

LIVING OUT OUR EUCHARISTIC MISSION

BY JILL RAUH, UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS
JUSTICE, PEACE AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT STAFF

In the new edition of the *Roman Missal* that will be used in English-speaking parishes starting in late November, we will hear two new phrases that may be used at the Dismissal: “Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord,” and “Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.”

For Catholics involved in the good work of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD), these words will describe what many already experience: after gathering and being transformed, we are then sent out to announce the Gospel!

What does it mean to announce the Gospel? Luke 4:18 describes the work that is central to Jesus’ life and ministry, and that continues to inspire Christians: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, / because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. / He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives / and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, / and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.”

This is the same verse that CCHD often uses to describe its own mission for transformation of communities—communities where children are captive, oppressed, or burdened by weak education systems, unsafe neighborhoods, absent

fathers, inadequate nutrition, and systemic racism. Announcing the Gospel involves spiritual transformation; it also involves addressing poverty, overcoming oppression, and working for social transformation.

Celebrating the Eucharist with spiritual sincerity transforms us individually and as members

of a community called to bring love and hope to the person living in poverty, the stranger, the unborn—all those whose dignity is threatened. Participating in the eucharistic celebration also reminds us of the God-given dignity of all people; it inspires people who have been marginalized to reclaim

their dignity and empowers them to fight poverty and injustice.

In *Sacramentum Caritatis*, Pope Benedict XVI reminds us that the “food of truth”—the Eucharist—“demands that we denounce inhumane situations” such as poverty, inequality, and violence (no. 90). The Eucharist also spurs us to imitate Christ’s sacrifice through our own “self-gift” to others (no. 14). But the idea that the Eucharist propels us to social mission is not new. In the fourth century, St. John Chrysostom reflected on Matthew 25:31-46: “Do you wish to honor the



PHOTO BY MARIA POPE

(continued on p. 3)

FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends,

“The Eucharist commits us to the poor” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1397).

From coast to coast, the country finds itself trapped in a scorching, unbearable heat. In addition to the sweltering heat of the weather, many of our brothers and sisters find themselves simmering in the troughs of abject poverty, a result of a feeble economy.

These families are caught in a blistering uncertainty that appears nowhere on the radars of any elected bodies. Roasting in unemployment, underemployment, and lack of education, and without a substantial voice, these families turn to a eucharistic people for assistance. A people who share the eucharistic mission of Jesus Christ reach out and assist in making people whole within their communities, allowing them to live up to the dignity God intends for us all.

For over 40 years, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development has responded to the Gospel call by working with communities across the country to enhance the life and dignity of the human person by giving hope to those who feel despair, love to those who feel abandoned, and confidence to those who feel insecure.

Thank you for your generous support.



Ralph McCloud
Director, Catholic Campaign for Human Development

Just FAITH Ministries

Attention JustFaith Graduates!

If learning about the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) invigorated your concern for people in your community who struggle daily to live with dignity, you can respond.

If you have

HALF A DAY OR LESS . . . gather with other JustFaith graduates to plan an outreach/awareness-building activity. Volunteer at a community self-help organization or diocesan program that addresses systemic factors that perpetuate poverty.

TWO HOURS . . . attend a local program to raise awareness of solutions to poverty. Invite others to read an article or view a film about overcoming poverty and discuss it.

ONE HOUR . . . share your Journey to Justice day experience and CCHD education materials with youth, RCIA, or parish leaders. Write to your favorite publication or an elected official about a poverty issue impacting your community.

FIFTEEN MINUTES . . . educate yourself further via www.povertyusa.org and www.usccb.org/jphd. Communicate your concern with someone close to you.

ONLY A MINUTE . . . pray for justice. Plan one action you will take.

Contact Donna Grimes for more information, dgrimes@usccb.org.

break the cycle of poverty

(continued from page 1)



Photo courtesy of BWA

BOSTON WORKERS ALLIANCE MEMBERS GATHER TO CELEBRATE AN OPEN HOUSE AT THEIR OFFICE.

body of Christ? Do not ignore him when he is naked” (*Homilies on the Gospel of Matthew*, 50: 3-4; PG 58, 508-509), and St. Augustine urged us, “Become what you receive” (Sermon 272). More recently, Blessed John Paul II called the Eucharist “the school of active love for neighbor” (*Dominicae Cenaе*, no. 6) and that which “increases, rather than lessens, our sense of responsibility for the world today” (Address, June 26, 2003).

When we participate in the eucharistic celebration, we are empowered to live “eucharistic lives.” What does this mean? Here are some examples:

- In Iowa, churches unite to launch a mobile obstetric clinic so that low-income mothers can access affordable prenatal health care.
- In Boston, community members, including ex-offenders, organize to convince the city to change its hiring procedure to prevent discrimination against the formerly imprisoned.
- On the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation in South Dakota, where 40% of households are below poverty level, an economic development initiative teaches financial literacy and business skills.
- In Omaha, churches work to improve youth programs, relationships between the community and the police, worker safety, and parental involvement in schools.
- In New Mexico, a community wins local control of water so that it can be used sustainably and be available for future generations.

According to Pope Benedict XVI, “a Eucharist which does not pass over into the concrete practice

of love is intrinsically fragmented” (*Deus Caritas Est*, no. 14). These stories from recent issues of the *Helping People Help Themselves* Newsletter are shining examples of the “concrete practice of love” to which we are called. CCHD groups around the country provide a wonderful avenue to live out in love our commitment to live the Eucharist in the world!

So what does the Eucharist have to do with the work of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development? If the Eucharist calls us to build “a more human world, a world fully in harmony with God’s plan” (John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, no. 20), then CCHD offers one way to realize this vision. CCHD provides Catholics and others of good will the opportunity to respond in gratitude to Christ’s love and self-gift by offering ourselves as gift. We do this through participating in CCHD’s action to transform unjust structures, policies, and laws that degrade human life and dignity.

We are all challenged to “become what we receive” by living the Eucharist in the world. Contact your diocesan CCHD director today to explore the possibilities of how you can connect with a local CCHD group and live the Eucharist in your own community.

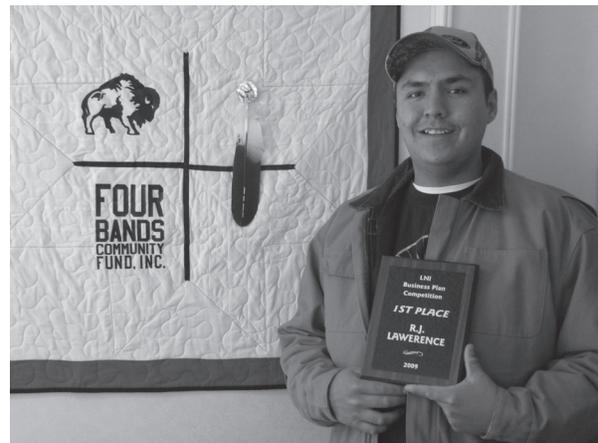
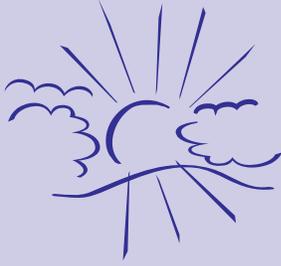


Photo courtesy of Four Bands Community Fund

RANDEL LAWRENCE STARTED HIS LAWN MAINTENANCE BUSINESS WHEN HE WAS JUST SEVEN YEARS OLD. MORE THAN TEN YEARS LATER, HE CREDITS FOUR BANDS’ ENTREPRENEURIAL AND BUSINESS TRAINING FOR HELPING HIM CONTINUE TO SUCCEED.

Learn more about the Eucharist and social mission connection. Visit www.usccb.org/campus/prayer-eucharist.shtml and search “campus prayer” now!



Spotlight on Renewal

The bishops' Subcommittee on CCHD benefits from the wisdom and expertise of seven consultants. **Dr. Richard Wood** was part of the Review and Renewal (R&R) working group and has been a consultant to the Subcommittee on CCHD for four years. He is an associate professor of sociology, founding director of the Southwest Institute on Religion, Culture, and Society, and former director of religious studies at the University of New Mexico. We asked him to share his thoughts on CCHD and the R&R, and he responded:

From your perspective, why is CCHD's work an important ministry of the Catholic Church?

First, without the kind of work that CCHD does, the Body of Christ is not whole. The sacraments and the liturgy (the "heart" of the Church) and the bishops' teaching authority (the "head" of the Church) need "hands and feet" in the world. That is, to be brought concretely into everyday life through CCHD's kind of practical work with poor folks and struggling families.

Along with other ministries, CCHD represents one of the outstanding ways that the Church bears witness to God's love in the world—and in doing that, the Church also can begin to reconstruct how Catholics and non-Catholics alike receive its teaching authority.

How will the Review and Renewal help CCHD do its work more effectively?

CCHD was founded in an era when the Catholic Church's public profile in the United States could be taken for granted. But that's no longer true. So CCHD has further heightened the "Catholic" dimension of all that it does, in part by asking all applicants to learn how to articulate their work priorities in light of Catholic moral and social teaching. CCHD already had good fiscal controls in place, but the bishops further strengthened those, too. And equally important, the R&R process had everyone involved in CCHD reflect more deeply on its work and why it is important. That's helped to build a deeper spiritual commitment to the work.

What Is CCHD?

Through the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), Catholics and friends of CCHD across the country help poor and low-income Americans to help themselves and their communities out of poverty.

Since 1970, the Catholic Campaign has contributed over \$280 million to more than 7,800 low-income-led, community-based projects that strengthen families, create jobs, build affordable housing, fight crime, and improve schools and neighborhoods. CCHD requires that projects develop community leadership and participation so that their solutions to poverty will be long-lasting and effective, and so that CCHD's investment in people will help break the cycle of poverty. CCHD also educates Catholics about the causes of poverty and seeks to build solidarity between impoverished and affluent persons.

Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development/Subcommittee on the Catholic Campaign for Human Development

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Most Reverend Michael P. Driscoll, Bishop of Boise
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