



Just Notes

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

December 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

ALTERNATIVES TO VIOLENCE PROJECT

By Rita Sloan

Someone whom I had not seen for a long time once asked me, "What do you do in all your busy life that you find life-giving?" A provocative question, to be sure! I have pondered it often since that day, and surely my cup overflows with good activity. At that moment, however, the first thing that came into my mind was the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP).

To attempt the impossible and explain what AVP is, I quote from the AVP Nevada brochure:

- AVP is an experiential program, helping people change their lives.
- It is a prison or community program, helping inmates learn new skills and attitudes that lead to new ways of being in the world.
- It is a program for everyone. It draws participants and facilitators from all religions, races and walks of life.
- It is an intensive learning experience through 3-day workshops on three levels: the Basic workshop, the Advanced workshop, the Training for Facilitation workshop.
- Nationally, AVP now has programs in the workplace, schools, universities, churches, drug abuse centers, gang-intervention groups, job-training and other community programs, as well as in many prisons across the nation.

After being involved with AVP for eight years, these are some of my observations. First, I have observed in myself that AVP has increasingly moved up on my priority list. What happens at an AVP workshop borders on magic! Hearts and minds open and change. Participants learn from one another, come to see one another in different light and lose preconceptions, and we share hardy laughter. Though not a religious program, AVP touches the spiritual aspect of human nature.

Sometimes we "good Church people" think violence is not a big issue in our lives; I know I thought that way. Instead, I've come to recognize that violence is woven into the fabric of our society. We are all touched by violence, and we are all capable and culpable. On the other hand, real change is possible. The way it has always been is not the way it must always be!

For more information on AVP, contact Rita Sloan at rwrksloan@hotmail.com or phone (775) 849-1653.

Published by:

The Life, Peace and
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PARISH NEWS:

Do you have Parish Life,
Peace and Justice news
to share? If so, please
contact our Coordinator,
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COULD YOU SURVIVE LIVING IN POVERTY? CAPITAL CITY CIRCLES INITIATIVE POVERTY SIMULATION

By Elizabeth Reville

On November 5, 2011, St. Teresa of Avila Catholic Community hosted the Capital City Circles Initiative's community education event, "Could You Survive Living in Poverty?" This event gave many of us a firsthand opportunity to experience the challenges that families living in poverty face every day. When we entered the meeting room, we were given a "new identity" to role play, and provided with a printout of our allotted resources for the month. You could be a homeless person, a single parent or parents out of work, who are trying to feed and house their children with limited resources. Along the walls of the room, people sat at tables with signs above their sections – Utilities, Social Services, House of Worship Food Bank, Grocery Store, Bank, Real Estate Office, Pawn Shop, and Police Station, and a Construction Payroll Office. These were our community resources.

In our packets, we had transportation passes, identity badges and instructions to obtain food stamps and other social services. When we were given the go ahead to begin our role playing and the timeframe in which we were to accomplish our tasks, we made our way to stand in line at the social services office to fill out forms for food stamps, for some a visit to the utility company to obtain assistance in paying a bill, and to track our transportation passes to get to our destinations. While all of this may seem fairly straightforward, it's life's daily challenges that can become frustrating obstacles that get in the way of providing for one's family. Some very real issues that arose: a car breaks down and there's no money to fix it, not enough money for gas, a child is ill and the parent has to miss work; the utilities are shut off due to non-payment, and food stamps run out before the next monthly allotment.

The Capital City Circles Initiative is a community-based program that assists families living in poverty (Circle Leaders) to achieve their goal of self-sufficiency through education and supportive friendships with Allies from middle-class members of the community. After completing a 20-week workshop the families, thereafter referred to as Circle Leaders, are matched with 3-5 Allies to form a Circle. From that point on each "Circle" meets once or twice a month to build friendships and to work on the Circle Leader's dreams, plans and goals toward achieving economic self-sufficiency. Families participating in the program typically take 18 to 24 months to achieve self-sufficiency, at which time they become Allies, and help other families achieve self-sufficiency; completing the circle or reciprocity. Brenda Sillis, Circles Coordinator, families and allies of the Capital City Circles (CCC) Initiative put on this very informative educational event. To learn more about CCC, visit their web site at: <http://sites.google.com/site/capitalcitycirclesinitiative/Home>

BRYAN SIRCHIO CONCERT

WHERE: ST. TERESA OF AVILA CATHOLIC COMMUNITY
3000 N. Lompa Lane, Carson City

WHEN: Sunday, January 8, 2012 - 7:00 P.M.

Bryan Sirchio, singer songwriter, received a M.Div. from Princeton Theological Seminary in Jan., 1984. He was a pastor of two small churches in northern Wisconsin, and then lived in Three Lakes, WI for the first 6 years of his music ministry. He has traveled extensively for the past 22 years doing concerts and leading worship services and retreats. He has also worked a good deal with two ministries which were born out of the well known "Church of the Saviour" in Washington, D.C. These organizations focus on economic justice and faithfulness from a Christian perspective, and it was in the context of his work with these organizations that he was privileged to connect very intimately with the country and people of Haiti. Sirchio states, "I've written many songs over the years that have been born out of my experiences in Haiti... I still work a good deal with several grass roots organizations that serve some of the poorest neighborhoods of Haiti." Some parishioners from St. Teresa Catholic Community will be part of the group traveling on a Mission of Mutual Exchange trip to Haiti, February 9-17, 2012, led by Bryan. For more information about Bryan Sirchio's ministry, please visit his web site at: <http://sirchio.com/>