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## The Preferential Option for the Poor in the 2004 Elections

*Bishop William S. Skylstad*

**t**he tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001, have created a new world order – and not necessarily for the better. Our experience as a nation, as a community, has left us frustrated, deeply concerned, and struggling to make things right, to make things secure, to make things as they were before.

Just less than two months ago two jet liners exploded over the skies of Russia. Analysis indicates that again, terrorism was involved; again, most likely suicide bombers. The recent siege at the school in Russia tells us dramatically that even children have become expendable.

What kind of desperation for change pushes people to kill themselves and innocent others, to do a “9/11”?

Here in the United States, new statistics indicate that we are experiencing a widening gap between the rich and the poor. More people are forced to gamble with their health, living without the simple safety net of medical insurance. Why has there been an increase in the grinding poverty that leaves people angry, disenfranchised, frustrated, and vulnerable?

As disciples of Jesus, we must proclaim the kingdom to a waiting world – as St. Paul tells us, a kingdom of justice, peace and joy (Romans 14:17). How do we do that?

The Gospels are full of stories of Jesus eating and dining with people. In the culture of his time, of course, meals often were about more than simple nourishment. Meals could be social affairs, where peers—“people like us”—came together to share food. In this context we hear the story in Luke 14, when Jesus is invited to dinner at the house of a leading Pharisee. All eyes are on the Lord.



He notices how the guests jockey for important places at table. He takes this moment, this social occasion, to tell a story illustrating an important message: Life’s experiences are far richer for having taken the lowest place at table, rather than by scrambling for the place of honor.

But he isn’t finished simply by

talking to the other guests. He turns to the head of the household. “When you hold a lunch or dinner,” says Jesus, “do not invite your friends or your brothers, or your relatives or your wealthy neighbors.... Rather, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.”

The Evangelist doesn’t share with us the host’s reaction to these words. But we can safely suspect the Pharisee was shaken, if not angered, by Jesus’ words.

### Our Foundation Stone

This Gospel story illustrates a fundamental foundation stone of the social teaching of the Catholic Church: Every person has dignity; every person deserves respect; every person deserves inclusion. The Second Vatican Council’s *Constitution of the Church in the Modern World* (“*Gaudium et Spes*”) specifies the relationship we should have with every person on this earth. The document’s opening sentence speaks forcefully of our sense of connectedness with the human family: “The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are also the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the followers of Christ.” We now live in a world

that is decimated by isolation, by disconnection, by exclusion. And now must be the time to build up caring relationships, to build up connections.

We are preparing now for another presidential election in our nation. There can be no better time to initiate a discussion of our Catholic values, values which will make our nation a better place for everyone to live. As in past election years, the U.S. Catholic bishops have published "Faithful Citizenship," a call to political responsibility. Just as Jesus told the leading Pharisee in the Gospel of Luke, the bishops proclaim to the rest of society: "Scripture teaches that God has a special concern for the poor and vulnerable. The prophets denounced injustice toward the poor as a lack of fidelity to the God of Israel. Jesus, who identified with 'the least of these,' came to preach 'good news to the poor, liberty to captives... and to set the down-trodden free.' The Church calls upon us to embrace this prefer-

ential option for the poor and vulnerable, to embrace it in our lives, and to work to have it shape public policies and priorities. A fundamental measure of our society is how we care for and stand with the poor and vulnerable." (*Faithful Citizenship*, page 15)

Our Catholic social teaching calls us to participate in the life of our nation, to take political responsibility, to work for the advancement of the common good and the well-being of all. To build up the culture of life in our country and in our world. To build relationships. To assist

***Every person has dignity;  
every person deserves respect;  
every person deserves inclusion.***

people in making connections. Every person, from the moment of conception to natural death, deserves respect and support from all of us. We are all on the human journey together. Everyone should have a place at the table of our society. We must work hard

to make sure that the story of Lazarus in the Gospel of Luke (16), the poor man who got only crumbs from the master's table, isn't repeated in our day. And if it is, then you and I have a serious responsibility to make it right, to correct the situation, and demand of ourselves and our political system that no one slips through the cracks of society.

Please read and reflect upon the statement, *Faithful Citizenship*. Read *The Constitution of the Church in the Modern World* from the Second Vatican Council, and read the 25<sup>th</sup> chapter from the Gospel of Matthew. Pray about what you read. Ask for God's guidance to enable you, and each of us, to be a voice for change, to invite graciously everyone to the table of life. And not only to invite everyone, but to assist everyone in getting there.

May the burdens and the plight of the poor and vulnerable also be our own. May we bear those burdens together, so that together, we can make our nation, and our world, truly a place of justice, peace and joy, and truly dedicated to the common good. ~

In *Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility*, the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops invites us to consider each candidate in light of a number of social and world issues. Listed below are the issues that IPJC has identified in the document.

Abortion	Domestic Violence	Lack of Development
Affirmative Action	Economic Justice	Latin America
Africa	Education	Marriage
Asia	Elderly	Middle East
Biotechnology	Euthanasia	Poverty
Care for Earth	Farm Workers	Racism
Children	Globalization	Refugees
Cloning	Healthcare	Religious Bigotry
Common Good	Homelessness	Social Security
Communications Media	Hunger	Sustainable Agriculture
Criminal Justice	Immigrants	War and Peace
Death Penalty	International Debt	Welfare Reform
Discrimination	International Resources	

# The Bodies Politic: Church & State

Don Hopps, Ph.D.

**m**y first recollection of church and state is still vivid in my mind. I can remember sitting in the pew next to my father when it was announced we would have no sermon that day because there was a letter from the Archbishop. The very fact that anything could interrupt the inevitability of Sunday and the pastor's rambling sermons must have made that kind of impression on me. That, and the fact that this missive was about a Right to Work initiative on the Washington State ballot.

I was proud of the Archbishop's stand. But I was aware that it hit the many that disagreed like a ton of bricks, confusing their religious understanding rather than enlightening their political perspective.

The ambiguity of this memory mirrors the ambiguity of the history of Catholicism and American Democracy, and points up the relative nature of the political order and the general messiness of democratic politics. One of the many gifts of the founders of American Democracy is, that in spite of strong philosophic views, they recognized and appreciated the ambiguity of political life. They shunned the absolutism of their era. Instead, they established a constitutional structure remarkably limited in its reach. This was manifest in their departure from the habit of wrapping them-

selves in divine mandate and issuing the kinds of moral strictures that were rampant in the laws of the colonies. More especially, they embraced the separation of church and state.

"Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion ...." This beginning of the First Amendment states the specific concern of the founders, the concluding guarantee of the free exercise of religion states its goal. The separation of church and state is essential to the free exercise of religion; and engagement in political life is essential to the exercise of religion. The resolution of this paradox is a clear manifestation of the founders' belief in the power of ideas, their faith in reason, and their fear of state power. Invite religion to engage in the marketplace of ideas and debate. Forbid religion a finger on the coercive power of the state.

During this era, Catholics in America were a small and repressed minority. The Church played no role in the development of constitutional doctrine. But within a generation, the Church in America became one of its most ardent and active supporters. Archbishop John Carroll, the first American Catholic Archbishop, had the foresight to see that the First Amendment not only freed the Church from colonial

## Democracy and the Church

repression, it provided ideal conditions under which the Church could grow. He boldly defended American Democracy in a Vatican in the grips of the "Reaction" against the French Revolution. He won unprecedented freedom for the American Church to determine how it would engage the American experiment. Up to our own time and even in our own Archdiocese, it has been the peculiar role of the American Church to mediate the relationship between the Vatican and the practice of democracy. In turn, it has been the role of the Church to temper the tendency toward radical individualism that is evident in American democratic practice.

Our history of navigating the tensions between religion and



democracy has not always been successful or glorious. But it is crowned with achievement that is as remarkable as the American Constitution itself and as important to the success of democracy. Without the active involvement of the American Church, it is hard to imagine that the great mediating institutions that have made American democracy practical and American capitalism tolerable would have ever been built, let alone been successful. Led by the religious orders of women, the

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church directly established health, social welfare, and education systems that prevented the brutalization of the poor, particularly the immigrant poor, by unfettered industrialization. These systems became a major barrier to the privatization and commercialization of social goods long before government entered into most of these fields. The Church was an active and critical supporter of both labor unions and the development of mass political parties. Without these means of giving the people voice in their political and economic lives, democracy in America would soon have become purely theoretical.

The American Church was as instrumental in the movement to open the Catholic Church to the modern world. The persistent

on three key factors: honor and respect for the civic culture, attention to the formation of individual Catholics, and a willingness to participate in service as a part of active citizenship. All three of these factors reflect a mature understanding of faithful engagement in political life.

Two decades ago, a mature faith led the Church to a new level of acting on its obligation to political life as a Church. The Bishops of United States undertook two monumental examinations of the American polity, both in the form of letters on critical issues before our country. *The Challenge of Peace* and *Economic Justice for All* remain thoughtful

in the basic religious understanding of ourselves as images of the Divine, created to realize ourselves in community with God and each other. Our life in politics can and should be the broadest expression of our potential for

community. Bringing to the political community our religious and moral vision is a critical part of our realizing human potential. It is also essential to fully completing the community. This is a great vocation. It demands our full commitment; a commitment that can only be made as a free person. It is not good enough for us to simply transmit even religious truths. Rather we are called to apply our religious understanding to find and give truth to the communal life we are procreating.

Religion thrives in freedom. Just as the truth makes us free, freedom allows us to fully realize the truth. It is ironic that our rationalistic founders, in adopting the separation of church and state as constitutional principle, deeply embedded in our system one of the central truths of the Gospels. The use of our power to control another person, even for a perceived moral good, interferes with the life of the spirit and its use is morally corrupting. By separating church and state, our constitution allows us to freely know God in our human relationships. While engaging a world of many wrongs where the coercive use of power in the practice of government is a reality, if not a necessity, we are free to witness to the truths of our Catholic faith. ~

***The separation of church and state is essential to the free exercise of religion.***

### ***Our life in politics can and should be the broadest expression of our potential for community.***

promotion of the American experiment, including an adamant embrace of the idea of separation of church and state, was antidote to the deep suspicion in which the Vatican and most European Churches held the movements of the nineteenth century. It became a major force in shaping Catholic teaching on social justice. Ultimately, the American Church provided the practical models for the breakthroughs at the second Vatican Council, if not its theological vision.

#### **Catholic Citizenship**

This history and the strength of the American Church today rest

and pertinent contributions to the policy issues we continue to face today. Equally important is the unique process by which they were developed. All over the country individual Catholics were engaged in dialogue and reflection on public policy. Work on the letters framed the dialogue. The substance of the letters captured its spirit. This process stands as a model of how we as a community, no matter how large and diverse, can democratically and effectively engage public policy. It also is a collective manifestation of how we should act as individual Catholic citizens.

Catholic citizenship is rooted



# Conscience Formation: A Call to Discernment

Kevin V. Hanley, Ph.D. with IPJC Staff

**W**hen citizens step into the polling booth in a few weeks, they'll be voting their conscience as well as their pocket-books. How will the United States wage war and pursue peace? Whose jobs and financial well-being will be protected? How will issues of abortion, health care, and the rights of gays and lesbians be handled?

According to the traditional teachings of the Catholic Church, "conscience is the inner sense of right and wrong that enables individuals to discern moral choices freely."<sup>1</sup> A conscientious Christian *must follow her conscience* and, at the same time, must make sure *it is an educated conscience*.

The "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World" (written at the Second Vatican Council from 1962 to 1965) taught that conscience is an essential element of human dignity which should be developed and followed in moral decision making.

"In the depths of [one's] conscience, [one] detects a law which [one] does not impose upon [one-self], but which holds [one] to obedience. Always summoning [one] to love good and avoid evil, the voice of conscience when necessary speaks to [one's] heart; do this, shun that. For [one] has in [one's] heart a law written by God; to obey it is the very dignity

of [humankind]; according to it [one] will be judged. Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a [person]. There [one] is alone with God, whose voice echoes in [one's] depths."<sup>2</sup>

The Catholic Church teaches that living by one's conscience is essential to becoming a whole human being. No one—not one's spouse, one's friends, or even

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***The Catholic Church teaches that living by one's conscience is essential to becoming a whole human being.***

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one's bishop—has the right to dictate to an informed Christian's conscience.

Unfortunately, many Christians have been afraid to embrace the responsibility of "deciding for oneself." People have been taught that, like Pinocchio, they need a Jiminy Cricket to "guarantee" that they will stay on track. Certainly

we all need "a community of learners" to make sure our conscience continues to be informed. But anyone who has honestly lived that responsibility can act from her conscience with the

conviction that she is living out her call from Christ to discipleship.

Recognizing our responsibility to follow our conscience is only the beginning. We must also take responsibility for forming our conscience under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. How does this happen?

Conscience formation is a process of discernment. It begins with a sense of personal worth and responsibility that helps us distinguish between good and evil. Conscience is not the same as feelings. Although feelings may be part of a process of discernment or conscience formation, feelings themselves are morally neutral.

Developing an informed conscience around a specific issue involves prayer; gathering factual information about the issue; consulting with family, friends, or colleagues; studying Scripture and the teachings of the Church; and reading the relevant works of theologians along with other insightful thinkers.

The Church has a role to play in challenging people to search their deepest selves to make sure that their conscience is adequately informed. Christians can help each other develop their conscience around difficult moral issues by sharing their stories, their questions, and even their disagreements.

Once a Christian has done the hard work of forming her conscience, she can act on it with confidence in the voting booth and beyond, knowing that she is acting as a moral agent for change in the world. ~

1. *Growing in Christian Morality*, Julia Ahlers, Barbara Allaire, and Carol Koch, Saint Mary's Press, Winona, Minnesota, 1996, p. 85
2. "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World", The Second Vatican Council, (1962 to 1965), Section 16



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***Conscience formation is a process of discernment.***

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# Bread And Cup—Healing And Reconciliation

by Father Jim Dallen

## Jesus and the Eucharist

**J**esus' table companions—the word means someone with whom bread is shared—included friends, the curious, and even hostile critics. Scandalously, they also included the ritually and morally unclean among the people of the covenant. That implied that the Covenant-Maker could be met even in the company of those who were disloyal to ancestral teachings and customs or who had sinned against God and neighbor. The reign of God was as broad

and welcoming as Jesus' attitude at table. Though present as a guest, his gracious commitment to companion anyone and everyone who would let him was transformative. As his companions, they experienced a power that challenged their standards and way of life. They could change because they were accepted, healed, and reconciled through Jesus' self-gift of communion.

The New Testament describes Jesus as host and leader of table-prayer only twice during his ministry: the lakeside meal (John) and the Last Supper (Synoptics and Paul). Hosting the crowds on the shores of Lake Galilee dramatized the broadness of the coming reign of God. Jesus made no effort to limit the scope of his largesse or to discriminate among those who were there. All were invited and welcome. If Mark 8

is right on the location—in gentile territory—then gentiles outside the covenant may have sat alongside Israelites in this great meal of the realm of God.

The last of Jesus' meals was with the chosen Twelve, sign of the restored Israel, or so it was remembered. They had committed to sharing his destiny. At the table were Judas who had already betrayed him, Peter who would deny him, and the others who

would abandon him. They had common union in the bread of table-friendship and the cup of blessing—in him. Broken bread carried his person, given for all. He challenged

them to do as he had done and to continue it to the limit he would set—death.

Bread and cup heal and reconcile. Since communion with God and neighbor are inseparable, the broken bread and the cup passed from hand to hand are not static objects. They are part of the disciples' human encounter. In every case, conversion is not the price of communion but its consequence. In no case does Jesus limit the scope of that power beforehand.

## The Church's Practice Through the Centuries

The power to reconcile was dramatically displayed when gentiles came to be companions in the Lord's Supper. It did not happen easily, even at Antioch. The realization grew, as Ephesians 2 summarizes, that in his flesh

Christ made Jews and gentiles into one, breaking down the ancient dividing wall of hostility between them.

Paul still felt compelled to draw lines within the reconciled diversity of the Corinthian community. He excluded the incestuous man from their gatherings. He challenged the rest, those whose table practice split the community and left out the poor, to be sure that their Supper was the Lord's.

Later, other lines were drawn to distinguish those who were officially faithful and those who were officially unfaithful. All were expected to be present, but not all could share eucharistic communion. Sometimes, as Paul intended at Corinth, exclusion from eucharistic communion challenged those who had ceased to live in the love of God and neighbor, those whose lives were un-Christian. They were called to repentance and reform before they could share bread and cup.

Some lines seem at odds with Jesus' practice. The Council of Elvira, for example, excluded from eucharistic communion parents who married their daughter to a Jew or anyone who ate a meal with a Jew. Where the lines were drawn permitting access to Eucharist varied. Exclusions multiplied over time.

Three ecclesial situations give insight into how the Eucharist, the Lord's Supper, draws people together in a healing and reconciling communion. The first is initiation, the process whereby people enter the mystery of Christ in the Church. Once filled with faith they are baptized into

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Eucharist: their sin is healed and they become one with the Church. The Eucharist concludes their conversion by realizing the final reign of God anticipated here and now in the assembly of the faithful. Their mystery lies on the altar, as Augustine says. They are the Body of Christ.

The second situation is the Christian life. Though we are the Body of Christ, we must continue to become the Body of Christ. What has happened to the Head in his dying and rising extends throughout the Body's history as the Church continues on the path of conversion and reconciliation. For each of us this is the work of a lifetime. Daily sins continue to receive forgiveness. Wounds continue to be healed. Differences and divisions continue to be overcome. For this to happen we share the bread and cup. As the Eucharist began in baptism, so baptism continues in Eucharist.

The third situation, an extreme one, arises when members of the Body lose touch with the power of the cross. Hearts grow hard and closed to its gift of life. Outstretched hands become clenched fists threatening others. Feet wander from the way that leads to God's realm. Church officials draw lines to indicate an impaired communion which

excludes from Eucharist. The process of a second conversion restores the repentant to the Body. Once more re-integrated into the eucharistic assembly through the sacrament of penance and reconciliation, they celebrate the Eucharist that shows their unity.

### Our Challenge

The power of the Eucharist to reconcile has its base in human hospitality and acceptance. In welcoming one another to table and sharing food and drink, we establish a common ground that can make strangers into friends. But eucharistic bread and cup have an even greater power because of the cross. God has made us one, reconciling us through the cross.

Until God's reign comes in fullness, our communion is tension and our unity is reconciliation. Sharing the Eucharist commits us to Jesus' way of life

ing the death of Jesus, we side with those who crucified him. So we need to examine ourselves before coming to the table. The challenge Jesus put to the Twelve cannot be muted. "The Holy for the holy" is the call to eucharistic communion.

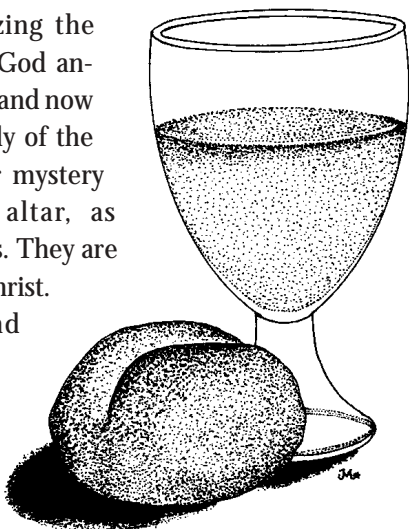
But to that call we all respond in awe and thanksgiving because none of us is worthy. That fact raises questions about efforts to exclude by law some sinners as too unworthy. They (and all of us) need to be helped to see the challenge put by bread and cup. However, exclusion keeps people from the healing and reconciling power of the Eucharist.

Jesus graced the table of critics and sinners. Lakeside, he hosted the multitude—people of varied intentions, conditions, and commitments. At his Last Supper he hosted his betrayer, his denier, and his weak and fearful friends. After his resurrection he graced and hosted all. Unity is a matter of degree. Wheat and weeds, though easily distinguished, grow together until the harvest. Until then, unity always takes the form of healing and reconciliation.

Eucharist is its sacrament.

Jesus' self-gift made total on the cross and shared in the resurrection heals wounds and reconciles differences. Communion is experienced here and now not as full unity but as reconciliation, a common

unity with Christ that transcends difference and even sin. Bread and cup focus the redemptive power of the cross, offering strength for the journey into the realm of God. ~



***Until God's reign comes in fullness, our communion is tension and our unity is reconciliation.***

and his destiny. If we cannot commit to that way, we make a mockery of the Eucharist. Like the Corinthians, serious failure at self-gift to God and neighbor means that rather than proclaim-

# Faithful Citizens Engage!

IPJC Staff

## “ESTOY LISTA!”

“We have to involve ourselves for the community and for ourselves, so that every one has the same opportunity to be better prepared and to be better people.” How did Luz, a Spanish-speak-



Selene, Isela & Luz meet with State Representative Dan Newhouse

ing mother in the Yakima Valley, find the courage to stand before the school board and speak about the effects of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) on her children? It all began when Sunnyside’s *Nuestra Casa* collaborated with the Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center to host a Women’s Justice Circle. “Being in the Circle has served me,” Luz said. “The women gave me strength.”

The women of the Sunnyside Circle educated their community about the negative aspects of this English-only test. They met with the Sunnyside Superintendent, the School Board who voted to address their concerns, and State Representative Dan Newhouse. They were featured on local Spanish Radio KDNA and spoke at St. Joseph’s Spanish Masses. Speaking powerfully from their lived experience, these women of the Sunnyside Circle achieved an impressive momentum and

received statewide media attention.

Luz felt timid when speaking to public officials for the first time. For her, the support of the women gave her confidence as she spoke her truth. “Our unity is our strength as a community, as women, as a society.”

Through collaboration with other women on an issue of mutual concern, Luz became politically active in her community. She was empowered to call for meaningful change in an educational system that struggles to meet the needs of economically and culturally diverse students. When asked about her interest in talking with public officials now and in the future, Luz replied, “Estoy lista!” *I am ready!*

## SEED PLANTING

“We’re a raggedy band of believers with a theme song,” says Mary Bradford, Pastoral Associate for Social Outreach at St. Leo Parish in Tacoma. During Sunday Mass, you will find a unique mix of parishioners gathered together for worship: well-educated, developmentally disabled, homeless, families, individuals suffering from mental illness, and commuters. In compassionate response to a homeless population which, according to Mary, “sits right in the lap of the parish,” St. Leo’s provides its parishioners with opportunities for increased political awareness and participation in programs that serve the needs of

their neighbors.

The parish is sustained by its commitment to community partnership. Mary says that leaving behind the paralyzing notion that *we can do everything by ourselves* has been essential to the parish’s success. St. Leo’s partners with Tacoma Catholic Worker House, Catholic Community Services, Pierce County Coalition for the Homeless, and its own Food Connection. The parish has been a fertile seeding ground for community projects that are grown in cooperation with these and other organizations.

“Seeds start in the parish when we identify a need,” states Mary. In response to a recent homeless crisis when social service agencies were at risk of collapse, St. Leo’s and the Catholic Worker House supported homeless individuals as they testified before the Tacoma City Council.

Nativity House Day Center is another example of this seed work. On Christmas Eve in 1979, in response to the growing number of homeless, Father Rothrock and three parishioners rented a main street storefront and opened it up to their hungry neighbors.

The newly formed community celebrated Mass and ate peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. With deeply rooted support, this “raggedy band” seed sprouted and grew, and is still serving guests with a warmth and welcome symbolic of its

first Christmas Eve. ❧





# Building Relationships for Transformation

## OPERATION JINGLES

Marie Marchand

“Senator Allard used to take care of my dog Jingles,” I said to the legislative aide who answered the phone. “I’ve come from Denver to talk to the senator about the clean-up of the Rocky Flats nuclear weapons facility and would like an appointment.”

Traveling to Washington, D.C. for the first time, I quickly realized just how much creativity is required to simply get in the door of a U.S. congress person. I also realized the value of revitalizing shared connections to build relationships.

My Colorado delegation of citizen lobbyists was having trouble getting an appointment with Senator Wayne Allard, a member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services. Since I grew up in Loveland, Colorado and Wayne Allard had been our family veterinarian, I volunteered to call his office. Invoking the name of my Shetland Sheepdog from childhood worked the needed magic, and we met with the senator’s top military legislative aides the next morning.

I recently volunteered for the re-election campaign of my state representative. One sunny Saturday morning in July, my family and I took a ferry ride to Vashon Island and marched with her in the Strawberry Festival Parade. I had met her before at conferences and monthly district meetings, and had written her a number of letters during the previous legislative session. It was different, however, being with her at this outdoor, family-oriented event when the legislature was not in

session. When she later called to thank me, we ended up talking about our neighborhood, our political views, and even our shared faith.

I vote, I call legislators, and I write letters to the editor, but as I hung up the phone with my state representative, I reflected on the relationships that I build with my neighbors and elected officials. It is through these relationships that I most fully live out my faith in political life.

## ADVOCACY IN COMMUNITY

Tereasa McGowan Palmer

One of my favorite times of the year is the start of the legislative session in Olympia. Spending a day with a group of other

in Olympia, I came to believe that it is so important for legislators to hear the voices of the people directly affected by issues such as access to affordable housing, healthcare, and childcare. With this in mind, I began inviting the residents with whom I work.

One year, Jessica, a single mother and resident, accompanied me to Olympia. Legislators invited Jessica to testify before a committee. While talking with legislative staff she had an opportunity to speak in favor of particular legislation that would benefit her family. Through this experience, both Jessica and I have become more connected to our legislators; we know that we have access to people who make vital decisions that deeply affect our lives.

“You do not have to be an expert to stand up and say that something is not just.”

I received this piece of advice at an IPJC workshop a few years ago. I carry it with me every time I visit my legislators. I do not have to be a housing expert or

understand every nuance of the budget to say that people deserve better than sleeping in cars or tents. Meeting with legislators yearly puts a face to the needs of the people; and because of this, it is one of the most important ways that we can create change. ~

*Tereasa McGowan Palmer is the Resident Services Coordinator at Intercommunity Mercy Housing.*



2004 Advocacy Day in Olympia

concerned people talking to our elected officials thrills me. My work is in direct service at a residential community, but I know that the challenges facing the families with whom I work will never improve without system-wide change. Organized advocacy days at the legislature provide fun, non-threatening opportunities for our voices to be heard by elected officials.

After my first few experiences



## United Way

This year please consider writing in IPJC on your United Way Pledge. This is one more important way for us to receive support for doing the work of peace and justice that is so needed in our world. When you designate IPJC also let us



know if your company has a matching program that will donate to IPJC.

## Welcome

We welcome **Marie Marchand** as the editor of *A Matter of Spirit* and staff for the Northwest Catholic Women's Convocation. As a young adult she brings experience and enthusiasm to our youth and young adult programs.



Marie comes to the position with degrees in Theological Anthropology and a Masters in Theological Studies.

## Women's Justice Circles



We welcome **Rosalinda Aguirre** to IPJC as the Coordinator of the Women's Justice Circles. Rosalinda brings her experience of faith-based organizing, active participation in parish life, her commitment to building community and an ability to work with diverse populations. As a bi-lingual minister, Rosalinda will enable us to strengthen our programming with those who are Spanish speaking.

- ❖ Join a Justice Circle
- ❖ Promote the Justice Circles
- ❖ Contribute to changing the systems affecting low-income women

Circles will take place this fall in the following cities: **Everett, Seattle, Vancouver, Spokane, Mattawa** (en español) Go to [www.ipjc.org](http://www.ipjc.org) for an updated list of sites.

## Fast at City Hall

The Seattle Religious Leaders Task Force—The Interfaith Task Force on Homelessness, Catholic Community Services, Lutheran Compass Center, and The Church Council of Greater Seattle—is coordinating an ongoing prayerful fast at the office of Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels that will continue through the budgeting process. IPJC encourages you to ask Mayor Nickels to preserve funding for human services in the 2005-06 City Budget. For more info on the fast contact: [publicfast@ccsww.org](mailto:publicfast@ccsww.org)

We are concerned by the following:

- i In 2000 there were 1,085 people in Seattle sleeping on the streets on any given night. In 2003 the number had risen to 1,899, *that's a 66% increase.*
- i In 2000, 11 out of every 12 women who tried to access a domestic violence shelter in Seattle/King County were turned away. In 2003 this number had grown to 13 out of every 14 women who sought shelter were turned away.
- i Since 2001 there has been a 40% increase in the number of uninsured people accessing Community Health Centers in King County.

## Shareholders & Consumers Move P & G to Fair Trade

Together, responsible shareholders and consumers are moving Procter & Gamble to sell a product that supports the economic, social, and environmental needs of coffee growing communities. Because of dialogue on the issue of Fair Trade coffee with Northwest Coalition for Responsible Investment (NWCRI) and a coalition of shareholders, Procter & Gamble launched Millstone Mountain Moonlight Fair Trade Certified™ coffee online in September 2003. Socially conscious coffee drinkers, who want growers to be paid a living wage, made this variety of Millstone coffee one of the most popular on [www.millstone.com](http://www.millstone.com).

The result of the work of shareholders and consumers is that Procter & Gamble began selling Millstone Mountain Moonlight at grocery stores on October 1, 2004. Millstone is one of the largest gourmet coffee roasters to sell Fair Trade Certified™ coffee in retail stores.

**Action:** ✓ Buy Fair Trade ✓ Ask stores managers for Fair Trade  
✓ Write letters to corporations requesting Fair Trade

**Resource:** [www.fairtradeaction.org](http://www.fairtradeaction.org)

NWCRI Annual Report for 2004 will be available after October 13 at [www.ipjc.org/programs/nwcric.htm](http://www.ipjc.org/programs/nwcric.htm) or 206.223.1138.

# peace & justice center

## Northwest Catholic Women's Convocation III

April 22-23, 2005

Washington State Convention Center



- ☑ Mark your calendars
- ☑ Announce and promote the Convocation
- ☑ Bring your friends, colleagues, and parishioners

Be part of the largest gathering in the Northwest! The Convocation will gather over 2000 to celebrate the many ways God lives and moves in our lives. As faith-filled women, we gather for:

- ☞ prayer, ritual and story
- ☞ education and empowerment
- ☞ celebration and transformation

Affirmed in our spirituality, we act for justice in our church and Earth community.

Watch our website [www.ipjc.org](http://www.ipjc.org) for regular updates on the Convocation.

At the time of printing *AMOS* we have confirmed the following speakers:

**KEYNOTE: Edwina Gateley, M.A. ❖ Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ, Ph.D. ❖ Bernice Johnson Reagon, Ph.D.**  
**WORKSHOP: Vivienne SM. Angeles, Ph.D. ❖ Betsey Beckman, M.M. ❖ Frida Berrigan ❖ Mary Boys, SNJM, Ph.D. Paula D'Arcy, M.Ed. ❖ Anita De Luna, MCDP, Ph.D. ❖ Margaret Farley, RSM, Ph.D. ❖ Fran Ferder, FSPA, Ph.D., D.Min., & Rev. John Heagle, M.A., J.C.L. ❖ Barbara Fiand, SNDdeN, Ph.D. ❖ Sandra Flamand ❖ Margaret Galiardi, OP ❖ Pearl Gervais & Bishop Remi De Roo ❖ Maria Elena Gonzáles, RSM ❖ Guadalupe Guajardo, SNJM ❖ Krista Gemmell Harris Loretta Jancoski, Ph.D. ❖ Sam Kauffman ❖ Pat Lewis & Carol Scott-Kassner, Ph.D. ❖ Maria Minkova & Lydia Guy Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, Ph.D. ❖ Mary Ellen & Casey Lopata ❖ Nancy Murray, OP ❖ Andrea Nenzel, CSJP & Thomas Allsopp Jamie Phelps, OP, Ph.D. ❖ Janet Ruffing, RSM, Ph.D. ❖ Sarah Sharkey, OP ❖ Brian Swimme, Ph.D. & Alexandra Kovats, CSJP, Ph.D. Flora Wilson Bridges ❖ Gail Worcelo, CP ❖ Seung A. Yang, Ph.D. ❖ Phyllis Zagano, Ph.D.**

## Faithful Citizenship Workshops

IPJC is providing 21 workshops in Washington and Oregon. Workshops have been held in Spokane, Richland, Bremerton, Port Orchard, Puyallup, Bothell, Marysville, Kirkland, Federal Way, and Seattle.

### Here is what Pastoral Leaders have said about the workshop:

"The content was fabulous; it was much more than I'd imagined. The participant reviews are sterling."

"This was an excellent balanced Catholic presentation."



Participants discuss the issues

### Join us at an upcoming workshop:

Yakima, St Paul

October 11<sup>th</sup>, 6-9 p.m.

Yakima, Religious Ed Conference

October 16<sup>th</sup>

Bellevue, Sacred Heart

October 17<sup>th</sup>, 10:15-12:15

Call us at 206.223.118 or visit [www.ipjc.org](http://www.ipjc.org) for location of future workshops.



Srs. Linda & Judy listen to participants

Seattle, Our Lady of the Lake

October 17<sup>th</sup>, 7-9:00 p.m.

Seattle, St. Patrick

October 19<sup>th</sup>, 7-9 p.m.

Olympia, St. Michael

October 20<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>, 6:45-7:45 p.m.

Spokane, Religious Ed Conference

October 30<sup>th</sup>

# Finding Hope through Catholic Social Teaching

From Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility, United States Catholic Conference of Bishops, 2003.

How can Catholic Social Teaching guide our discernment this election season? Seven main themes comprise the heart of Catholic Social Teaching. The themes and questions are intended as a basic framework as you engage the candidates and consider Faithful Citizenship.

## Life and dignity of the human person.

Every person is created in the image and likeness of God. We believe that every human life is sacred from conception to natural death.

- ☑ *What are your positions on abortion, the death penalty, and embryonic stem cell research? How will you reduce the use of violence in responding to terrorism?*

## Care for God's Creation.

In our use of creation, we must be guided by a concern for generations to come. We show our respect for the Creator by our care for creation.

- ☑ *What international and state initiatives will you support and act on to protect the environment?*

## Option for the poor and vulnerable.

Jesus, who identified himself with "the least of these," came to preach "good news to the poor...and to set the downtrodden free." The Church calls on all of us to embrace this preferential option for the poor.

- ☑ *How will your budget priorities support Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and those who are most vulnerable?*

## Solidarity.

We are *all* responsible *for all*. At the core of solidarity is the pursuit of justice & peace.

- ☑ *How will you support debt relief to the world's poorest countries? What state measures will you pursue to support refugees and victims of trafficking?*

## Call to family, community, and participation.

Marriage and family should be supported and strengthened. Every person has a right to participate...and a corresponding duty to work for the advancement of the common good.

- ☑ *What steps will you take to advocate for jobs, poverty reduction, and the rights of documented and undocumented immigrants?*

## Dignity of work and the rights of workers.

The economy must serve the people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's act of creation.

- ☑ *How will your plans for creating jobs provide for sustainable living and environmental safeguards?*

## Rights and responsibilities.

Every person has a right to the conditions for living a decent life—faith and family, food and shelter, education and employment, health care and housing.

- ☑ *How will your policies contribute to increased access to affordable housing and health care?*

The questions developed by the Intercommunity Peace and Justice Center are meant as a framework as you consider how you will bring the principles of Catholic Social Teaching into the public square. They can be adapted for local, state, and national candidates.

**For more information on the elections visit:**  
**[www.ipjc.org](http://www.ipjc.org)**

*A Matter of Spirit* is a publication of the Intercommunity Peace & Justice Center

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