

# Just Matters

For Parish Social Ministers in the Archdiocese of Baltimore

*JustMatters is a publication of the Office of Parish Social Ministry. Please duplicate and share as appropriate.*

## Volume 5, Issue 2

### January/February 2004

- ◆ The Church and the Elderly
- ◆ Aging and the Dying Process
- ◆ Catholic Social Ministry Gathering, Washington, DC
- ◆ Catholic Charities' Adoptions
- ◆ Poverty Quiz
- ◆ 25th Annual Social Ministry Convocation
- ◆ Assisted Living: What is it?
- ◆ Volunteer Opportunities for Middle and High School Students
- ◆ Three Women with Developmental Disabilities Who Share a Home
- ◆ Catholics in Annapolis Night
- ◆ Health Care Statistics
- ◆ Resources
- ◆ Calendar
- ◆ Enclosures

#### Contact information:

Christine Smith 410-261-6781  
csmith@catholiccharities-md.org

Joan Marie Stief, OSB 410-261-6782  
Jstief@catholiccharities-md.org

 Catholic Charities

## The Church and the Elderly

Our times are marked by the fact that people are living longer... The elderly should not be considered merely an object of concern, closeness, and service. They have a valuable contribution to make to life. Thanks to the wealth of experience they have acquired over the years, they can and must be sources of wisdom, witnesses of hope and love... Society must have a renewed awareness of the sense and meaning of old age in a culture only too dominated by the myth of productivity and physical capacity. We must allow the elderly to live with security and dignity, and their families must be helped economically, in order to continue being the natural place for intergenerational relations... It is necessary to develop charitable strategies that put a priority on the dignity of the elderly and that help them, as far as possible, to maintain a sense of self-esteem lest, feeling they are a useless burden, they eventually desire and ask for death...

(Excerpts from Pope John Paul II's 10/98 Address to the Conference of the Pontifical Council for Health Workers)



## Aging and the Dying Process

The Catholic tradition does not view the dying process as a useless experience. Death that allows us the time to come to terms with our lives and those with whom we have lived it - - to thank and be thanked, to forgive and be forgiven - - is a good way to deepen our relationship with God. Common needs for dying people may include: to complete their legal and financial affairs; to achieve a sense of meaning about life (i.e., telling one's stories, transmitting knowledge and wisdom); to experience love of others; complete relationships with family and friends (i.e., express gratitude, regret, acceptance, & forgiveness); and to surrender to the unknown. The challenge of people of faith is that we must make relatives, elderly neighbors, and colleagues feel so wanted and needed that they will not want to die. Instead of shunning the dying or making them feel like a burden, we must surround them with love. (*Just News*, Nov. 2003 Diocese of Richmond)

If you have any questions or would like information about the elderly, please call Catholic Charities' *Answers for the Aging* at 410.646.0100. To volunteer at a Catholic Charities Senior Center or volunteer with seniors, please call 410.547.5521.

## Catholic Social Ministry Gathering in Washington D.C.

The Catholic Social Ministry Gathering February 22-25, 2004 is the annual coming together of social justice ministry leadership from national Catholic organizations and offices, dioceses, and parishes around the nation. Held in Washington D.C., at the Hyatt Regency, Washington, the meeting includes prayer and celebration, challenging speakers, and social ministry skills workshops. In addition, participants receive detailed briefings on priority social and economic justice issues concerning the poor and vulnerable, and carry a common Catholic message to Senators and Representatives on Capital Hill. To register go to: [www.usccb.org/sdwp](http://www.usccb.org/sdwp) and click on the Catholic Social Ministry Gathering link or call 1.800.937.8728. Locally, for more information, you may call Catholic Charities Office of Parish Social Ministry at 410.261.6781.

## Adoptions

Adoption was the first work of Catholic Charities, due to the waves of immigrants that came to Baltimore, starting in the early 1800's. Today, the majority of adoptions are international, with 77 children coming to families from countries outside the U.S. and 12 children coming from the U.S. in 2003. Our adoption services are built upon comprehensive, personal support of people experiencing a crisis pregnancy, as well as those who are seeking to create families through adoption. We also offer a range of services available for years after the adoption service is completed: parent support groups, teen support groups, workshops, homeland tours, counseling, and adulthood search and reunion. For more information about Catholic Charities' Adoption Services call 410.659.4050 or see our website at [www.cc-md.org](http://www.cc-md.org).

## Why Me?

By Franklin W. Collins, 2003

When death and destruction wreaked havoc  
around  
and my comrades lay still on the bloody  
ground,  
You lifted me up, placed me gently down  
And let me tread on hallowed ground.  
Why Me?

When the horrors of war become unbearable  
and sanity almost irreparable,  
You allowed me the moments that made life  
bearable.  
Why me?

When a friend breathed his last, which I  
thought unfair  
And, unfortunately, the Rabbi could not be  
there  
I hope that Jehovah received my prayer.  
Why me?

So when the downtrodden have suffered all  
they can stand  
and need a friend and a helping hand,  
to help them follow the Son of Man.  
Send me.

Frank is a Parish Social Minister at St. Joseph Monastery Church, Baltimore, Decorated Veteran of several Wars.

## Poverty Quiz

(answers on page 4)

1. The poverty rate is highest among the elderly. True or False?
2. One full-time minimum wage worker in the U.S. earns \$10,712 annually, which is below the poverty line for a family of three. True or False?
3. The top 20% of households receive about 40% of national income. True or False?

## 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Social Ministry Convocation

Come to the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Social Ministry Convocation's *Breaking Cycles/Building Circles* on **Saturday, March 6, 2004** from 8:00am to 3:00pm at Seton Keough High School!

The first keynote speaker, Dr. Patricia Mische, Co-founder and President of *Global Education Associates*, will speak on the past 25 years of Global Social Justice, the present issues, and the challenges for the next 25 years in Global Solidarity. Dr. Mische will present a workshop on true Global Solidarity and how to practice living in this spirit. Jack Jezreel, Creator and Director of *JustFaith*, a conversion-based process that seeks to integrate personal spirituality and social ministry, will explore the sacramental nature of "Breaking Cycles" and "Building Circles". In addition, he will offer an introductory workshop on *JustFaith*.

Other workshops will include the Catholic Campaign for Human Development's "Braking the Cycle of Poverty"; Affordable Housing; Injustices towards Immigrants; Solidarity with Young People; and Ex-Prisoners Re-Entry into Society. In addition, awards will be presented to outstanding social justice ministers. "Fair" table displays afford parishes and organizations opportunity to share the good work of their programs.

Look for your registration form in the mail. For more information, contact Christine Smith in Catholic Charities Office of Parish Social Ministry at 410.261.6781 or email [csmith@cc-md.org](mailto:csmith@cc-md.org).

## Assisted Living: What is it?

For seniors who can no longer live independently and require some help in performing basic daily activities, assisted living may be the answer. Assisted Living is designed to provide seniors with residential community, supportive services, supervision, and personalized assistance with Activities of Daily Living (ADL's). ADL's include bathing, eating, toileting, dressing, walking, and transferring (moving from bed to chair). Assisted Living also offers medication management, housekeeping, laundry and recreational and cultural activities. Nursing supervision is provided by a Registered Nurse five days a week and Resident Assistants are available 24 hours a day to assist residents with their needs.

Catholic Charities' Caritas House offers a comfortable, home-like living environment. Since the spiritual well-being of the residents is at the essence of the program's mission, Caritas House offers a nurturing pastoral care program. In addition, daily Mass is offered in the campus chapel.

Caritas House is fortunate to be able to offer a flat monthly rate. This means regardless of how little or how much care a person needs, the monthly fee remains the same. Included in the flat rate is: three meals a day, snacks and drinks, housekeeping, laundry, medication management, assistance with activities of daily living, recreational activities, and in-room service if a resident is "under the weather." For more information, call 410.646.6600.

## Volunteer Opportunities for Middle and High School Students

Catholic Charities is Maryland's leading private provider of social service programs in Baltimore City and nine counties. Middle and high school students who volunteer at a Catholic Charities program can earn credit toward service learning hours by participating in a formal volunteer program or as an independent effort. Students may select from our programs that serve children and families, seniors, the disadvantaged, and people living with developmental disabilities. If you would like copies of the Catholic Charities Directory of Programs and Volunteer opportunities, please call 410.547.5576 or visit our website at [www.cc-md.org](http://www.cc-md.org) for additional information.

### Three Women with Developmental Disabilities Who Share a Home

A manicured lawn, blooming hydrangea, wall-to-wall carpeting, momentos and photos around the living room is the home that greets visitors of Linda Spiece, Christine Albert, and Mary Jeppi, residents of one of Catholic Charities' Gallagher Services' alternative homes for persons with developmental disabilities. Under the direct supervision of staff, the women engage in the daily routine of running a home. The women do all the cleaning and cooking in the house. All three women work. Christine works at Alliance, a pre-vocational program for people with developmental disabilities, as a janitor. Mary is employed at Chimes pre-vocational program where she files and keeps the kitchen area clean. Linda worked at Shamrock Gardens greenhouse on the campus of Gallagher Services. Family members were concerned about what would happen if there was no place like Gallagher Services, where the women could live independently with some supervision and be happy. (*Blessings* Fall 2003) If you know someone who would like to volunteer at Catholic Charities' Gallagher Services, please call 410.252.4005 or check our website at [www.cc-md.org](http://www.cc-md.org).

### Catholics in Annapolis Lobby Night

Join Catholics from across the state to represent Maryland's vulnerable men, women, and children to law-makers on **Monday, February 16, 2004 at St. Mary's Church** and Parish Hall (109 Duke of Gloucester St., Annapolis) from **3:00 PM to 8:30 PM**. Areas of focus for Catholics will include: social concerns and health care; justice, pro-life and human rights; and education. The afternoon will begin with an opening prayer followed by an issue briefing, then a meeting with your legislator, and last a debriefing session. Bring a picture ID and a brown bag supper. To register, please call Christine Smith at 410.261.6781 or email [csmith@cc-md.org](mailto:csmith@cc-md.org). To find your legislative district or legislator: <http://mlis.state.md>.

### Health Care Statistics

- In one year, 60 million people go without health insurance. Year around, there are 43.6 million people without health insurance, an increase of 2.4 million in one year.
- 30.1% of Americans aged 18 to 24 have no health coverage; 16.1% of all Americans are not covered.

*No More Jobs* The Employment Project, Vol.9, No.8, 11/03

*An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all.*  
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

### Poverty Quiz

(answers continued from page 2)

1. False. The poverty rate is highest among children: one in six children live in poverty, whereas one in ten seniors live in poverty.
2. True. The poverty line for a family of 3 is \$15, 260.
3. False. The top 20% of households receive 50.4% of the national income, while the remaining 80% receive only 49.6%. The top 1% of income earners (2.7 million people), receive 12.9% of national income, as much as the poorest 100 million people.

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

## Resources

*Faithful Citizenship*, a parish kit with ideas for your parish on the responsibility of Catholics in the Public Square, will be coming to your pastor from the national office of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops at the end of January. See your pastor about this kit.

*Need help paying for medicine or other expenses?* For people over 55, [www.BenefitsCheckUp.org](http://www.BenefitsCheckUp.org) is a free consulting service provided by the National Council on Aging. They can tell you if you are potentially eligible for prescription savings, and other programs to help pay for doctors' visits, utility bills, property taxes, and other needs.

*Following Christ Today: Compassion for the Poor and Globalising Stewardship*, a keynote speech by Julian Filochowski, can be found at [www.usccb.org/cchd/ddcorner.htm](http://www.usccb.org/cchd/ddcorner.htm). (Click on Compassion for the Poor.) This speech calls Catholics to examine our roles as consumers and as members of the universal Church. It examines our Catholic imperative to consider the impact of our decisions on people living in poverty, and encourages us to "redeem structures and systems" in order to create a more just world.

*If Only Today You Knew the Things That Make for Peace*: calls for Catholic Leaders in schools and parishes to work with peace and social justice ministry members as fully and effectively as we can. [www.ipj.ppj.org/Diocesan&OtherReligiousLeaders.htm](http://www.ipj.ppj.org/Diocesan&OtherReligiousLeaders.htm)

*John Paul II: A Light for the World*. This informative book, published by Sheed & Ward in a joint effort with the USCCB, includes selections from the Pope's speeches and writings with more than 140 photos, personal reflections by cardinals, bishops and others who know the Pope well. You can find out more about this best-selling book on [www.popebook.com](http://www.popebook.com).



### Reflection: God Said

God Said: If you never felt pain, then how would you know that I am a Healer?  
If you never had a trial, how could you call yourself an Overcomer?  
If you never felt sadness, how would you know I am a Comforter?  
If I gave you all things, how would you appreciate them?  
If you had all the power, then how would you learn to depend on me?  
If your life was perfect, then what would you need ME for?

(Author Unkown)

## Calendar for January & February

### January

- 1 New Years Day  
World Day of Peace
- 4-10 National Migration Week
- 19 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday
- 11-17 Stand Against Violence Week
- 18-25 Week for Pro-Life Witness and Prayer  
for Christian Unity
- 20-22 31st Annual March for Life  
Washington D.C.

### February

- 11 World Day of the Sick
- 16 Catholics in Annapolis Night
- 22-25 Catholic Social Ministry Gathering,  
Washington, DC

#### Save the Date

**April 23-25, 2004, The Catholic Charities USA Parish Social Ministry Regional Assembly** in Portsmouth, Virginia at the Renaissance Portsmouth Hotel. Keynote speakers Rev. J. Bryan Hehir, Jim Wallis, and Gina Hens-Piazza, renowned for their expertise in scripture and social justice, as well as the variety of workshops, should be inspirational to all parishioners, parish leaders, social ministers, JustFaith participants, clergy and deacons, and diocesan and agencies staffs who participate. More information will be forthcoming; in the meantime, if you have questions please call Sr. Joan Marie Stief, OSB at 410.261.6782.

**Catholic Charities  
Office of Parish Social Ministry  
2305 N. Charles Street, 3rd Floor  
Baltimore, MD 21218-5128**