

LIVING OUR FAITH at St Philip Neri

June 2003 Volume 1 Issue I

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Living Our Faith*, a periodic publication of the St. Philip Neri Peace & Justice Commission. We hope to use this newsletter to provide information about what our community is doing to carry the values of our faith into the world around us.

"Many Catholics do not understand that the social teaching of the Church is an essential part of Catholic faith." –U.S Bishops 1998 article "Sharing Catholic Social Teaching"

Catholic social teaching is a rich treasure of wisdom about living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of modern society. It represents the rising social consciousness and concern in the church as it searches for more just and sustainable ways for the peoples of the earth to live together in peace.

In 1891, Pope Leo XIII began the tradition of official Catholic Social Teaching with his encyclical letter, *Rerum Novarum*. Since then, our tradition has grown to include these major themes:

- Life & Dignity of the Human Person
- Call to Family, Community & Participation
- Rights & Responsibilities
- Option for the Poor & Vulnerable
- Dignity of Work & the Rights of Workers
- Solidarity
- Care of God's Creation

Look for the next issue of *Living our Faith* for an introduction to the theme of Life & Dignity of the Human Person.



**June is
Hunger
Awareness
Month**

Jesus . . . had compassion for them . . . Jesus said to [the disciples]. "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." And he said, "Bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled." *Matthew 14:14, 16-21*

"Feed the hungry, help the needy" is a clear directive of our faith tradition. Helping those in need was at the core of Jesus' ministry on earth. In our parish, one way that we help our neighbors who are in need is through our Food Basket ministry. We have over 30 parishioners who have volunteered to provide food baskets to people in our neighborhood who are hungry and in need of food.

The program is organized through the St. Vincent DePaul Society, who act as a clearinghouse for food and emergency requests throughout the city. When one of our neighbors in the Hosford-Abernathy community calls, St. Vincent's takes their request and directs it to our parish office. Our Food Basket organizers, Genie Huffine and Cecelia Guinee, take that request and call one of the volunteers to fill it. The volunteers use the food we collect in our Food Pantry, supplement the canned and dry goods with some meat, fresh fruit and dairy products, and deliver the food to our neighbors. In a typical month, the parish receives between ten to twenty requests for help. Most volunteers agree that it is both a humbling and satisfying experience. It makes us more aware and thankful for the bounty we enjoy and often take for granted, and it makes a real difference in the life of our neighbors who are in difficult situations.

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(Food Basket continued)

You can help this ministry in two ways. First, continue to contribute food and money to our Food Pantry. Donated food is the well that we draw from as we fill the bags for our hungry neighbors. Cash donations go to buy the fruit, meat and dairy products that we buy for each request. Secondly, if you would like to be more directly involved, become a volunteer. After we train you, each request requires about an hour, usually once a month at most. If you are interested in helping, leave word with the parish office. Cecelia or Genie will call you, answer your questions and arrange a time to train you if you choose to become a Food Basket volunteer.

Did you know that 33 million people, including 13 million children, experience hunger in the US? The Peace & Justice Commission has gathered information about the hunger problem in Oregon and the world. Just stop by our bulletin board in the foyer.

Prayer for Social Justice

Pope Pius XII

Almighty and eternal God,
may your grace enkindle in all persons
a love of the many unfortunate people
whom poverty and misery reduce
to a condition of life
unworthy of human beings.

Arouse in the hearts of those who call you God a
hunger and thirst for social justice
and for fraternal charity
in deeds and in truth.

Grant, O Lord, peace in our days,
peace to souls, peace to our community
and peace among nations.

Amen.

Metropolitan Alliance for the Common Good

What is MACG? The Metropolitan Alliance for the Common Good (MACG) is a coalition of more than 35 civic institutions that have joined together to promote and reinsert our values and belief in the common good into the political life of our tri-county community. Institutions of the MACG include Catholic parishes, many Protestant congregations, Jewish temples, labor unions and community based non-profit organizations.

Why is St. Philip Neri involved with this organization?

St. Philip's has a strong tradition of taking our faith and Catholic values into the day to day life of our community. We have many ministries that reach out to the immediate needs of our neighbors. But it is also vitally important to address the structures that create or exacerbate the pain and injustices which many of our neighbors experience. MACG offers our parish a very effective means to use our values to influence the decisions that shape our community's life.

It is MACG's purpose to strengthen our civic institutions, and give us an active voice in the discussions with the government and market sectors that effect us and our families' lives. As part of the Catholic caucus, our goal is to insert our Christian beliefs of compassion, equity and stewardship of our natural resources into the decisions that directly affect our lives in the Portland Metro area. It is a chance for us to live our beliefs.

What can you do? Join us. We are a volunteer effort, looking for new leadership and support. Take part in a basic institute, which is the first step in participating in the organization. Attend our educational events, which will be focussed on **sustainable jobs and economy, affordable housing, health care access, and public education**. Become a member of one of the working groups focused on these issues, and make a difference in the life of our community here in Portland. Also, look for reports and information on MACG in future issues of this newsletter

If you are interested, or have any questions regarding MACG or opportunities to participate as a representative of our parish, leave your name with the parish office. One of our core team members will contact you to answer your question.