



# Just Notes

A newsletter from the Life, Peace and Justice Commission for the Diocese of Reno, Nevada

Spring 2011

## Statement of Purpose for the Commission:

We, the Life, Peace, and Justice Commission, attest to the unity we share in the Body of Christ through the Holy Spirit. In solidarity, directed by Catholic Social Teaching and inspired by Scripture, we commit ourselves to encourage our parish communities to work for justice and peace. We speak for the voiceless in our community and world, seeking to advocate for the dignity of all and promote the unity that we share as the creation of a loving God.



Walking the Walk

## Key Themes of our Catholic Social Teaching

Life and Dignity of the Human Person

Call to Family, Community and Participation

Rights and Responsibilities

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

Solidarity

Care for God's Creation

## REFLECTING ON THE USE OF THE DEATH PENALTY

By Rita Sloan

As we approach Holy Week, our thoughts turn often to the solemn feelings of Good Friday. While emotions and reflections will vary among us, we cannot help but think of the gravity of a life ended by execution. We remember the words of Pope John Paul II and of the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops: "The new evangelization calls for followers of Christ who are unconditionally pro-life: who will proclaim, celebrate and serve the Gospel of life in every situation. A sign of hope is the increasing recognition that the dignity of human life must never be taken away, even in the case of someone who has done great evil. . . . I renew the appeal I made . . . for a consensus to end the death penalty, which is both cruel and unnecessary' (Pope John Paul II).

Catholic teaching on the common good commits each of us to pursue the good of everyone and of society as a whole. When the state, in our names and with our taxes, ends a human life despite having non-lethal alternatives, it suggests that society can overcome violence with violence. The use of the death penalty ought to be abandoned not only for what it does to those who are executed, but for what it does to all of society. The pursuit of the common good is linked directly to the defense of human life. At a time when the sanctity of life is threatened in many ways, taking life is not really a solution but may instead effectively undermine respect for life. In many ways the death penalty is about us: the actions taken in our name, the values which guide our lives, and the dignity that we accord to human life. Public policies that treat some lives as unworthy of protection, or that are perceived as vengeful, fracture the moral conviction that human life is sacred. Catholic teaching on the death penalty should not be oversimplified, distorted, or minimized by supporters or opponents of capital punishment. The death penalty presents Catholics with an unavoidable moral challenge. The Church's teaching, as expressed clearly and authoritatively in the Catechism and The Gospel of Life, should not be ignored or dismissed as just one opinion among others. Rather, Catholics are called to receive this teaching seriously and faithfully as they shape their consciences, their attitudes, and ultimately their actions"

<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/national/penaltyofdeath.pdf>

## OUR LADY OF WISDOM AND GLENMARY MISSIONS OUTREACH

By Fran McMillen

The University Catholic Community, Our Lady of Wisdom Parish, in conjunction with Glenmary Missions, is "twinning" with St. Christopher's Parish in Pontotoc, Mississippi. This area of Mississippi is extremely poor and their needs are many. Father Vince and Chris Luna from Our Lady of Wisdom visited St. Christopher's and were most impressed by the ministry of Fr. Tim and Sr. Soledad. One of the ways our community has helped is through sponsorship of children to their summer camp. Our hope is to have university students help at the camp this summer.

We were blessed with a visit from Fr. Tim in February. He shared their gratitude and experiences at Our Lady of Wisdom's International Potluck Dinner and during his homilies on Sunday. Communicating, sharing our gifts and blessings is a gift to our Wisdom community.

"If you want peace, work for justice." - Pope Paul VI

**Published by:**

The Life, Peace and  
and Justice Commission

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## ACTIONN LEADERSHIP TRAINING

By Elizabeth Reville

On Saturday, March 12, 2011, seventy-two members of local faith communities attended the Acting in Community Together in Organizing Nevada (ACTIONN) training session which was hosted by the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Northern Nevada. ACTIONN was formed by a group of local faith leaders (clergy and lay) after meeting for several months and exploring the People Improving Communities through Organizing (PICO) faith based community organizing model. PICO is one of the largest community-based efforts in the U.S., and since 1972 has successfully worked on the following issues:

- Health care accessibility
- Improvement of public schools
- Building affordable housing
- Redevelopment of communities
- Foreclosures (since 2008)

ACTIONN needs leaders who are committed to acting on shared values in order to build a more just world. Trained leaders from local congregations will help to develop congregational plans that will address local community issues.

The next training is scheduled in June. For more information, please contact Rita Sloan, Coordinator for the Life, Peace, and Justice Commission of the Diocese of Reno: [rwrksloan@hotmail.com](mailto:rwrksloan@hotmail.com) or 775-849-1653.

## FORECLOSURE INFORMATION AND THE DANGER OF FORCLOSURE SCAMS

By Rita Sloan

Numerous people are facing the anxiety of foreclosure and other stresses related to our nation's current economic struggles. Nevada has the highest foreclosure rate of all the states. If we are not struggling ourselves with a mortgage that is much higher than the value of our home, we most likely know or live near someone who is. Foreclosure scams have sprung up across the nation, and they are taking in great profits from unknowing and desperate clients. **WARNINGS:** Never pay someone in advance for the promise of a loan modification or help in stopping a foreclosure. Beware of anyone who guarantees they can stop a foreclosure or get a loan modified. Do not sign anything such as power-of-attorney or title to property! There are several HUD-approved agencies available to help with your mortgage, usually for free:

- Homeowner's Hotline – 888-995-HOPE (4693)
- Consumer Credit Counselors of Northern Nevada – [www.cccsnevada.org](http://www.cccsnevada.org)  
(800) 451-4505 or (702) 364-0344
- Washoe County Senior Services – (775) 328-2592  
<http://www.washoecounty.us/seniorsrv/legal.htm>
- Nevada Foreclosure Mediation (fee required)  
<http://www.nevadajudiciary.us/index.php/foreclosuremediation>
- FDIC Foreclosure Prevention Website – [www.fdic.gov/foreclosureprevention](http://www.fdic.gov/foreclosureprevention)
- HOPE For Homeowners (H4H) – <http://portal.hud.gov/>  
(800) CALL-FHA or (800) 225-5342
- Making Home Affordable – [www.makinghomeaffordable.gov/](http://www.makinghomeaffordable.gov/)