

NETWORK Connection

PEOPLE LOBBYING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE • SECOND QUARTER 2010

Faith Communities Stand With Immigrants



dear members

As I write this, we are unwinding from the “healthcare struggle” that resulted in a huge change for our country. President Obama and Vice President Biden (as well as MANY members of Congress and the administration) told me that NETWORK gets the credit for “tipping the balance” toward passage with our “nuns’ letter.” It came as a culmination of NETWORK’s 38 years of advocacy on the issue of healthcare reform.

But while we need to celebrate this amazing and improbable victory, there is a worry for us in the process. I’m saddened by the loss of civility in the debate. Our staff reports that when they delivered the article from the January 2010 *Connection* to Hill offices, there was great interest in Jim Leach’s article on civility. It seems that it is something to hunger for, but not act on. Congressman Bart Stupak told me that he thought that the Republican who yelled at him while he was addressing Congress did it on purpose and not “in the heat of the moment.” Mr. Stupak told me that the Republican had an ad up on the Internet that night seeking campaign donations because he had “stood up” for Republican values. What is our nation coming to?

Simone Campbell, SSS



COURTESY OF GORDON WHITMAN AND JAMES SALT

Immediately after the signing of the healthcare reform bill, President Obama and Vice President Biden thanked Simone Campbell, SSS, and NETWORK for playing such an important role in getting the bill passed (see page 8). Ironically, NETWORK faces a financial crisis even as our effectiveness has never been more apparent! Turn to the back page to see how you can help strengthen our voice in Washington. And THANK YOU for your support!

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NETWORK

A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby

NETWORK—a Catholic leader in the global movement for justice and peace—educates, organizes and lobbies for economic and social transformation.

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Cover: Pro-immigration reform march on the National Mall, March 21. Photo by Marge Clark, BVM

Fringe

By SIMONE CAMPBELL, SSS

Cultural Snag

The Mexican claret shawl drapes in informal elegance across my Anglo shoulders. I lean into the thin warmth, sheltering from the drizzle breeze. The hugging textured center of this native cotton cloth solidly claims my back, arms, wraps round me, but, I confess, I detest the fringe.

I loathe the interfering fringe that catches on door knobs, chair backs, rings, keys, a wide variety of protruding parts of my jagged speeding world. The pesky fringe jolts me in mid-certain stride or dramatic gesture and snags the disquieting wonder: Should this fluid disturbance to warm comfort be tolerated or snipped?

This poem has always been about my frustration with the people of the United States and our immigration policy. We love Cinco de Mayo celebrations and all kinds of Mexican food. We delight in Mariachi music and can't keep our feet still. We love flowers and great fiestas. I grew up in Southern California where in fourth grade we studied our state's roots in a Latin culture where Spanish was our first language.

But then as an adult, I learned that our immigration laws push many people from this treasured culture to the side of our society. Economically, we delight in "opening markets" in Mexico and Central America for U.S. products, even if this means undermining their domestic economies. We are then righteously shocked as a nation that people "sneak" into our country in the hope of getting work to support their hungry families. Some of our businesses (construction, landscaping, car washes, child care, etc.) utilize the labor of people without papers and pay them a mere pittance. I was talking with three men from Guatemala who were in DC for an immigration rally, and they told me they are trying to organize carwash workers in Southern

California. These workers have 11-hour shifts and are paid \$40 a day plus tips! What exploitation and what a benefit to the owners of the carwash—and to us who get cheap service!

Some people are heard to say, "These immigrants should wait in line to come in." "They should do it according to the law." But there is no line and there is no law to help these hungry people. We in the U.S. are too intent on the comfort that these workers provide to focus on the painful reality of a failed system that provides neither realistic access to our country nor a plausible trade policy to encourage a domestic economy that sustains them in their home countries. It is truly the fringe of our society that suffers, and their suffering at times is an annoying disturbance to our warm comfort.

During the healthcare debate, when we at NETWORK issued our press release with the signatures of leaders of women religious congregations, I came to another insight. As we worked valiantly for the passage of a healthcare bill that ensured expansion of healthcare to 32 million people AND cost containment for all of us AND no federal funding of abortion, we increased our

impact. It was then that opposing forces started calling us a "fringe element" in the Church. It was then that the poem shifted for me.

I was being seen as the leading edge of fringe that should be snipped off. It was then that I realized that this poem and our immigration policy are about a false dichotomy between them and us. Justice demands that we embrace all of reality, even the inconvenient parts. At times, we are each "inconvenient" reminders of a deeper truth. That is the gift (and curse) of community.

We as a nation need to wake up to the fact that we cannot separate the benefits of a diverse culture from the disquieting reality that we have no modern immigration system to accommodate workers we need in our society. If we are to be true to who we are as a nation, melting pot or salad bowl, we must reform our immigration system in order to revel in the beauty of the whole. This is a faith response to a cultural challenge. We need to act now so that the beauty of the whole is revealed.

Simone Campbell, SSS, is NETWORK's Executive Director.

Immigration Justice from the Heart



PAMELA BURLEY

One of life's mysteries is how some people who revere the story of the birth, life and Gospel of Jesus can look with disdain, even contempt, at immigrants who come to the U.S. to feed and support their families. Equally puzzling, how can a person of faith exhibit anti-immigrant bigotry when core values of faith systems are love and peace?

Today, groups representing a variety of religious backgrounds are strengthening their bonds as they work together to bring moral values to the immigration debate. In March, more than 700 people from various faith traditions came to Washington for Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD). The theme of the weekend conference was "A Place to Call Home—

Immigrants, Refugees, and Displaced Persons." Among their goals—convince our elected leaders that comprehensive immigration reform is needed this year so that undocumented immigrants can earn lawful residency and citizenship, families can be reunited, and humane border policies can be instituted.

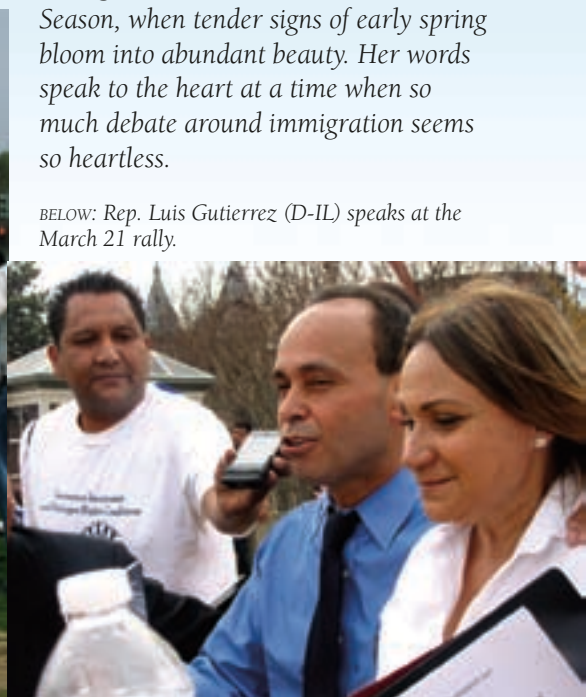
As noted by Cardinal Roger Mahony in a Washington Post op-ed written just before EAD, "We now live in a society that has accepted *de facto* the presence of a permanent underclass in our society, without equal rights or protection under the law. This is a current reality our founding fathers sought arduously to avoid. As a moral matter, we should no longer tolerate a system which preys

upon the vulnerability of our fellow human beings and benefits from their labor, yet fails to guarantee their basic human rights."

For a number of years, people have asked "What would Jesus do?" when confronted with a moral or ethical problem. One need only look at the Gospel message of compassion to answer this question as it relates to immigration.

Bishop Minerva G. Carcaño, who presided over the welcome and opening worship service at EAD, provided a moving look at the inhumane treatment of an immigrant giving birth during an earlier homily about the birth of Jesus and the meaning of compassion. With her permission, we reprint a slightly abbreviated version of the homily here during this holy Easter and Pentecost Season, when tender signs of early spring bloom into abundant beauty. Her words speak to the heart at a time when so much debate around immigration seems so heartless.

Photos taken at pro-immigration reform march on the National Mall on March 21 by Marge Clark, BVM.



BELOW: Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D-IL) speaks at the March 21 rally.



EUGENE CHOI

Homily

LUKE 2:1-20 | But What Does it Mean?

BY BISHOP MINERVA G. CARCANO

What a wonderful and lovely story the Christmas story is. As Christians we believe that the story is true; that on one splendid and wonder-filled night a virgin gave birth to a baby, that angels sang glorious songs of praise to God for the birth of this child of God, that shepherds witnessed all of it, that an Eastern star shone brightly in the midnight sky as a bright sign that God had appeared among mortals. To this day, we believe that the glorious story of Christmas day is true and faithful. So we celebrate with carols and special worship services, with gift-giving and merry-making. But what does it mean?

What does it mean to you and me and to the world that God sent Jesus to be born among us for our salvation—the very Son of God, whose name is Emmanuel—God is with us. What does it all mean? The Gospel story accord-

ing to Luke proclaims that it means that there is a God: a loving God, a God in whom we find our strength and hope. A God who brings joy and peace to our lives for he is Emmanuel, God, who is with us!

It means all of this and so much more!

Living in a time of economic recession gives us just the right lens through which to see and know what this means. Good things can come from little to nothing! It was in a manger, a trough for feeding animals, that the newborn babe was laid. For Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus there was nothing more than that for them; no sanitized hospital, or specially prepared delivery room with warm blankets ready to receive the tender baby as it arrived to the world, or drugs for the pain of childbirth, or steak and champagne dinner for the proud

parents with newspaper announcements and cigars with blue bands!

It was in a cold, dark, stinking manger, among restless barn animals, that the Christ Child was born. But it was enough—enough to get the angels singing, and the shepherds moving, and all of creation stirring, for God had arrived! This means that even in the worst of times and the worst of life's places, God can appear with the fullness of love and joy! I can give witness to this for in the worst of times and worst of life's places I experienced the fullness of divine love and even joy.

It was Christmas Eve, a night for joy and expectant hope. On that night I had great joy and more than an expectant heart. I was with child halfway to that child's birth. I found myself identifying with Mary and feeling no small degree of concern for her, but I knew the outcome

of her pregnancy and it brought me joy! What I did not know was that the joy of my own pregnancy would be cut short, at least for a time. By Christmas morn I had lost my child. Through the pain of a suffering body and a breaking heart I remember thinking, "But this is a night for babies to be born and not to die." But death would not have the last word on that night!

I remember being in so much anguish, having gone through the experience of a miscarriage once before, that my soul lost its voice. I had to depend on others to speak for me. Through the words of the Psalmist I cried out to God, more to mask the reality of the moment than because I expected anything to come out differently. But to my amazement, it was a much different night than I expected.

At one point I found myself all alone in the surgical room, a cold cavernous room of stainless steel. I have never felt more alone or more abandoned, but at the very moment of my deepest despair I heard God's own voice. It was on the lips of a woman who spoke my name with such familiarity that it startled me. As she came close to the hospital bed where I lay, I realized that I knew her. She was a member of one of the churches that I superintended, and a nurse. She came close to me, stroking my forehead with such love that all the tears I had been holding back came flowing down my cheeks. She told me with gentle but convincing words that all would be well, and then she prayed for me. I have never slept better. Some would assume that it was the anesthesia, but I know it was the prayer and God's own presence.

The next thing I remember came through the fog of the anesthesia, another kind woman speaking to me with love and care. She was telling me that she was changing my bloody hospital gown, but she said so much more. She told me her children loved me. She was another member of the same church the first nurse attended, a church where I often preached and always cared for the children's time when I did. As she spoke more to me I realized her three children always came forward for children's time and sat closest to me. It was a moment



Bishop Carcaño at the Methodist General Conference.

of true grace, a mother of three lovingly sharing her children with me, a barren woman.

Two weeks later, feeling better, I visited that church. I wanted to thank God and those two women who had been present for me on Christmas Eve.

Right after worship, the first nurse came to me inquiring about my health and then sharing a word of mighty good news. She told me that she had not been scheduled to work that Christmas Eve, but when the call had come for her to fill a vacancy on that very night she had felt something stir within her and had gone. She said to me with a great big smile and a hug, "I know God was calling me so that I could be there for you." That woman's name is Joy, and joy she brought!

I left her side after thanking her profusely and, like Mary, pondering what she had just said to me, when I came upon the other nurse with her three children in tow. She told the children that it was alright to hug me and they encircled me with hugs and giggles as their mother repeated the very words I had just heard—she had not planned to work on Christmas Eve, but when the shift calendar had come asking for persons to work on Christmas Eve, something nudged her to sign up. "It was God," she said, who had nudged her. "I am so glad that I was able to be there for you," she said as

she joined her children in hugging me. My heart overflowed with a thankfulness beyond description.

Sometimes others need to tell us, but the faithful word is that God is with us! I believe that! Not because I am a bishop of the church, but because I too have been brought from death to life by God's own loving presence! And so I say to you, my brothers and my sisters, God is with you, embracing you with the fullness of God's own love! Do not doubt and do not be afraid.

It was through that Christmas Eve that I came to a deeper understanding of what it means to fear not. Throughout Advent we heard these words, "Fear not..." The angel said them to Zechariah: "Fear not!" Then said them to Mary: "Fear not!" Multitudes of angels said them to the shepherds living in the fields keeping watch over their flock by night: "Fear not!" And the words are said to us: "Fear not, for unto us a Savior, the Messiah, the Lord is born!" We fear not, for God is with us especially in the worst of times and the worst of life's places.

What I've also come to know over the years is that fear subsides in an extraordinary way, like when the shepherds who, having seen the Christ Child lying in a manger as the angels had told them, went with haste to tell others, glorifying and praising God as they went for all they had heard and seen.

I have recently joined others in sharing prayers and presence with a woman who just had a baby. Sharing with her banishes all fear from my heart as I pray, makes her fear subside as well in the clear assurance that God is with her too.

She spent Advent sitting at Estrella Jail with the exception of a few days, which she spent at a hospital. I can't begin to imagine sitting in jail on Star Night even if the jail is named Star! Detained by Sheriff Joe Arpaio's deputies under suspicion that she is undocumented, she suffered indignity, cruelty and inhumanity that no one should ever have to suffer.

She was pregnant, expecting her baby to be born on January the 4th, but the baby came early, perhaps as a result of the trauma in her life. She was taken to a local hospital and there allowed to have her baby, who came by caesarian section. But the condition for this privilege was to be shackled to her bed. Her feet and hands were shackled to the surgical bed as the doctors sliced open her belly to save her baby. It does not take any medical expertise to know that a woman under such circumstances is not going to run!

When her baby was born, she was not allowed to even touch that precious baby, much less hold it. Why would this be done? To intimidate and humiliate an immigrant population that lives and serves you and me, and to show who is the boss! But this earthly boss is not the boss of God!

God is God of justice and peace, who forgets no one. The prophet Isaiah is so very right. We walk in darkness, but we have seen a great light; we live in a land of deep darkness, but upon us has shone the light of ages!

When Jesus was born, God came breaking the yoke of those who are burdened, removing the bar from across their shoulders and the rod of their oppressor.

We know this mighty God of justice and peace in a child born for us. He is the boss, and his authority shall grow

continually, and there shall be endless peace as he establishes his justice and his righteousness among us (Isaiah 9:2-7).

God is in charge of the world and we can believe God's faithful promises. "Fear not," our marvelous God says, "for I am with you. Be not dismayed for I am your God. I will help you; I will strengthen you; I will uphold you with the right hand of my righteousness... Do



not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall wear... Cast all your fears on God because God cares for you ... The Lord is our light and our Salvation; whom shall we fear? The Lord is the stronghold of our life, of whom shall we be afraid?" The message is that we do not have to live in fear. God of justice is with us!

This holy word of God's persistent love and righteousness is the heart of this, and it does bring great joy unto us and all the world. It is not a superficial joy, however, present for a night and then gone. It is the abiding joy of those who choose to live under the justice and righteousness of God, our God of mercy. I pray for Sheriff Joe Arpaio, for he shows no sign of knowing the

boundaries of just law, much less the joy of God's mercy.

I confess to you that I took great delight in an *Arizona Republic* editorial cartoon. In the cartoon we see Santa Claus with Sheriff Joe Arpaio on his knee. Santa looks at Sheriff Joe somberly as he says to him, "You've been bad." To which Sheriff Joe responds, "You're under arrest." I'm praying for Sheriff Arpaio and for all of us.

But I also pray for myself, for I know that I am called to love even Sheriff Joe Arpaio if I am to know the joy of God's mercy. I trust that some day soon Sheriff Arpaio and I will be at peace with each other and with God. I trust that the moment of peace will come for us and all the world not because of our hearts or our wisdom or abilities, but because of our Lord and Savior, our good Shepherd who will lead us all to that peace that passeth all understanding. The prophet Micah makes it so abundantly clear: the Messiah himself shall stand and shepherd us, his flock, in the strength of the Lord, and he shall be our peace (Micah 5:4-5). On this good word we can place our hope.

What does it all mean? It means that the time is now. God's love, and joy and peace and hope are here! God's glory is upon us! The Messiah, the Savior, the Lord is with us! Thanks be to God!

In 2004, Bishop Minerva G. Carcaño, originally from Edinburg, Texas, became the first Hispanic woman elected to the episcopacy of the United Methodist Church. She currently serves as Bishop of the Phoenix Episcopal Area, Desert Southwest Conference of the United Methodist Church, and is the official spokesperson for the Council of Bishops on the issue of immigration. Joe Arpaio, whom she mentions in the homily, is a controversial Arizona sheriff who has targeted undocumented immigrants and has been investigated for racial profiling and abuse of power. More information about Bishop Carcaño's ministry can be found at www.desertsouthwestconference.org.

History! And NETWORK Helped Make It Happen

BY MARGE CLARK, BVM, STEPHANIE NIEDRINGHAUS AND DAVID GOLEMBOSKI

In a vote that will appear in future history books, Congress finally passed health-care reform legislation on March 21 after decades of attempts. The final vote in the House of Representatives was 219–212, with no Republicans voting in favor. President Obama signed the bill into law on March 23. Because NETWORK had played a key role in passing the legislation, we were invited to be present in the House galleries for the final vote, and at the signing ceremony.

NETWORK members and lobbyists had worked tirelessly for increased access to healthcare since our founding in the 1970s. Early in the Clinton Administration, NETWORK Lobbyist Catherine Pinkerton, CSJ, worked with First Lady Hillary Clinton to reform healthcare, and she continued her advocacy efforts with Senator Edward Kennedy. Along the way, NETWORK members flooded Congress with tens of thousands of messages and personal visits as they pushed for healthcare for all.

The final weeks before passage were a time of intense lobbying, both for and against. NETWORK members continued to press their elected officials for a yes vote. On March 15, NETWORK strongly affirmed Sister Carol Keehan, President and CEO of the Catholic Health Association, when she wrote that she supported passing the bill. A few days later, NETWORK Executive Director Simone Campbell, SSS, circulated a letter urging passage that was signed by the president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious and other prominent leaders of religious congregations. The effect on Congress in the final days

of the debate was immediate. According to *The Washington Post*: “The nuns’ announcement is expected to resonate among a clutch of House Democrats who voted for a health-care bill last fall but have raised objections to abortion provisions in the Senate measure, which the House must approve as part of a final compromise.” Major media outlets from around the world carried stories about us, with the *The Times* of London praising the “eloquent lobby of nuns” that supported the bill.

After passing the main bill, the House approved a second bill (H.R. 4872) that increased subsidies to help individuals buy insurance and raised certain taxes and fees to help pay for the expanded coverage. The Senate passed the new version, and the House cleared it.

Members of Congress, along with President Obama and Vice President Biden, were effusive in their gratitude for the role the Catholic sisters and NETWORK members had played in passing the historic legislation.

Budget

The president presented his budget request in early February. NETWORK noted with dismay the three-year freeze in non-security discretionary spending. This is not an across-the-board freeze, however. Some programs would be enhanced, others cut, and some eliminated.

Non-security discretionary spending is such a small part of the entire budget that the savings are minimally significant. There would be far more savings in freezing non-combat-related elements of the military budget, particularly pro-



ARTHUR KWIATKOWSKI

grams not requested by the Pentagon, such as the C-17 cargo plane. House and the Senate budget resolutions are due to be filed by mid-April. We have some concern that they may forego resolutions, relying instead on the structure of the FY 2010 budget as a guide to appropriations. NETWORK would be disappointed were this to occur, as it would limit the ability to increase critical underfunded areas.

Unemployment Insurance

Almost one in ten people lack jobs and many of those working are underemployed. Meanwhile, the percentage of “long-term” unemployed accelerates. As *Connection* goes to press, many people are scheduled to lose benefits on April 5, when the current unemployment insurance extension runs out, since one senator blocked further action. (To get state information about who would lose benefits on April 5, see <http://www.nelp.org/page/-/UI/NELP.april.2010.exhaustions.pdf?nocdn=1>)

Housing

The National Housing Trust Fund (NHTF), authorized in 2008, is still unfunded. The president included \$1 billion for the fund in his budget request for FY 2011, plus \$65 million for additional vouchers. Champions in the House and the Senate are struggling to provide acceptable funding sources. Given the increased number of homeless families, passage of this funding is urgent.



Need up-to-date information about legislation in Congress? Check out NETWORK's Legislative Action Center at

<http://capwiz.com/networklobby/issues/bills/>. ★ To learn what happened to legislation you followed in the past, go to <http://capwiz.com/networklobby/issues/votes/> and enter your zip code in the “Key Votes” field.

The NHTF will create jobs for workers with a broad range of skill and experience levels, particularly youth and those with limited skills. NETWORK thanked the Congressional Black Caucus for its letter urging Speaker Pelosi to make this an immediate priority. NETWORK continues to work for funding.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

As its September 30 expiration date gets closer, we have worked to extend the TANF Emergency Contingency Fund (ECF). A provision of the Recovery Act, the TANF ECF provides funding for states to start subsidized jobs programs, and also helps them pay basic cash assistance. The TANF ECF is important to many low-income families and is a job creation tool. The House recently approved an extension through the end of FY 2011, and we are working hard to get the Senate to also act.



DANIELA ANDREA SPIROPOULOS

Child Nutrition

Reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Programs passed the Senate Agriculture Committee and is moving toward floor action. Additional funding was requested, which would enhance programs such as WIC and summer food programs. More attention needs to be given to simplifying enrollment and reaching out to expand the number of children who will benefit. NETWORK continues to work for the needed improvements.



BRANDY TAYLOR

Trade

NETWORK is working with the Interfaith Working Group (IWG) on Trade & Investment to increase support for the TRADE Act (H.R. 3012, S. 2821). As of this writing, 137 members of the House have cosponsored the bill, sending a strong message that failed trade policies of the past must end.

In mid-March, the Obama Administration entered initial negotiations for the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Free Trade Agreement, which would include eight nations in the Pacific Rim region. The IWG wrote to the president and U.S. Trade Representative, urging that any TPP agreement live up to the standards expressed in the TRADE Act.

Immigration

Senators Charles Schumer (D-NY) and Lindsey Graham (R-SC) are working on bipartisan legislation to reform current immigration policies that includes, in their words, “a tough but fair path to legalization for those already here.” NETWORK

will monitor legislative developments and do all that we can to promote comprehensive, fair and humane reform.

Civility Still an Issue

It has become increasingly obvious that the last *Connection*, “Civility and the Common Good,” was very timely. The healthcare reform vote came at the cost of loss of civility in many quarters, with ugly, personal attacks launched toward many who stood up for their beliefs. Partisanship over citizenship continues to spill over from the healthcare debate to all areas affecting economic equity. It is long past time for a change.

Marge Clark, BVM, is a NETWORK lobbyist. Stephanie Niedringhaus is NETWORK's Communications Coordinator. David Golemboski is NETWORK's Field Associate.

TANF Reauthorization an Opportunity for Improvement

By AMY JOHNSON

With TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) coming up for reauthorization this year, NETWORK has begun an in-depth research project to track its progress and provide recommendations for improvement in the upcoming legislation.

In 2001, as a response to the 1996 welfare reform law we conducted surveys at social service organizations across the nation for a report titled *WELFARE REFORM: How Do We Define Success?* The report influenced legislation and provided a useful guide for Congress as they evaluated the TANF program. We are preparing a new report in this reauthorization cycle to document strengths and weaknesses of current TANF programs.

Alongside important research on how states administer their TANF block grants, we are conducting a new survey that will direct our findings. Partnering again with social service agencies that support low-income families, we have begun to gather information from agency administrators and those impacted by TANF policies. Our hope is to learn from those who receive or may be eligible for TANF benefits about their personal experience with the program, especially during the economic recession. While other safety net programs have expanded during recent years, TANF support has increased at a smaller rate, and our investigations will help to shed light on how we can strengthen the program to help families most in need.

If you can recommend social service agencies that may be willing to partner with us in administering our brief and anonymous survey, please contact me at ajohnson@networklobby.org.

Amy Johnson is a Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellow working on the TANF research project at NETWORK.

Want timely information about key issues in Congress? NETWORK members can sign up for our weekly email legislative hotline. Send your name, zip code and email address to jsammon@networklobby.org.

The Complexity of Immigration

By MAGDA LANUZA

Massive immigration is a highly complex issue and has various implications in Central America. The majority of immigrants coming to the United States are not among the poorest in their home countries, because the costs of traveling are too high for the most destitute. Many have some level of education, and most of them fall in the low end of the middle class. This is why we find a teacher from Guatemala picking strawberries in California. He is party to a perverse exchange: he is paid much more money for an unskilled job outside of his country, but he will be paid as an illegal immigrant.

Early 1990s peace accords in Central American countries did not solve the problems of poverty and inequality. During the past two decades, various forms of exclusion have widened the gap between the rich and the poor. This income gap and the policies that create inequality account for the conditions that force people to leave their home countries.

Central America: Exporting Human Resources

In Central America during the 1980s and early '90s, the factors driving immigration were obvious, given the military conflicts we experienced. It was a matter of life and death, as many people fled their home countries to secure their survival outside. However, we expected that peace settlements would halt the trend of massive migration. This did not happen, and migration continued even as the primary reasons changed.

Migration became a matter of economic options. People had no jobs—or poorly paid jobs—and the gap between rich and poor widened. There are no exact figures of how many people are constantly moving, as most migrate illegally, and even many of those migrating legally decide to overstay their visas. However, authorities calculate that there are around three million Central Americans in the United States. El Salvador is in first place with nearly two million people, then Guatemala, followed by

The new border fence between El Paso, Texas and Juarez, Mexico.

Honduras and, last, Nicaragua. By 2005, 1.3 million Central Americans had obtained legal resident status.

The Experience through Mexico

Traveling illegally to the United States through Mexico is both dangerous and extremely expensive. It can cost a person \$4,000 to \$9,000 (U.S. dollars), depending on the place of origin and the route taken. Ninety-nine percent of these migrants pass through Mexico. According to 2009 figures, over 5,000 Salvadorians have died or disappeared on their way to the United States. Mexico has worked to make migration difficult, hampering the work of Mexican human rights organizations to assist with immigrants. Every day, Mexico deports over 200 Salvadorians. The situation has worsened since 1994, when Mexico implemented Operation Gatekeeper, the goal of which was to protect the U.S. border with Mexico.

Main Causes

External Debts with Their Related Conditionalities, Trade Liberalization (CAFTA,) and Cuts in International Aid

For many reasons, national governments have not been allowed to truly invest in human development. There are three clear factors directly linked to the international policymaking that significantly restrained the administration of resources and national economic sovereignty. These are: external debt, trade liberalization, and international aid.

External debt has been used by international financial institutions (IFIs) as a political mechanism to impose the “Washington consensus”—a program of economic liberalization. In Central America, Honduras and Nicaragua provide clear examples. These two countries took on the long-term process of poverty alleviation through macroeconomic policies. The expected results did not occur, even though they took the prescribed steps. Huge cuts were made to social investments (such as health and education), all in the name of alleviating poverty. Both countries remain the most impoverished in the region. They continue to bear the burden of debt repayment, even for debts linked to the civil wars and destructive projects such as the Chixoy Dam in Guatemala. Today, our economies are highly dependent and continue to subsist on international loans. As of this March, the IMF had granted \$790 million to El Salvador and \$735 million to Costa Rica. At the same time, Nicaragua’s external debt measured \$3.5 billion, while Guatemala’s debt has risen to \$4.9 billion.

Trade liberalization was a process encouraged primarily by international foreign advisors. CAFTA (Central American Free Trade Agreement, also known as CAFTA–DR, or U.S.–Dominican Republic–Central America Free Trade Agreement) offered the opportunity to trade with the U.S. and is a prime example. As happened with the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the negative consequences could be seen



ARTURO ENRIQUÉZ



just four months after the implementation of the agreement. In 2005, a group of Salvadorian companies were exporting \$1.8 billion worth of goods to the U.S., but by 2009 they were selling only \$1.7 billion's worth. The winner was the United States, where exports to El Salvador rose from \$2.47 billion to \$2.6 billion in those same years. In 2005, there were 1,374 Salvadorian companies exporting to the U.S., but by 2009 only 377 were left. The job creation promised by CAFTA has not happened. In fact, decreased numbers of people paying social security indicate that jobs have actually been lost.

International aid committed by wealthy nations since 1970 has not been delivered. Forty years ago, an agreement was made that these rich countries should invest 0.7% of their GNP in developing nations (International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade, UN General Assembly Resolution 2626 [XXV]). It was declared that financial and technical assistance should be aimed exclusively at promoting the economic and social progress of developing countries and should not in any way be used by the developed countries to the detriment of the national sovereignty of recipient countries. However, rich nations have consistently failed to

live up to their agreed-upon obligations. Rather than 0.7%, the amount of aid has been between 0.2% and 0.4%—some \$100 billion short. In the case of the U.S., two-thirds of government aid goes to only two countries: Israel and Egypt. Much of the remaining third is used to promote U.S. exports or to fight a “war against drugs” that could only be won by tackling drug abuse in the United States. For poor countries, the little we receive is often tied to policy-driven conditions, or is given in the form of military aid.

How the Situation Could Be Different

Though there are many factors driving massive migration from Central America to the United States and other countries, some factors require particular attention. National governments should have better and more access to economic resources to invest in sustainable development. Rich nations have to review their own commitments to impoverished countries. IFIs should lessen their power relationships over our economies and allow the UN to have a bigger role on economic reconstruction. There must be a review of all the practices of trade liberalization—including CAFTA—as it has been shown that unfair trade is fueling environmental degradation and causing less capacity for national production.

Finally, international aid should be committed with no delays in order to achieve sustainable relationships between rich nations and poor countries. Only when we work for changes in the ways we relate to each other can the world be secure, sustainable and peaceful.

Magda Lanuza, a Nicaraguan-born activist, is the Program Coordinator for Latin America with the Kenoli Foundation and also serves as Latin American facilitator for the Agribusiness Action Initiative. She has worked for more than 14 years on environmental, social and economic justice issues with many different national and international nonprofit organizations, and she holds a Masters degree from Brandeis University. She spoke about the root causes of migration during Ecumenical Advocacy Days.



COURTESY THE AUTHOR

She Came. She Saw. She Conquered... Washington and NETWORK's Heart

BY STEPHANIE NIEDRINGHAUS

Catherine Pinkerton, CSJ, tells everyone that her father first instilled in her a passion for social justice during the Depression. From him she learned the necessity of helping others and that nobody has a right to live a life of excess when others are suffering in poverty.

She carried that lesson through decades of activism and education for justice until she arrived at NETWORK more than a quarter century ago. Since then, she has become a legendary lobbyist in official Washington and a renowned justice educator in communities across the land.

And now, we at NETWORK must bid her a sad good-bye as she returns to her beloved Cleveland to begin a new ministry.

Awards and Star Power

It is impossible to describe the impact Catherine has had in the space of one

page. Suffice it to say that her accomplishments have included the presidencies of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), National Assembly of Women Religious, Sisters' Senate of Cleveland, and her Congregation of St. Joseph in Cleveland. Along the way, she also received an honorary doctorate from the College of Our Lady of the Elms, the 2006 Outstanding LCWR Leadership Award, which called her "a Leader, Advocate, Prophet, Teacher, Sage, Sister and Friend," and induction into the Ohio Women's Hall of Fame.

Her image and words have appeared in an enormous array of news media, starting with newspapers and magazines and culminating in Internet appearances on YouTube, including her much-viewed benediction delivered at the 2008 Democratic Convention in Denver. One early reporter called her "Our Lady of the

Hill." As noted by her friend and former colleague Kathleen Phelan, OP, this was "a nickname used in many a teasing moment, but whispered with great respect. 'Our Lady's passing by.'"

In Washington, Catherine earned the esteem and friendship of political greats. Her friends included the Clintons (she worked with then First Lady Hillary Clinton on healthcare), Representative Marcy Kaptur (a close friend to this day), the Kennedy family, Senator Paul Wellstone, and a long list of other Hill and administration favorites.

Celebrating Catherine

Many Washington friends and admirers joined NETWORK staffers to honor Catherine in February. Among them were Marian Wright Edelman of the Children's Defense Fund, columnist/TV commentator EJ Dionne, Rep. Marcy

Kaptur, White House and congressional officials, leaders of numerous nonprofit and advocacy organizations, and former NETWORK staff and Board members. The tributes and gifts were plentiful, with Board Member Donna Korba, IHM, presenting a lovely poem in her honor.

A Passionate Heart

We at NETWORK have been honored and blessed by Catherine's presence for more than 25 years, and we are grateful for the many powerful gifts she has shared with us. Above all, we thank God for Catherine's passionate and loving heart, which has touched us all.

Stephanie Niedringhaus is NETWORK's Communications Coordinator.

TOP LEFT: Catherine with friends and admirers at her party (l to r): John Kelly, Obama Administration; Cody Fischer, former NETWORK Associate, now with The Alliance to End Hunger; Kate Byrne, former NETWORK Associate, now working for U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur; Catherine; U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur; and Obama Administration members Alexia Kelley, Mara Vanderslice and Mark Linton. TOP RIGHT: Catherine with President Obama; BOTTOM RIGHT: with journalist EJ Dionne and Nancy Conway, CSJ; and with President Clinton.



Take Action on Immigration Reform!

The Catholic Church believes that the current U.S. immigration system is broken and needs to be reformed in all aspects, or, comprehensively. This would include a path to citizenship for the 11–12 million undocumented in the country; a temporary worker program to allow migrant workers to enter safely and humanely; and family-based immigration reform which allows families to be reunited more quickly. The Church also teaches that the root causes of migration—namely, global economic disparities—need to be addressed.

—JUSTICE FOR IMMIGRANTS, U.S. CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

Here's what you can do to promote immigration reform:

1. Sharing your experience with others will make your action more effective.

- Reach out to individuals in your “circles” with an interest in immigration, a stake in the solution, or experience organizing and advocating.
- Consider partnering with members of nearby parishes, organizations or communities to promote immigration reform.
- National advocacy groups like Justice for Immigrants can provide background materials, organizing resources, and connections to other local advocates.

2. Think outside the box when it comes to meaningful political advocacy.

Be creative and incorporate your interests and passion into your planned action. For example, organize an exhibit featuring photos from the U.S./Mexican border, tell the stories of migrant workers in a skit or play, or organize a walk in support of immigration reform. Set up a display at the farmers market to draw attention to the plight of temporary agricultural workers. Invite immigrant children to speak at a school board meeting to highlight the need for the DREAM Act.

3. Finally, once everything's in place, don't forget to invite local, state and federal officials, as well as the media!

Have fun, take pictures, and report back to us at NETWORK on how it all goes!

Our task will not be an easy one, as the present political culture does not lend itself to addressing controversial yet urgent issues such as immigration. Our cause, however, is right and true, not only for millions of immigrants in our country, but for the welfare of the nation.

—CARDINAL ROGER MAHONY,
3/19/2010

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Quick Facts

Comprehensive immigration reform helps families and strengthens communities.

PROBLEM: Approximately five million American children live with at least one undocumented parent.

SOLUTION: Require undocumented individuals to come forward and register with the government, pass a background check, pay fines and back taxes, and demonstrate proficiency in English. Upon completing this process, they could work and live legally in this country, and eventually apply for permanent residency and full citizenship.

Comprehensive immigration reform helps workers.

PROBLEM: Workers in New York, Chicago and Los Angeles have lost \$56.4 million/week due to labor law violations. U.S. and immigrant workers suffer when immigration enforcement trumps labor rights.

SOLUTION: Protect U.S. and immigrant workers by informing people of existing labor protection policies, and increasing penalties for employers who break the law.

Comprehensive immigration reform addresses demand.

PROBLEM: Our current system allows approximately 5,000 annual visas to low-skilled laborers. Yet, estimated annual demand for these workers runs close to 500,000.

SOLUTION: Create flexible channels for future legal immigration that allow more foreign workers into the U.S. during strong economic times.

Comprehensive immigration reform helps the economy.

PROBLEM: A shrinking U.S. workforce and increased congressional spending have created high government deficits.

SOLUTION: Legalizing the millions of undocumented workers in our economy would compel them and their employers to contribute payroll and income taxes, generating more than a trillion dollars in tax revenues.

Last but not least, comprehensive immigration reform will allow us to maintain our heritage as a vibrant nation of diversity and strength!



JORGE SALCEDO

Written by NETWORK Associates Meghan Tighe and Sarah Carey

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Time for Change

BY JEAN SAMMON

March 21 was a beautiful spring day on the National Mall in Washington, where 200,000 people from all over the country gathered to call for changes to our nation's immigration laws. The crowd included about 700 people who had come to Washington a few days earlier to participate in this year's Ecumenical Advocacy Days conference, the theme of which was immigration justice.

As I experienced the joyful, peaceful rally on the Mall, and as I talked with the advocates at the conference, it seemed to me that the stars were aligned to create powerful changes in Washington. (The historic vote on healthcare reform happened on that same day.) But we know that change comes as part of a long process of building political will, and that process must occur in places all across America. The good news is that it is happening.

A Texas Story

I recently talked with Margaret Gomez, a county commissioner in Travis County, Texas, about how people are creating change in that area. Margaret is a long-time NETWORK member who works with supporters of immigrants, including the Catholic Diocese of Austin and government officials, to help immigrant workers and their families. As an elected official, she is invited to speak at public meetings about the experiences and rights of immigrants. She is especially concerned about what happens to children when their parents are detained and deported, and is trying to raise awareness about the need for legal guardians for these children.

When the county sheriff provided a local office for federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials, the community protested. Margaret was able to hold a public discussion about the issue. Many in the community feel that local law-enforcement officials shouldn't have to do the job of federal officials, and that the lack of sensible immigration policies at the federal level has led to local conflicts and practices that are harmful to immigrants and to the community. Fear of ICE may also contribute to immigrants' fear of participation in the Census, which is important for the community.



ABOVE LEFT: Participants of the Texas Convention on Immigration Integration, "A Call for Reform," February 20, 2010 at Austin's Travis County Expo Center. The County Commissioners Court waived the fee for the well-attended convention. ABOVE RIGHT: County Commissioner and NETWORK member Margaret Gomez. BELOW: Some of the coalition leaders.

A coalition of groups of immigrants and their supporters in the Austin area sent representatives to the rally in Washington. They are trying to convince Members of Congress that comprehensive reform of our nation's immigration policies will benefit everyone. They also advocate at the local and federal levels for services for immigrants. They say it should not be controversial to spend public money on immigrants when it is not controversial to take their money through taxes and fees for services such as vehicle registrations. And if the government wants to count everyone in order to allocate federal money, why should it exclude anyone when it comes to spending that money?

Margaret and others in her community see that immigrants challenge the rest of us to be better citizens. They ask, "Why don't you vote?" "Why don't you

have a better education?" "Why don't we have better jobs?" And in her experience with her own family and other immigrant families, Margaret sees a thrifty culture that encourages saving money for a down payment on a home and education for children.

As time goes by, Margaret sees that the local community seems to grow more supportive of immigrants than they were in the past. This, she thinks, is due to the groups who have been educating people about immigration and promoting more understanding about the issue.

This is only one example of what is going on in communities across our nation, moving our country toward our highest values and ideals of justice for all. *It gives me hope that change is gonna come!*

Jean Sammon is NETWORK's Field Coordinator.

“NETWORK’s witness is a beacon. Always on the cutting edge of the issues facing society today, NETWORK continues to contribute their wisdom and advocacy in ways that transform both church and society.”

—Bishop Walter F. Sullivan,
Bishop Emeritus of Richmond

NETWORK

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NETWORK helped make history in the healthcare debate, and the world noticed!

News stories about our work appeared in Italy, Spain, France, Canada, Switzerland and the U.K., where the BBC carried interviews with Sister Simone Campbell, our Executive Director, and *The Times* of London made note of the “eloquent lobby of nuns” that came out in support of healthcare coverage for millions of people.

Congress and the White House also thanked us for our work, which many said helped tip the balance of votes toward healthcare reform.

Ironically, this all comes at a time when we struggle to pay our bills.

We have already had to lay off staff, even as our workload and impact increase. If you appreciate NETWORK’s leadership, please make a contribution to help us keep our doors open. We need your support now more than ever!

Here is how you can help.

- Go to NETWORK’s Web site (www.networklobby.org) and click on our “Donate” button (<https://secure.groundspring.org/dn/index.php?aid=20530>)
- Pull out the envelope in the middle of this magazine and send us a contribution.
- Spread the word to people you know so that they, too, can invest in our mission of justice for all.

THANK YOU!

Two messages among *many* that were sent to us in recent weeks:

“Thank you for your support of health care improvement. God bless you and give you the strength to continue your good work.”

“Know that millions of Americans thank you for your work in getting this most important endeavor into law.”

“The bottom line is always the same for me: NETWORK is the Catholic heart in the public arena...”

—Sister Joan Chittister, OSB

