

May 2012

Advocacy & Social Justice Committee Mission Statement

We promote social justice as central to all Daughter of Charity ministry. We move together with persons who are poor and marginalized from reflection to advocacy for systemic change.

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NEWSLETTER LAYOUT & DESIGN

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Advocating for Social Justice

Newsletter of the Interprovincial Daughters of Charity Advocacy & Social Justice Committee USA

The Cry of Marquis

By Sister Mary Ellen Lacy, DC www.networklobby.org

It was the annual Orr Weathers Apartments after-school trip to the apple orchard near East Saint Louis, Illinois. Before we could go into the orchard, we had to be grouped according to chaperones and paired with a buddy. The process resulted in an insufferable delay for my five year old cherubs. As we waited, a smaller group of white kids approached. They had ample chaperones and waltzed right into the orchard. They did not endure even a moment's hesitation. Little Marquis had seen them approaching and he observed carefully to see what they would do. He watched to see what privilege they would exercise. As they marched through the gates without a pause, he angrily but quietly stated, "I hate white people." To this, little Keisha responded, "Even Sr. Mary Ellen?" He became quiet and seemed confused. It was as if he had not known that I was white because I seemed just as poor as he.



In his life, privilege was to white as poverty was to black. He had begun to hate the people of privilege as much as the inequity itself. At the age of five, Marquis had already figured out that the system is rigged. There are groups of people who get more privileges and benefits to the detriment of those most in need. And that injustice keeps me up at night. It is also what gets me up in the morning.

Most people are thermometers that record or register the temperature of majority of opinion.1 A

Daughter of Charity, on the other hand, should strive to be a thermostat that transforms or regulates the temperature of society. St. Vincent beckons us to revolutionize human hearts. In the meanwhile, the habits, if not the hearts of people, have been and are being altered by legislative acts, judicial decisions and executive orders. Let us not be misled by those who argue that poverty cannot be ended by force of law. Laws and legislators that provide for the common good enable human beings to be fed, sheltered and clothed as Jesus intended. They provide hope for the Marquises of the world.

I am a lobbyist at NETWORK, A Catholic Social Justice Lobby in Washington, DC. NETWORK was founded 40 years ago by 47 Catholic sisters who recognized that systemic change could not be achieved without staunch advocacy at the federal level. Since coming here in August, I have learned much about politics, poverty and providing for the common good. Mostly, I have learned that the squeaky wheel really does get the grease. In the world of politics, the volume and perseverance of the squeak often correlates with the amount of grease it receives.

Advocacy at the local and federal level is not another means of serving the poor; it is the completion of our responsibility to them. Legislators have the ability to sponsor or squash life changing Programs and laws that will pave roads out of poverty. Programs that support Sisters' direct service are regularly defunded when the budget is crunched. If we fail to protest loudly against activity that harms our Masters, we do not have what it takes to revolutionize hearts.

A five-year-old child engulfed in poverty cannot advocate for himself. That is why God gave him the Daughters of Charity. At NETWORK, we advocate and help others advocate for social justice. NETWORK sends weekly legislative updates to online members that notify the member of pending legislation which will impact the most vulnerable. The alerts provide direction, talking points and/or pre-formatted letters to legislators that can be emailed (e-advocacy) to the most appropriate recipient. At our website, www.networklobby.org you can register for these free online alerts. Embrace your responsibility to advocate for the most vulnerable and elect legislative leaders who will sponsor legislation that does not balance the budget on the backs of the Poor!

Strength To Love, Martin Luther King Jr., Transformed Nonconformist, p.23, First Fortress Press, 1981.

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## Who Will Speak?

*By Sister Mary Ellen Lacy*



The 2012 election comes at a time when the U.S. faces the escalating poverty rates, soaring income disparities and a crushing budget deficit. Legislators face stark choices concerning who will thrive and who will suffer as a result of the decisions they make. Will those decisions be based on the common good or will they serve the already super-wealthy and divide us further? Will they foster economic justice and peace? Or will our nation become mired in injustice and division?

Guided by the Gospel command to protect those who are most vulnerable and hold accountable those with power, we know we cannot afford to “sit this one out.” NETWORK and 13 Catholic organizations formed an Election Coalition for the Common Good.

Our goal is to create common-good platforms for each state and the District of Columbia using input of residents. Then, they will be signed and delivered to candidates and public officials. The 51 individual platforms will include a national preamble designed to outline a common good perspective. We will use them on Capitol Hill to lobby your ideas related to serving the common good.

Join Catholic voters across the nation and host a discussion to identify the matters you want your legislators to address in this election year!



## Catholic Social Ministry Gathering—Washington, DC

February 10-15, 2012

*“Faithful Citizenship: Protecting Human Life and Dignity, Promoting the Common Good”*

*By Sister Betty Marie Dunkel*

Each year, representatives of fourteen Catholic organizations, including the Daughters of Charity, St. Vincent de Paul Society, and Ladies of Charity, come together to learn about the position of the Catholic Church on key issues that will come before Congress. This year about 500 people came together from 40 states. We got together in our state groups and then broke down into smaller groups to go together to talk with our Senators and/or Congressperson about the 4 priorities established year:

- Put the needs of the poor and jobless first in our public priorities, budget and tax policies, and economic recovery efforts.
- Protect the rights of religious groups to serve those in need without governmental mandates that force them to violate their teaching and insist that to be “religious” they must employ and serve only members of their faith.
- Preserve poverty-focused development and humanitarian assistance to promote a better and safer world;
- Release the hold on humanitarian funding for Palestinians to promote security and peace in the Holy Land.

## The 2012 Farm Bill

By Sister Julia Huiskamp

A critical piece of legislation to be enacted this year is the extension of the 2008 Farm Bill—critical in the sense that so many aspects of American life are impacted by the 15 titles of this bill.

The Farm Bill regulates and funds everything from food safety, crop supports, rural development, forestry management, foreign food aid, conservation, and food supplement programs for the Poor, vis., SNAP (food stamps), WIC, school and summer feeding programs. 97% of the current USDA budget pays for four titles of the bill: nutrition programs, crop price support, conservation and crop insurance.

With funding projected to be very tight this year, Congress will have a hard task deciding how much to fund the Agriculture Department, then mediating between various groups who have different priorities and will be competing for the allocated dollars. From President Obama's budget request, USDA's total outlay is estimated at \$155 billion for 2013.



Many who follow agricultural policies think that commodity price supports will take a substantial hit. This because crop prices are currently quite high and the list of subsidized crops is quite small: grains, oil seeds, cotton, milk and sugar. Currently 30% of the corn crop is converted to ethanol. There are no supports for fruits, vegetables or live stock.

Advocacy centers around making supports available for fruits, vegetables and livestock as well as for devising supports that target small and family farms and not the huge factory farms which currently are the largest beneficiaries of support policies. Other targets for advocacy will be fighting off efforts to cut SNAP (food stamps) which are helping 46 million Americans avoid hunger.

## Development & Humanitarian Assistance

By Sister Catherine Mary Norris



Each year the Catholic community from across the United States comes together in Washington, DC for the annual Catholic Social Ministry Gathering sponsored by the USCCB. One of the highlights of the Gathering is the day that is spent on The Hill lobbying on behalf of the voiceless. This year the

international issues we focused on were humanitarian aid to the people of the West Bank and Gaza as well as international assistance to the poverty stricken areas of the world, particularly the Horn of Africa.

The situation on the West Bank is bad but the situation in Gaza is dire. Money ( \$150 million) has been appropriated for humanitarian aid to Gaza but it has not been released for fear that it will fall into the hands of Hamas. This despite CRS's assurances that they will monitor every dollar and see that it goes for basic needs such as food and clothing and medical aid. Because Gaza is such a political football in Congress, there is no movement to release the funds and the people continue to suffer.

The situation in Africa is just as dire and yet there are those in Congress who are pushing for a reduction in humanitarian assistance.

Do you know what percentage of our budget is spent on humanitarian assistance overseas? 25%? 30%? What should be spent on such basic needs as food, water and health care? Most people think 10% would be a good number, in keeping with the biblical concept of tithing. The actual amount spent on humanitarian aid is .06%, not even one full percent. In the 2012 budget this amounted to \$19.1 billion dollars and in the proposed budget for 2013 with a 6% reduction it would be \$18.9 billion dollars. As a point of comparison 36% of the national budget goes to defense.

If this aid were cut, or God forbid eliminated, it would not come close to ending our deficit nationally, yet it is the thing you hear talked about most frequently. The federal budget is more than just numbers, it is a moral document reflecting our moral priorities. If we espouse Catholic Social Teaching, then we believe that people living in poverty have a compelling moral claim to these most basic of human needs. Budget cuts that target the most vulnerable people on earth will only deepen global inequality and thus threaten stability and security everywhere, which will produce great pain with little gain. Our nation cannot attempt to balance the budget on the backs of the poor overseas.



## The HHS Mandate on Preventive Services and Religious Liberty

*By Sister Carol Keehan, DC / Edited by Sister Kathleen Natwin, DC*



### HEALTH REFORM

As part of health reform, the law required that insurance plans be adequate and not substandard and also provide, without the financial barriers for low income people, those preventive services that will improve the quality of health care and prevent avoidable deaths. In order to take the politics out of the decision-making, Secretary Sebelius of the Department of Health and Human Services asked the Institute of Medicine to make recommendations based on clinical knowledge of what preventive services, at a minimum, should be included in all insurance plans without any co-pay. The Institute of Medicine gave the Secretary recommendations and for the most part, they are excellent. They include things like no co-pay for mammograms, colonoscopies, annual health exams, etc. Unfortunately, they also included provisions for contraceptives and sterilization.

### CONCERNS EARLY ON

When the regulations were first published, they contained an exemption for religious organizations that was way too narrow for most Church ministries to be eligible. It was a four-part test that basically only had parishes and perhaps parish schools exempt.

There has been an outpouring of indignation and calls to change this from all segments of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Health Association was very vocal in insisting that this had to change. President Obama has now committed to a change that will be designed after dialogue with all the relevant parties in an attempt to resolve the serious concerns.

CHA staff continues to meet regularly with the staff of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic Charities USA, Catholic Relief Services and the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities. We are also in touch with members of the President's Administration. Catholic Health Association is working to resolve the religious liberty issue. It is a work in progress and there seems to be good will on all sides.

### IN FEBRUARY

On February 10, the Administration finalized the Women's Preventive Care Contraception Coverage Mandate requiring health insurance plans to cover all FDA-approved contraceptive services without cost-sharing, including sterilization procedures and emergency contraceptive drugs with potential abortifacient properties. The Administration maintained the same religious employer exemption it had originally proposed, defining religious employer narrowly with the result that many of the Church's ministries, including the health care ministries, would not qualify for the exemption.

### TEMPORARY SAFE HARBOR

At the same time, the Department of Health and Human Services issued guidance announcing a one-year "temporary enforcement safe harbor" from the mandate (until August 2013) for non-profit organizations with religious objections to covering contraceptives and sterilizations. This includes CHA ministries.

### LOOKING AHEAD

The Administration committed to developing new rules that will allow non-profit organizations with religious objections to provide health insurance to their employees without purchasing or referring for contraceptive

and sterilization coverage, but also committed to ensuring that these employees have access to these services. Specifically, HHS plans to initiate rule-making in the coming year to accomplish this. They are exploring a number of ways, including requiring insurers to offer a policy without contraception coverage to non-profit organizations with religious objections and requiring the insurers themselves to directly offer the employer's employees the option to receive contraceptive coverage from the insurer without cost. HHS also stated its intention to develop these policies to achieve the same goals for self-insured group health plans sponsored by non-exempted, non-profit religious organizations with religious objections to contraceptive coverage. We understand the Administration continues to explore other options for achieving these goals. The Administration has stated its intent to work with stakeholders to develop alternative ways of achieving the goals as soon as possible. CHA has been in dialogue with members to explore their concerns and individual situations, which may vary by state depending on local requirements. CHA also continues to work with the Bishops' Conference and the other major Catholic organizations for whom this is such a critical issue.

A major concern initially was that the original regulation appeared to put the government in a position of deciding what was and what was not a Church ministry. Deciding that a ministry is Catholic is the responsibility/right of the local Bishop. The solutions being worked on would address this concern as well.

## Notes on Advocacy: IMMIGRATION

### A 50 State Issue—Focus on State and Local Immigration Initiatives

Salt Lake City, Utah . January 11-13, 2012

*By Sister Betty Marie Dunkel*

While statistics can be made to say anything, there were a few noteworthy ones presented. 70% of immigrants have been here 5 or more years; 300,000 people are in process of being deported currently; 1.3 million people have been deported since Mr. Obama became President, more than under any other President. In regard to the negative impact of Arizona's aggressive laws, the hotel industry in Arizona lost \$131 million the first year and by the end of 2012, Phoenix is expected to have lost \$388 million.

There was much said in the 2 days, but the steps below are a very practical mini-course on advocacy from the local advocacy leaders in the states where the most repressive immigration laws are being developed.

- Get started early; Get organized. Get involved!
- Get Catholics on board. **Get them calling legislators.** Numbers count in advocacy.
- Talk about the issues and educate the community.
- JUST FAITH programs are most helpful.
- Engage other faith groups.
- Work with employers of immigrants.
- Articulate the moral approach.
- Get allies to the table.
- Consider compact of principles agreed upon by community leaders, as in Utah, Legislators will follow. (Utah Compact)
- Meet people where they are: KNOW THEIR NEEDS and WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO THEM!
- Stories are important, but NUMBERS are more important.
- It is NOT productive to insult. Be balanced.
- Try small asks at the Federal level and big asks at the state level.
- They changed scope by taking big question of Immigration Reform and asked city leaders: "What are you doing about Immigration Reform?"
- Consider asking City Council to form an immigration committee that then makes resolutions of action.
- Put a face on the issue.
- Distrust polling information.
- Continue working with trusted partners and seek out new alliances that share your values.
- Establish good relationships with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and law enforcement and with the Mexican Consulate.
- Utilize the media: meet regularly; give them stories.
- Make long term fiscal arguments (e.g. on public health pre-natal care).
- Create coalitions and collaborate with partners who have influence. (Campaign for Human Development will help financially). New Mexico went to liquor distributors for help on Drivers' licenses since licenses are needed to prove legal age to buy beer... They went to farmers for employment support and said they would be milking their own cows if their laborers got deported.
- Partner with local legal service providers, like Catholic Charities in support of each other and to get stories.



For more information, recommendations would be to read Zoe Ryan's articles in the National Catholic Reporter as well as Marjorie Cortez' article of Friday, January 13, 2012 in the Desert News on how children are being targeted through new immigration laws in several states.

## Fulfilling the Daughters of Charity Mission Requires Advocacy for the Whole Person

By The Honorable Conway Collis

Within the healthcare mission of the Daughters of Charity we focus on treating the needs of the whole person. Our approach to advocacy should reflect the same perspective.

Far too often those of us involved in the provision of health and social services have focused on fighting to avoid cutbacks in our area of health care or social service delivery, rather than focusing on the whole person. In so doing, we have unintentionally cannibalized critically important programs. We have done so because it is difficult to confront the underlying issue: As a result of the economic downturn and state and federal tax policies there has been a reduction in general fund revenues. As a consequence virtually all state and federal governmental programs, including programs for those in need, have also been reduced.

California is a microcosm of the country and provides an important example. The state's budget shortfall has exceeded \$40 billion since 2008. In fact, general fund revenues have now been reduced to 1980 levels, when the state had 25 million fewer people than today.

The consequences of this shortfall have been brutal for those who require services and severe for the state's future. Given the size of the budget shortfalls, that result is virtually unavoidable, since over 75% of the state general fund budget is allocated to education, health and human services, housing, transportation and environmental protection. The state cannot solve a \$40 billion deficit over four years without impacting vitally important programs that comprise 75% of the budget. Although the impact is in every area of the budget, the health and social service cuts have had a tragic impact on people's lives.

In health care, the cuts have severely reduced access. Funding for adult day care, dental care and psychiatric services has been eliminated. Seniors living at or near the poverty line have been required to pay more for doctor's visits and outpatient services, and the elimination of state support for community clinics has been proposed by the state.

Child care and children's programs have been especially hard hit. In California, low income parents can qualify for child care assistance to help them find and retain jobs. About 300,000 children are enrolled per month, with another 200,000 children on waiting lists. Despite these waiting lists, \$6 billion has been cut from these programs since 2009. Another 35,000 children will

lose access to child care and pre-school as a result of additional cuts in 2011. Most child care funding for 11 and 12 year olds was completely eliminated. In addition, in the separate program for families emerging out of welfare and into the workforce, over 25,000 families have lost assistance because of cutbacks in the program in the last two years.

Perhaps the harshest cuts have been to the Supplemental Security Income program that provides cash assistance to low-income seniors and people with disabilities to pay for basic necessities. In the last four years the program has been reduced by \$4.6 billion. This equals a cut of \$3,600 per year for each of the 1.3 million California residents who rely on these funds

for basic survival. Let's be clear what this means. Individuals in this program will now receive an annual income of up to \$9,960, substantially below the federal poverty line of \$10,890. It is not possible for an elderly woman living alone to afford both housing and a minimally adequate diet at that income level.

Faced with the drastic consequences that we see in our work, there is a natural tendency to fight cutbacks in the programs in which we are most involved. To carry on the Daughter's mission of advocacy for the poor, we should bring together caring people into an association that advocates for the whole person, including health, social services, education and safety. That will mean acknowledging that government at all levels has a revenue problem, and suggesting solutions to that problem.

As those of us honored to help further the Daughter's mission know so well, people are suffering because of government's funding shortfalls. At the state level in California a solution would be for the Daughter's to take the lead in drafting an initiative for the 2014 ballot that addresses tax reform, and dedicates the additional revenue to funding health and social service needs.

*"But when we are successful in fighting off health care cuts, for example, additional cuts have likely been made for other necessary services. Our mission requires us to do better."*



*The Honorable Conway Collis, former Chair of the California State Tax Board, is Senior Counselor and Chief Public Policy Officer for the Daughters of Charity Health System.*

## Advocacy for Those Living in Poverty

### The US Federal Budget, Safety Nets, and Financing for Development

By Sister Faith Colligan

At the time of this writing, Congress just passed the Transportation Appropriations Section of the FY'12 Budget completing the Federal Budget for 2012. President Obama has already submitted his FY'13 Budget Proposal to Congress which will take its time to begin the Budget Process for the upcoming year. As I was researching information and reflecting in preparation for this article, I recall an "advocacy" effort by St. Louise; an urging from our current Constitutions; and cite specific funding in the Annual Federal Budget 2012 that will afford those living in poverty access to one or several federally funded "safety net" programs.

**Constitution Article 24** (Daughters of Charity) states: "St. Vincent reminds the Sisters that love embraces justice. The Daughters of Charity are constantly solicitous for the development of every person in all aspects of their being. That is why they are alert to ways of helping their brothers and sisters to become conscious of their own dignity and agents of their own promotion. They plead the cause of the under privileged who do not have the possibility of making their legitimate demands and aspirations heard.

While respecting the individual, they take up the cause of those who are poor and collaborate, according to the directives of the Church, with those who are working to defend their rights. They commit themselves to work for social transformation, **to change unjust structures that cause poverty.**"

**Statute 8 (d):** "Convinced that the goods of the earth form a common patrimony, they foster responsible use of natural resources and the **equitable** distribution of goods."

Saints Vincent and Louise exerted many efforts with the Civil authorities of their time, making them aware of the need for structural change, and the obligation of government to assist those living in poverty. In this regard, Coste notes from our early work with the Foundlings, "Matters went from bad to worse until in 1649 there was not even enough bread. Mlle. Le Gras could not stand it any longer; she took up her pen and asked the Chancellor to send her some." (Coste, P., **Life and Works of Vincent de Paul**, Chapter 35, **The Foundlings**, p.275).

**Selected Safety Nets included in the Federal Budget designed to assist those living in poverty include:**

Safety Net	FY' 2012 Budget	Who Benefits
SNAP	\$80.4 Billion	(Food Stamps: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) Approx. 46 Million families each month receive temporary and targeted assistance
WIC	\$6.62 Billion	(Women, Infants, and Children) 9.1 million women, infants and children at nutritional risk receive food, nutrition education and access to health care
TEFAP	\$260.25 Million	The Emergency Food Assistance Program provides food at no cost to low-income Americans in need of short-term hunger relief via food banks/pantries
CSFP	\$151.4 Million	The Commodity Supplemental Food Program provides food packages to an estimated 599,000 low-income seniors (97% of participants; others include pregnant/postpartum women, infants, and children up to 6yrs old.
LIHEAP	\$347+ Billion	Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program assists low income households, especially those with lowest incomes that pay significantly high energy costs compared to income amount.
Section 8	\$111 Million	The Choice Voucher provides rent assistance to qualified families and individuals for a house, townhouse or apartment paying part or all of the rent
HUD Rental Assistance		Various grant programs, including monies from the recent stimulus package provide funds for rental assistance and other housing cost assistance, especially targeted to preventing homelessness

Twenty percent of families (20%) receiving food stamps in September 2011 reported they had **no cash income**. One in five Americans indicated they are unable to afford food. Let us double our efforts being the voices for these sisters and brothers making known their needs to our legislators in Washington. Watch for legislative alerts related to funding issues and programs up for reauthorization in 2013.

More Info: [www.whitehouse.gov/omb](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb) ; [www.cbpp.org](http://www.cbpp.org); [www.frac.org](http://www.frac.org); [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org); [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING – My Voice, My Choice

By Sister Carol Durkin

Anyone who would like to write and ask why they have not signed the **Code of Conduct** may use this sample letter to contact the Corporate Headquarters of Marriott International:

Mari Snyder  
Corporate Headquarters  
Marriott International, Inc.  
10400 Fernwood Road  
Bethesda, Maryland 20817



[www.thecode.org](http://www.thecode.org)

Dear Mari,

*An estimated two million children all over the world are annually exploited through prostitution, pornography, and trafficking. Some travelers use tours and hotels as venues to exploit children. Without clear policies and training, staff are not equipped to identify and react to such behavior.*

*The **Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism** is the only internationally accepted tool that can help your company effectively crack down on the sexual exploitation of children. To date, over 1,000 companies across the world have signed the Code and I urge your company to be the next to join them.*

*Putting an end to this abuse is important to me and I believe your company is in a unique position to make a difference in a very effective and visible way. I will follow up on your decision and this will be affecting my travel purchases in the future. Thank you for your time.*

Sincerely,

Groups that have signed the Code of Conduct in the USA are:



- Millennium Hotel St. Louis
- Delta Airlines
- Carlson (Radisson, Country Inns and Suites, Park Inn, Park Plaza, T.G.I. Friday's, Carlson Wagonlit Travel)
- Hilton Worldwide
- Nix Conference and Meeting Management
- Wyndham Worldwide Corporation
- Global Exchange Reality Tours

The United Nations estimates that between 700,000 to 4 million women (most between ages 18 and 24) and children are involved in trafficking. Their stories vary slightly but the outline is the same. They are moved around like chess pieces for prostitution, illegal labor, and drug-related activities. Most of them experience physical and/or sexual violence. Their vulnerability in the larger context of economic and sexual inequality leaves them ripe for this kind of exploitation.

### How might one identify a victim of human trafficking:

- Has inexplicable physical injuries
- Shows a great deal of fear and/or signs of severe trauma
- Is unable to speak English, but has a companion speak for her/him, despite the presence of neutral interpreters
- Cannot produce documentation of legal status and identity
- Is unable to go out or move about freely or alone
- Has moved housing locations frequently

## Look for in the next issue...

The Sisters of the Province of the West and the Province of St. Louise unanimously support taking a united stand against human trafficking. In the next Social Justice Newsletter there will be additional practical information and concrete ways Sisters can organize and support this effort.