

The Menu



“But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous” *Luke 14:13-14*

Newsletter of the UCC Social Justice Team

Volume 2, Issue 7

What is the Social Justice Team?

SJ Team Mission statement:

The UCC Social Justice Team connects what we experience at Mass to how we live. We serve the common good through works of mercy for the poor and vulnerable. We also work to eliminate the conditions that create the need for charity by advocating for just social policy and education of the community.

Join us at meetings this semester!

We meet each Monday 6:30-7:30PM in the Mother Teresa room.

This semester, we will focus on:

- **Studying scripture's call for justice
- **Discussing current events & studying Catholic Social Teaching
- **Partnering with Maryhouse Catholic Worker, a home for the chronically ill homeless
- **Taking action in letter writing campaigns and other events
- **Planning educational opportunities around the UCC

We are planning:

- **A UCC-wide Lenten service project
- **A discussion about the presidential candidates platforms
- **Your ideas are needed!

We always welcome new faces in our community!

Chef's Special: Common Good

Catholic Social Teaching: Call to Family, Community and Participation

The fact that human beings are social by nature indicates that the betterment of the person and the improvement of society depend on each other. Insofar as humanity stands completely in need of life in society, it is and ought to be the beginning, subject and object of every social organization. Life in society is not something accessory to humanity: through dealings with others, mutual service, and dialogue, men and women develop their talents and rise to their destiny.

Among the social ties necessary for humanity's development, some correspond more immediately to our innermost nature, such as the family and the political community. Socialization is not without its dangers, but it brings with it many advantages for the strengthening and betterment of human qualities and for the protection of human rights.



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Source: *Gaudium et Spes: Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Second Vatican Council, 1965, http://www.osjspm.org/majordoc_gaudium_et_spes_part_one.aspx*

Our Community: Bigger Than We Think

By Leab Kolar, SJ Team Prayer Leader

Last weekend I took the *Austin Tan Cerca de la Frontera* (Austin So Close to the Border) trip with the American Friends Service Committee. The trip broadened my view of community. I participated in a delegation of 12 people from the U.S. who traveled to Piedras Negras on an educational trip to learn

more about *maquiladoras*, U.S. factories on the Mexican side of the border.

We talked to workers in their houses with women organizers from the CFO (in English, the Border Workers Committee), a long-standing grassroots organization dedicated to informing workers about their rights under Mexican labor law. We saw first hand the conditions in which they lived in the *colonias*, shantytowns. We shared meals and discussion with organizers and workers. We learned about the stringent conditions in the *maquiladoras*, the poor wages of the workers and the surprisingly high cost of living facing the families of these dedicated workers.

My favorite part, though, was celebrating Three Kings Day with their families Saturday evening. Their simple love and encouragement got me speaking Spanish despite my hesitation. Four of the workers from *Dignidad y Justicia*, a women's fair trade cooperative comprised of women who had been



Leab with two women from the Dignity and Justice Cooperative and their inventory.

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Reading Resolutions 2008 This year, check out these books that explore the intersection of faith & promotion of justice!

- ◆ *Love that Does Justice*, by Thomas Schubeck, S.J. (Orbis Books, 2007)
 - ◆ *Lazatus at the Table*, by Bernard Evans (Liturgical Press, 2006)
 - ◆ *A Banqueter's Guide to the All-Night Soup Kitchen of the Kingdom of God*, by Patrick McCormick (Liturgical Press, 2004)
 - ◆ *No Salvation Outside the Poor*, by Jon Sobrino (Orbis Books, 2008)
 - ◆ *Quest for the Living God: Mapping Frontiers in the Theology of God*, by Elizabeth Johnson (Continuum Books, 2007)
 - ◆ *Just One Year: A Global Treasury of Prayer and Worship*, by Timothy Radcliffe (Orbis Books, 2006)
 - ◆ *The Vocation of Business: Social Justice in the Marketplace*, by John Medaille (Continuum International Publishing Group, 2007)
 - ◆ *Faith at Work, the Spirituality of Leadership*, by Donald Dorr (Liturgical Press, 2007)
 - ◆ *Not on Our Watch: The Mission to End Genocide in Darfur and Beyond*, by Don Cheadle and John Prendergast (Hyperion, 2007)
 - ◆ *Left to Tell: Discovering God in the Midst of the Rwandan Genocide*, by Immaculee Ilibagiza (Hay House, 2007)
 - ◆ *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier*, by Ismael Beah (Farrar, Straus and Girous, 2007)
- Source: educationforjustice.org

Dear Lord, we who are divided
unloving
prejudiced at times
inclined to
misunderstanding
intolerant
Make us instead united
loving
open to learning
understanding and forgiving
tolerant
May your Spirit be present in us
as you are in all peoples.

Religion and Labor Network of Austin asks "Is There Justice in Target?"

Target claims to be committed to high ethical standards, but in Texas, janitors were paid below minimum wage and denied overtime by Target's business partner, *Jim's Maintenance*. They are now suing Target for unpaid wages and damages in two court cases.

Come learn more!

Mon., Jan. 21, 2008, 7-9PM

University Presbyterian Church, 2203 San Antonio St.

(parking in CO-OP garage across the street)
SPEAKERS INCLUDE: Workers who have filed a lawsuit, Bill Beardall of the Equal Justice Center, and Members of RLNA who are standing with workers, unions, faith communities and consumers in a NATION-WIDE CAMPAIGN to seek justice for all Target workers.

Like what you see? Want to become a part of it?

A group committed to promoting justice around the UCC & in the community produces this newsletter, looks for opportunities to do charity and justice, leads workshops and hosts events. If you would like to help, have ideas to add, or have a submission for the newsletter, send an email to sjteam@utcatholic.org.

Join Pax Christi Austin for a discussion of the Pope's World Day of Peace Message 7PM on Sun. Jan. 20

At Fr. Payne House at St Ignatius Church on S. Congress. Read the message and bring your thoughts, to the conversation!
(see the January *Catholic Spirit* for the Message)



PCA meets on the 3rd Sunday of each month, so join us and make 2008 a year of commitment to Pax Christi Austin and the Catholic Peace Movement. Your energy, ideas and faith are needed as we seek to be leaven in our community and a voice for Gospel peace. Contact Bob Rankin at bobr4@austin.rr.com.

(Community, continued from front) Mexicans and Americans found fulfillment in the simple awareness and newly-built solidarity we had created. It was in community that we found love and fulfillment. Before embarking on this trip, we couldn't have realized how big our family actually was.

For more info about the ATCF delegation, visit afsc.org/central/austin/EJthree2ndlevel.htm. To buy fair trade items from the co-op: ethicalgoods.org.

By the end of the trip, as we shared our reflections about our experience together in a circle, we were struck by how close we had grown. Tears welled up in the eyes of one of the maquila workers as she shared how much it meant to know that some 'gringos' really did care. The U.S. delegates too had grown to love these women and their families. Through this love, we celebrated with them as we heard their successes, felt their pain and experienced their despair in the injustices through which they live daily. In short, both



Maquilas have an impressive facade in front and a windowless room in back for workers. Most maquilas in Piedras Negras assemble electrical car parts.