is 3.5 times more likely to get the death penalty if their victim is white than if their victim is a person of color.
- It has been documented that prosecutors often exclude people of color from sitting on juries in death penalty cases. Many African-Americans on North Carolina's death row were sentenced to death by all-white juries.
- Currently, a death row inmate is barred from presenting statistical evidence—often the best and most accessible form of proof—to show that racial discrimination took place in his case.

Respect Life Seminar



Saturday, August 22
 St. Mary Mother of the Church Catholic Church
 Garner, NC
 9:30-2:30, including lunch

Who should attend?

Parish respect life leaders and committee members,
 those parishioners interested in respect life
 and parish social ministry activities

The Sacredness of Life in the Spirit of St. Francis of Assisi

Keynote: Reverend Louis Cannino, OFM
 Executive Director, St. Francis Prayer Center, Stoneville, NC

The following workshops will be offered:

(Each participant will have an opportunity to attend both workshops.)

- *Dignitas Personae (The Dignity of Person) –*

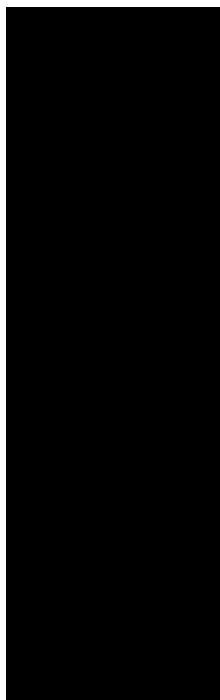
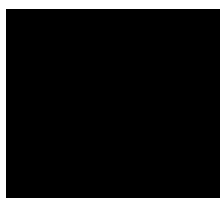
This workshop will provide information and guidance regarding this encyclical from the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith on ethical issues and biomedical research.

- *Best Practices for Respect Life Committees-*

This workshop will discuss strategies to develop an annual plan, recruit and maintain volunteers, conduct effective meetings, and organize a well-balanced respect life ministry at your parish. Examples of existing diocesan ministry ideas will be shared.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION BELOW!

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| <p>Cost: \$20.00</p> <p>Send registration to: Registrar Catholic Diocese of Raleigh 715 Nazareth Street Raleigh, NC 27606</p> <p>Make checks payable to: Catholic Charities</p> <p>Or email: stone@raldioc.org</p> <p>Questions? Call (919) 821-9751</p> | <p>Registration: - <i>Respect Life Seminar, St. Mary's Garner, August 22, 2009</i></p> <p>Please complete this form and mail along with check to the Diocese of Raleigh.</p> <p>NAME _____</p> <p>ADDRESS _____</p> <p>PHONE _____</p> <p>EMAIL _____</p> <p>PARISH _____</p> <p>LUNCH ___ regular ___ vegetarian</p> |
|--|---|



SAVE THE DATE!
Parish Social Ministry Seminar
on
Saturday, October 3, 2009
10:00-3:00
Our Lady of Guadalupe, Newton Grove

Where is Newton Grove??
Only 45 miles SE of Raleigh and
90 miles NW of Wilmington just off of I-40!

Parish Social Ministry with
Prayer, Peace, Patience, and Perseverance!

Keynote Speaker:
Rev. Fred Kammer S.J.
Director, Jesuit Social Research Institute,
Loyola University, New Orleans

Come learn more about:

- *The Spirituality of Social Justice*
- *Hunger Awareness- What do we do next?*
- *Immigration- Responding with Resources*
 - *Care of Creation- What can we do?*
- *Prison Ministry- Can we make a difference?*
 - *Parish Social Ministry- Do we have it?*

More information will be available in August!

*This conference is sure to be full of useful and practical ideas
 which are "parish ready"!*

JustFAITH

Congratulations to the following parishes and their recent JustFaith graduates:

St. Michael's in Cary, Holy Infant in Durham, St. Thomas More in Chapel Hill, UNC Chapel Hill Newman Center, St. Ann in Clayton, and Immaculate Conception in Durham.

JustFaith is a 30 week program and offers an opportunity for parishioners to experience a spiritual journey into compassion. JustFaith, offered in hundred of parishes across the country, provides a lively and challenging format to read, view, discuss, pray, experience and be formed by the justice tradition, which changes lives, inspires faithful witness, and transforms the world through love and service.

A former participant said, "JustFaith was an avenue by which I could discover who I am/am not, explore simplicity, define a life purpose, develop a social consciousness, experience compassion, build community, and rediscover prayer. JustFaith was a life-changing course of study; it awakened the Spirit within me and opened my mind and heart."

For more information on this life-changing and parish-changing program, go to the JustFAITH website- <http://www.justfaith.org/index.html>.

Nearly 350 people in more than 10 parishes in our Diocese have graduated from the JustFaith program. We would be happy to get you in touch with some leaders of this program to assist you in starting one at your parish. In some cases, parishes have combined efforts to do collaborative groups which has worked very well. We can also act as a resource for questions which your parish priest has regarding this program.

Now is the time to think about JustFaith for the Fall!

What is Fair Trade?

How can I promote fair trade in my parish?



Interested in learning more about the Fair Trade movement and how it relates to Catholic Social Teaching? Want to encourage your parish to serve Fair Trade coffee and stand in solidarity with farmers in developing countries? Looking for a fund-raising project for your Youth Group that offers social responsibility and teaching resources in addition to chocolate? Searching for a way to introduce parishioners to economic justice and connect them with artisans around the world? Talk to Sally Poland!

Sally has recently helped parishes create fair trade fairs and even helped one parish educate staff who is now drinking fair trade coffee at work!

A parishioner at Sacred Heart Cathedral in Raleigh, Sally is a brand new Fair Trade Ambassador for Catholic Relief Services. Please contact Sally at 919-828-2607 or email: sapoland@earthlink.net. She would love to talk to you!



Around the Diocese...

August 22

Diocesan Life Seminar

St. Mary's, Garner

9:30-2:00

See page 3 for more details.

August 29, 2009

Run for Life

Wake med Soccer Park, Cary

See <http://www.raleighrunforlife.org/>

for more information.

September 23-November 1

40 Days for Life

Contact apex4life@gmail.com or prayforlife247@aol.com

for information.

October 3

Parish Social Ministry Training Day

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Newton Grove

See page 4 for details.

October 4

Diocesan Respect Life Mass

11:00 a.m.

St. Ann, Fayetteville

Bishop Michael Burbidge presiding

October 9, 2009

Benefit for Life Gala

See <http://bflgala.com/index.html>

for more information.

October 22-24

Catholic Convocation (formerly Emmaus Conference)

St. Raphael Catholic Church, Raleigh

More information available soon.

January 22

March for Life in Washington D.C.

More information available soon.



The Dream Act *An Opportunity for Advocacy!*

Help U.S.– raised immigrant children pursue their dreams of higher education.

Background: The DREAM Act (S. 729, H.R. 1751) is a bipartisan bill introduced in the House and Senate on March 26, 2009. It establishes a path to legal status and eventually obtain permanent resident status provided that the students attend college or enter the U.S. Military. This bill would apply to students in public and private schools, including Catholic schools. The premise of the DREAM Act is that immigrant youth should not be hindered from working towards a more promising future solely because they were brought to the United States by their parents at a young age without legal status. DREAM seeks to provide these students with a fair chance to earn citizenship and to contribute to the country they call home.

How would the DREAM ACT move us beyond fear toward hope for common ground?

- Currently, 65,000 undocumented immigrant youth graduate each year from U.S. High Schools. They face unique barriers to higher education, are unable to work legally in the U.S., and often live in constant fear of detection by immigration authorities.
- The DREAM Act would add thousands of talented, motivated, multi-lingual and multi-cultural people to our workforce.
- With higher education, these young adults would earn more pay, pay more in taxes and maximize their contributions to our economy and communities.
- The DREAM Act would support justice for young people who have lived in the U.S. for most of their lives and desire only to call this country their home.

Action: Your action is needed to help pass the DREAM Act. Efforts have been made to pass this important legislation since 2001, and DREAM failed in 2007 by only a few votes in the Senate. DREAM does enjoy support in both parties and is backed by President Obama. However, grassroots momentum is needed in the coming months to overcome opposition and ensure that DREAM becomes law. Please CALL and/or WRITE your representative or senator today and ask them to co-sponsor DREAM Act (S. 729/H.R. 1751). Capital Hill Switchboard: (202) 224-3121

Talking Points:

- I am calling to ask Senator/Representative to co-sponsor or support the Developments, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM, S. 729/H.R. 1751). The DREAM Act would permit immigrant youth who have graduated high school, are at least 15 years of age, and who have lived in the United States 5 years, to apply for permanent residence, provided they complete two years of college or served two years in the military. It also would permit states to offer these young persons in-state tuition without restriction.
- These young persons came to the United States as children with their parents, so did not enter the United States illegally on their own accord. They know no other homeland than the United States and want the opportunity to offer their skills and leadership to our nation. We would be foolhardy not to give them that opportunity.
- I urge to to cosponsor this legislation, which could help 65,000 student per year come out of the shadows and pursue their futures.

See <http://www.usccb.org/mrs/dreamalert.shtml> for more information about the DREAM Act.

In addition you can always find information about Immigration Legislation at <http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/>.

Parish Social Ministry Resources for your whole Parish

Did you know that Catholic Charities USA has a Parish Social Ministry (PSM) Section?

Go to www.catholiccharitiesUSA.org for more information.

The PSM office of Catholic Charities USA endorses national growth and development of Parish Social Ministry by supporting Catholic Charities agencies, dioceses, and parish leaders in integrating the Church's social mission into parish life.

Want to share what you are doing? Please e-mail Melissa DuCharme at melissa.ducharme@raldioc.org!

Why Advocate?

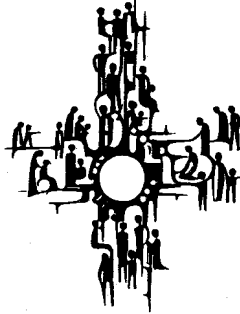
(resource: Just Neighbors program from Family Promise)
www.familypromise.org

“Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.”
 Proverbs 31:8-9

Advocacy is speaking out. Advocacy is using our collective voice as citizens to shape public policy. People of faith have a special concern for speaking with and on behalf of those who are poor and marginalized.

Here are some reasons WHY we ADVOCATE:

- Our faith calls us to advocacy.
- Advocacy is a part of our democracy.
 - Legislators need our help.
- Advocacy provided an important balance to lobbying.
- Our organizational structure is ready-made for advocacy.
 - Advocacy make a real difference.
 - Advocacy empowers.
- Advocacy makes volunteering make sense.



Catholic Social Teaching draws a distinction between the 2 ways we respond to people in our world– charity (direct service) and justice (advocacy). Many of our parishes are very charitable, but without removing the root causes of poverty, the need for charity will exist for ever. Social Justice aims to change structures, policies, or decisions that cause the symptoms we see in our charity work: homelessness, hunger, poverty.

A List of Organizations Who Advocate

In this issue of *Focus on Life ~ Justice ~ Peace* we have highlighted 2 opportunities for advocacy– Immigration (page 5) and Death Penalty (page 2). Many national initiatives in advocacy are going on right now in which individuals and parishes can attain resources and participate . Below is a summary of those initiatives.

USA Campaign to Reduce Poverty in America

Catholic Charities USA
www.catholiccharitiesusa.org

Catholics Confront Global Poverty

Catholic Relief Services, USCCB
<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/globalpoverty/>
www.crs.org

Catholic Coalition on Climate Change

www.catholicsandclimatechange.org

Bread for the World

www.bread.org

We encourage you to take a look at these sites filled that are filled with great resources and see how you and your parish can answer the call to charity AND advocacy!

Office of Peace, Justice & Respect Life Resources

NEW AND IMPROVED WEBSITE INFO.

Check it out today!

www.dioceseofraleigh.org/how/peace_justice/index.aspx

We have an entire page dedicated to Catholic Social Teaching Resources, Parish Social Ministry, Advocacy resources, and more!

Don't see what you need here??

Call us, we can help!

Contact the Office of Peace, Justice, & Respect Life

919-821-9751 / jurski@raldioc.org

Receiving this in the mail?

E-mail us today to receive it electronically!

*“If you want peace,
 work for Justice”*

Pope Paul VI

NC Catholic Voice

Go to the website www.CatholicVoiceNC.org for more information and to register.

More than 800,000 residents of North Carolina profess the Catholic faith in the 187 parishes and missions of the Dioceses of Raleigh and Charlotte. Catholic Voice NC facilitates a grassroots effort by concerned Catholics in North Carolina to educate and influence our lawmakers. When an important issue arises you will receive an e-mail alert with the option to contact your legislator to express your Catholic views.

Register today, it's free!

Each of these issue areas are currently covered:

- Respect Life
- Stem Cell Research
- End of Life
- Immigration
- Family Life





Prayer of Thanksgiving

By: Walter Rauschenbusch

O God, we thank you for this earth, our home;
For the wide sky and the blessed sun,
For the salt sea and the running water,
For the everlasting hills
And the never-resting winds,
For trees and the common grass underfoot.
We thank you for our senses
By which we hear the songs of birds,
And see the splendor of the summer fields,
And taste of the autumn fruits,
And rejoice in the feel of the snow,
And smell the breath of the spring.
Grant us a heart wide open to all this beauty;
And save our souls from being so blind
That we pass unseeing
When even the common thornbush
Is aflame with your glory,
O God our creator,
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen

