

SALT & LIGHT

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- PUBLIC POLICY
- ADVOCACY
- GREEN CORNER

OUR LADY

Happy Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe! This holy image of an expectant, indigenous Mary has come to symbolize hope for pregnant women, for impoverished people dominated by a colonial power, for immigrant families at risk of being torn apart. Jesus incarnate for all of us, regardless of where we fall in the human power structure. Happy feast day!



DIOCESAN PUBLIC POLICY

The Diocesan Public Policy Committee usually chooses its advocacy and education issues by September to give us all time to prepare materials. This year, however, shifting political winds in Albany and Washington made it more challenging to determine the most timely and urgent issues. Below, you will find an outline of this year's issues. A link to the materials will be posted as soon as they are completed.

Advocacy Issue

The Diocese of Rochester Public Policy Advocacy Week-end (February 11/12, 2018) will focus on passage of The Dream Act of 2017, legislation supported by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and now before the Congress. If passed, The Dream Act will give the 1.8 million immigrant youth/young adults who were brought to the United States as children, a path to eventual citizenship, with specific requirements they must meet. Resources, including a petition or postcard, will be available for parishes from the Public Policy Committee in early January.

This effort will be in support of Pope Francis' two-year initiative called *Share the Journey: Love Your Neighbor*. This initiative seeks to promote the virtue of solidarity and help us deepen our understanding of and compassion for the realities faced by refugees and migrants. An essential aspect of this initiative will be Pope Francis' call to *encounter with others* and the Gospel imperatives *to love our neighbor and welcome the stranger*.

Education Issues

The first education issue may become an additional advocacy issue. The DPPC will be carefully watching the progress of abortion expansion legislation in New York State. Each year since 2013 the NYS Assembly has

passed legislation that would expand the legality of abortion beyond 24 months. Each year the Senate has narrowly defeated their version of the bill. Changing dynamics in the Senate could make it more likely that they would support passage. In that case the Rochester Diocese would follow the lead of the New York State Catholic Conference in supporting opposition through online advocacy and a possible postcard campaign.

The second education issue addresses an issue that is close to home for all too many people, the opioid crisis. From 2000 to 2014 nearly *half a million persons in the United States have died from drug overdoses*. In 2014, there were approximately one and a half times more drug overdose deaths in the United States than deaths from motor vehicle crashes. And in 2015 more than 33,000 people in the United States died of opioid overdose, which is over 90 people each day. Is there a parish that has not buried a beloved child or parent who died as a result of their addiction disease?

Bishop Matano has asked Catholic Charities to help parishes respond to this crisis from a pastoral and educational perspective. Regional Catholic Charities Directors and Justice and Peace staff have agreed to help each region develop an appropriate response in collaboration with local resources and human service agencies.

"Most people migrate through regular channels. Some, however, take different routes, mainly out of desperation, when their own countries offer neither safety nor opportunity, and every legal pathway appears impractical, blocked or too slow.

...When we turn that [contemplative]gaze to migrants and refugees, we discover that they do not arrive empty-handed. They bring their courage, skills, energy and aspirations, as well as the treasures of their own cultures; and in this way, they enrich the lives of the nations that receive them. We also come to see the creativity, tenacity and spirit of sacrifice of the countless individuals, families and communities around the world who open their doors and hearts to migrants and refugees, even where resources are scarce."

Pope Francis, 2018 World Day of Peace Message

SPEAKERS ON REFUGEES

Catholic Family Center can provide parishes with speakers on refugee resettlement. Please contact Lisa Hoyt, lhoyt@cfcrochester.org or 585-546-7220 Ext 4630 to arrange for someone in the Refugee Resettlement program to speak at your parish event.

PARISH RESOURCE

The USCCB has created a resource for the World Day of Peace that could be used as a bulletin insert or study tool. Go to <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/war-and-peace/upload/World-Day-of-Peace-2018-handout.pdf>

STAND WITH DOLORES

When a beloved community member faces deportation, the tragedy of aggressive enforcement comes into sharper focus. Carly Fox, (585-500-9409, cfox@wjcnj.org) from the Worker Justice Center, asks us to stand in support of Dolores Bustamante as she faces deportation:

Join Dolores Bustamante, her friends, and community supporters to stand with her before and during her upcoming trial!

Tuesday, December 19, 2017
Buffalo Federal Detention Center
4250 Federal Dr., Batavia, NY

8:00 AM- 4 PM or as long as you can*

* Time depends on the length of the trial. A press conference will follow immediately after the trial.

Bring Signs, banners, friends, etc.
Wear warm clothing suitable for the day's weather.

Dolores' Story

After fleeing abuse in Mexico, Dolores settled in Wayne County with her young daughter more than 13 years ago. As a single Mom and valued worker on an apple farm, a community leader of farmworker women, worker rights advocate and active board member for two organizations, Dolores deserves to stay in Wayne County with her daughter where they have made their home. She has represented farmworker women and testified at conferences in the US, including at Harvard and Washington, DC, helps her fellow farmworkers in need, and contributes to her community. In 2014, when Dolores was stopped for a minor traffic violation, State Police turned her over to immigration authorities and she was subjected to deportation proceedings. Dec. 19, 2017 is the date of the trial that may sadly end in Dolores's removal to Mexico. Let's say NO to her deportation! Stand in solidarity with Dolores! Keep families together! Stop deportations now!

ADVOCACY FOR OUR EARTH

The Catholic Climate Covenant reports that the EPA is repealing the Clean Power Plan without putting a new one in place or revealing what would be included in a replacement. From the CCC:

"The Clean Power Plan seeks to reduce carbon pollution from the United States' largest source, the power sector, by 32 percent by 2030. By EPA's own [estimates](#) the CPP, by 2030, could prevent a projected **500 to 3,600** premature deaths, **90,000** asthma attacks in children, up to **1,700** heart attacks and **1,700** hospital admissions.

As EPA's stated mission is to protect human health and the environment, EPA's replacement rule must meet or exceed the CPP's human health protections and carbon reduction goals. Furthermore, the CPP should not be repealed until the replacement rule is operational.

A lesser rule will likely increase premature deaths and put human health—particularly in poorer neighborhoods near power plants—at risk across the United States. It would also worsen climate change which is disproportionately harming the poor and marginalized at home and around the world. If EPA were to repeal the CPP before putting another plan in its place, it would be subverting its own mission." Take action at: <http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/press-release/testimony-of-catholic-climate-covenant-at-public-hearing-of-proposed-repeal-of-cpp>

TAX ADVOCACY AND MORE

The U.S. Bishops have spoken out strongly against the "Tax Cuts and Jobs Act". Add your voice to this and other issues at <https://www.votervoice.net/USCCB/home>

LOTS MORE ADVOCACY

The New York State Catholic Conference currently has action alerts for many timely issues including abortion expansion, support of the Dream Act and an urgent request for advocacy for Catholic Schools. You can find all these and more at <http://www.nyscatholic.org/nys-catholic-conference-action-center/>

GREEN CORNER

The best way to save energy and protect our planet for future generations is to use energy consciously. Pope Francis has reminded us that our grandparents were much less wasteful than we are. They washed and reused useful items rather than throwing them away. They creatively used leftovers to stretch their food budgets. In winter they dressed warmly for the weather and turned off lights when not in use.