

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

Issue 4, April 1, 2007



You're Invited! Building a Culture of Justice: A Workshop

Sun. April 15, 1-5 pm

Cost: \$5 (includes materials and snacks)

Registration: After masses, at UCC front desk, or email sjteam@utcatholic.org by April 8

Scheduled talks and activities:

- *What are the CST and why do they matter? (Featuring the UCC's own Jim Harrington, Director, Texas Civil Rights Project)
- *The Catholic Church a Peace Church? (By Matt Lohmeier, Adjunct Professor in Religious Studies, St Edward's University)
- *Catholic Life Issues (By Catholic Longhorns for Life)
- *Using CST as a leader
- *Faithful Citizenship (By Barbara Budde, Director of Parish Social Ministry and Social Concern, Diocese of Austin)
- *Hope Bags for the homeless

Email sjteam@utcatholic.org with questions, registration, or to help out!

Chef's Special:

Our call to faithful citizenship

Catholic Social Teaching:

Rights and Responsibilities

The Catholic tradition teaches that human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and responsibilities are met. Therefore, every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities--to one another, to our families, and to the larger society.

Source: <http://www.usccb.org/sdnp/projects/socialteaching/excerpt.htm>

What does scripture say?

"Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them... but let justice roll like a river, righteousness a never-failing stream!"

Amos 5:22, 24

Bishops Expect Much from 2007 Legislative Session

The Texas Legislative Session is flying by! In this issue, we'll take a look back at the Bishops' desires for the session.

By Alfredo Cardenas, Reprinted from Catholic Spirit Jan. 2007 Issue, © 2005, 2006 Diocese of Austin, www.austindiocese.org/catholic_spirit/index.php

"Our foundational principle to protect the life and dignity of all human persons calls us to work to end abortion, euthanasia, destruction of human embryos, cloning and assisted suicide," say Texas' Catholic bishops in a legislative policy statement issued before the start of the 80th Texas legislative session, which is currently underway in Austin... "TCC works with members

of the Texas Legislature and the leadership in order to promote issues on our legislative priorities list," [TCC Associate Director Jennifer] Carr said. Thirty percent of the Texas Legislature is Catholic, but the bishops and their staff don't let that discourage them.

Some legislators are receptive to the church's teachings on abortion, stem cell and traditional marriage but are not as open to helping with social justice issues such as ending capital punishment, advancing immigrant rights or providing more benefits to the poor. Other legislators vote with the church on social justice issues but will withhold support from pro-life and traditional marriage. The hope is to move toward a

vision that is more inclusive and open to supporting the dignity and sanctity of the lives of all individuals. In addition to what are often considered traditional pro-life issues, other legislative priorities of the conference include immigration, health and human services, education and criminal justice reform.

The rest of the article, outlining specific legislative issues is summarized on page 2.

View statements by the Texas bishops, public testimony made on behalf of bishops and a list of priorities at www.txatholic.org. Also, the Conference of Catholic Bishops has many documents on their site (www.usccb.org) that provide information on Catholic social teachings and the public policy positions.

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"...but we must speak."

An event celebrating the 40th Anniversary of Dr. King's courageous stand against war in his "Riverside" address.

Thurs., April 12 7-9pm
St. James Episcopal Church
3707 E MLK, 78721

Please join us for readings from "Beyond Vietnam" music, commentary, and community sharing.

For more information contact: Austin Center for Peace & Justice 799-5117
contact@austinpeacecenter.org

SJ Team Mission statement:

The UCC Social Justice Team seeks to connect what we experience at Mass on Sunday to how we live the rest of the week by focusing on the tenets of charity and justice. We serve the common good through works of mercy for the poor and vulnerable and advocate for just social policy.

Life Issues

- Trigger Ban: abolition of abortions in case Roe v. Wade is overturned by Supreme Court
- Parental consent laws
- "Choose Life" license plate
- Funding abortion alternative providers
- Oppose payment for ova donation
- Oppose funding for embryonic stem cell research
- Support funding for adult stem cell research

Immigration

- Texas driver's licenses available to all residents
- Oppose attempts to reduce access to healthcare and education for immigrants
- Oppose fence along the Texas-Mexico border

Concern for Poor

- Support foster care services and programs that make health care more affordable and accessible
- Increase funding for Child Protective Services,

- including foster care service delivery
- Increase access to affordable housing
- Cut the number of uninsured Texas children in half by enrolling every eligible child in the Children Health Insurance Program and Medicaid with 12 months of continuous eligibility by providing adequate reimbursement to providers
- Increased access to mental health care, including services for the homeless

Education

- Support parental choice (vouchers), because it recognizes parents as the primary educators of their children
- Adequate funding for Equal Educational Opportunity and the Tuition Equalization Program (TEG)
- Tax credits or tax deductions for educational expenses
- Enable the state to loan textbooks to children

- enrolled in non-public school
- Expand school breakfast program to include state subsidies for universal free breakfast program offered by the USDA

Criminal Justice

- End the death penalty
 - Support successful rehabilitation and reintegration for those leaving prison
 - Increase funding and support for the chaplain corps within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ)
 - Equitable pay and increased funding for training of corrections officers
 - Full implementation and funding for the Indigent Defense Act of 2001
 - Oppose passage of "Jessica's Law," which would require tougher tracking of released sex offenders
- For information on specific legislation and to see what bills have already passed, visit www.legis.state.tx.us*



Apathy or Action: The Struggle for Human Rights
Symposium April 16 - 19

The White Rose Society is a UT student organization dedicated to holocaust and genocide awareness and activism. In their campaign to end genocide in Darfur they have raised and donated thousands of dollars, sent thousands of letters to politicians, raised awareness on campus and in the community, and successfully lobbied the Texas Senate to divest from Sudan. The events include a Holocaust and Genocide Commemoration, Film Festival, Speaker Series, and a Social Justice Activism Fair.

The White Rose Society will be handing out 10,000 individual white roses for free on campus, roses for every man, woman, and child murdered at Auschwitz in just half a day during the Holocaust. These roses honor those who were lost and serve to bring awareness to injustice in our time. They need 100 people on Wednesday April 11 to prepare the roses, and 100 people on Thursday April 12 to hand them out.

- Wed., April 11 - 6 pm- 10 pm Roses Preparation at the University Catholic Center
 - Thurs., April 12 - 10 am - 3 pm Hand out roses on the West Mall and Speedway
- Visit www.thewhiterosesociety.org for more information.

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

A small group of students and adults committed to promoting justice around the UCC and the community produces this bi-weekly newsletter, looks for opportunities to do charity and justice, leads workshops and hosts other events. If you would like to help with planning, or would like to submit to the newsletter, email sjteam@utcatholic.org.