



# Just Notes

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

Summer 2013

## 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



...feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.

### 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

## IMMIGRATION EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

*“Central to our identity as Catholics is that we are called to be leaven for transforming the world, agents for bringing about a kingdom of love and justice.”*

*– Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions, U.S. Bishops, 1998*

By Elizabeth Reville

S. 744, the Border Security, Economic Competitiveness, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013 was recently passed by the U.S. Senate. Archbishop Jose H. Gomez, archbishop of Los Angeles, CA, and chairman of the USCCB Committee on Migration, urged the House of Representatives to follow the U.S. Senate’s lead and pass a comprehensive reform bill as soon as possible. The USCCB supports efforts that will allow a clear, accessible path to citizenship and improved family reunification.

Undocumented immigrants live in our communities, working and worshiping with us, and facing the risk of deportation and separation from their families. Here in the Reno Catholic Diocese we have heard personal stories of many of our own parishioners who came to the U.S. hoping for a better life. Through educational efforts of the Justice for Immigrants team, ACTIONN (Acting in Community Together in Organizing Northern Nevada), Immigration Reform for Nevada, and leaders from St. Teresa of Avila Catholic Community, Catholics in Northern Nevada have the opportunity to listen and dialogue with the undocumented who share their real-life experiences of their journey to the U.S. and the dangers and exploitation they face every day.

In May a standing room only crowd of over 1,200 attended a Public Assembly held at St. Therese of the Little Flower Catholic Church in Reno. In attendance was U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid who expressed continued support for immigration reform. Also present were representatives from the offices of Senator Dean Heller and Congressman Mark Amodei. Bishop Randolph Calvo also spoke about the need for immigration reform and called on Congress to pass a fair, affordable reform measure. Several speakers gave personal testimonies, including an eight year old boy who shared his fear that his dad might be deported. He spoke about trying to be brave to talk about immigration reform because it’s important.

On July 4<sup>th</sup> we celebrated Independence Day by giving thanks for our freedom. As a people of faith we are called to pray and advocate for the eleven million undocumented immigrants who aspire to become American citizens. St. Teresa of Avila Catholic Community has held several immigration reform listening sessions after weekend masses and ten parishes in our diocese have participated in the Justice for Immigrants (JFI) Immigration Education Campaign.

For JFI information, contact Rita Sloan at: [rwrksloan@hotmail.com](mailto:rwrksloan@hotmail.com). On the web: [www.justiceforimmigrants.org/index.shtml](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/index.shtml) [www.piconetwork.org/issues/campaign-for-citizenship and actionn.org](http://www.piconetwork.org/issues/campaign-for-citizenship-and-actionn.org)

## CLIMATE CHANGE

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**PARISH NEWS:**

Do you have Parish Life, Peace and Justice news to share? If so, please contact our coordinator, Rita Sloan at:  
rwrksloan@hotmail.com

By Jeff Hardcastle

At our January meeting the Life, Peace and Justice Commission watched an Academy Award® nominated film, "Sun Come Up", a story of the people of the Carteret Islands who are being impacted by rising sea levels. The Carteret Islands are in the South Pacific, 50 miles off the coast of Papua New Guinea. They are planning to relocate over 2,700 people to Tinputz parish on Bougainville over the next ten years. Rising tides and increased flooding due to more intense storms have decimated their ability to consistently grow their own crops and to live their traditional livelihood. This is but one direct impact of climate change.

Too often climate change is thought of as only global warming and focuses on temperature. There are other indicators. For instance, one that caught my attention was on the Discovery Channel's new reality show "Alone and Afraid." The two participants were left to survive on an island in the Maldives where the stock of fish has decreased in the area due to a number of factors including global warming, reducing their chance of finding a source of protein. The Maldives government has had a presence at the last round of climate change talks. Their population is just over 319,000, almost the size of the Cities of Reno and Sparks' combined population. The U.S. has agreed to provide them funds for climate adaptation, but imagine if they have to relocate their population and the impact of that.

In the United States President Obama, in his Inaugural Address, highlighted climate change. The following day, NPR carried two reactions by Congressmen. One was that the problem is too big and we can't do anything about it. The other was an attitude that everyone else is polluting so why should we have to bear the burden alone. The implication is that we do not want to change our lifestyle unless everyone else does.

Our Church has a long history of being concerned about clean energy and has increasingly become involved in the topic of climate change. The lead group on this is the Catholic Climate Covenant (<http://catholicclimatecovenant.org>). The Life, Peace and Justice Commission will be hosting a workshop around the Feast of Saint Francis to look at this issue in greater detail. Please stay tuned for more information.

## SEX TRAFFICKING BILL SIGNED BY GOVERNOR

By Betty Bishop

On June 6, 2013, Governor Brian Sandoval signed Assembly Bill 67 which criminalizes sex trafficking. The bill was introduced by state Attorney General Catherine Cortez Masto, and both houses of the legislature unanimously passed the bill.

According to the law, sex trafficking is defined as an offense against anyone who "induces, causes, recruits, harbors, transports, provides or maintains a child to engage in prostitution." The new statute provides law enforcement agencies with more authority to investigate and prosecute traffickers. The law criminalizes sex trafficking and increases penalties, including prison terms for pimps who prey on homeless and runaway children, selling them for sex. The law stipulates that children cannot voluntarily consent to sex for pay. In addition, anyone convicted of trafficking will be registered as a sex offender. Their assets may be seized, liquidated and used to provide compensation to the victims.

In a recent press release, Masto is quoted as saying, "Nevada legislators took an important step in protecting the victims of sex trafficking in our state. The efforts of public and private sector leaders were a powerful force in raising awareness of the epidemic. Together, we met our goal of protecting children and young adults and holding sex trafficking perpetrators accountable." Many faith communities in Nevada supported this legislation for its important stance on human dignity and children's rights.

## PARISH TWINNING ANGEL TREE FOR ST. CHRISTOPHER'S FRIENDSHIP CAMPS

By Fran McMillen

Our Lady of Wisdom held a fundraiser using an Angel Tree to sponsor a child for summer camp. Each angel on the tree represented a camper from our sister parish, St. Christopher's, in Mississippi who will attend Summer Friendship Camp or Catholic Camp. The camp costs about \$80.00 for the week. Each child's family is asked to contribute something for the camp fees. The rest is donated. This is a very poor community and it is a way for the OLW Community to provide summer fun and education to children living in poverty.