

Catholics for Peace and Justice

March 2012 Newsletter

In this time of hostile politics, we were happy to see the statement from the Wisconsin Council of Churches [see below] calling for the citizens of our state to enter a "[Season of Civility.](#)" This coming Tuesday we again go to the polls to cast our vote. Regardless of the outcome, we still have a choice – to act with hostility or to disagree with dignity in a civil and respectful manner while continuing to work for positive change.

An election issue that is being raised by the USCCB and is bound to be a topic in our faith and politics discussions this election season is the idea of Religious Liberty. We invite you to read the bishops statement [\[information and link below\]](#) then go to the CPJ website to begin a thoughtful and civil dialogue on the topic. While you are there we invite you to read our 2012 election pledge to practice civility.

Finally, we are happy to report that as of noon on Wednesday we are told from one collection source that over 700 signatures had been gathered in nomination of our Sisters of the Milwaukee Archdiocese for the 2012 Vatican II award. Ladies we honor your leadership and your contribution to our community and beyond.

Peace and Blessings on your ministry.



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Action: Global Hunger and the Farm Bill

It may be a little known fact that the Farm Bill establishes and authorizes funding for U.S. international food assistance programs. In particular the Farm Bill authorizes funding for a program called "Food for Peace" which provides food relief for people suffering from natural or manmade disasters and "Safe box" which provides food for persistently hungry people through programs that improve basic sanitation, aid women and their young children, improve agricultural practices and feed children in association with school programs. In other words programs aimed at hunger prevention.

In the current version of the Farm Bill U.S., Senators are seeking to change or eliminate resources allocated to the "Safebox" hunger prevention portion of the program. Catholic Relief Services a program distributor of "Food for Peace" and "Safebox" resources is asking for help from Catholics to lobby our Senators to preserve current funding for "Safebox" hunger prevention programs.

Advocating here in Wisconsin is especially important as Senator Kohl is Chairperson of the Agriculture Committee. Senator Kohl and the committee are in the process of writing the current version of the Farm Bill, which expires in September of this year.

Now is the time to Contact Senator Kohl and his staff to tell them

- Thank you for continuing to fund the "Food for Peace" and "Safebox" programs in the 2012 Farm Bill
- As a part of the Farm Bill, "Safebox" hunger prevention programs are imperative to those suffering with persistent hunger and malnutrition – especially children
- Maintain "Safebox" funding at \$450 million annually and to remove a waiver in the bill that would allow diversion of this funding to other programs so that "Safebox" funded programs can reliably and consistently address persistent hunger

Senator Kohl <http://www.kohl.senate.gov/contact.cfm>

Phil Karsting, Chief of Staff phil_karsting@kohl.senate.gov 202-224-5653

Dianne Nellor, Staff Member for the Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee Dianne_nellor@appro.senate.gov 202-224-8090

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CPJ Common Ground Core Team Meeting – Jun 13

Are you interested in learning more about participating in Common Ground and Common Ground campaigns, but your congregation is not a member? Catholics for Peace and Justice, a member of Common Ground, offers individuals an avenue to participate in Common Ground campaigns, actions, assemblies and in CG University.

The Catholics for Peace and Justice **Core team for Common Ground will be meeting on Wednesday, June 13 at 6:00 pm at the Panera at 15040 West Greenfield Avenue** (just east of Moorland Rd in Brookfield [map](#) All are invited. Please RSVP your interest to Debra Schneider at info@catholicsforpeaceandjustice.org [Map to Panera](#)

Common Ground Update - The June Common Ground Newsletter is now available www.commongroundwi.org with updates on CG campaigns – Milwaukee Rising – preserving the Sherman Park neighborhood; Common Ground Healthcare Cooperative; and Education – Out of School Tutoring. If you are interested in Common Ground, please join us on June 13 at 6:00 pm at the Catholics for Peace and Justice Core Team meeting. [Details are listed above.](#)

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Nunjustice.org – “American Nuns Resist Vatican Rebuke”

[From USA Today, by Cara Matthews,](#)

“As the Vatican accuses American nuns of spending too much time on human rights and helping the poor, some Catholic activists who support them are organizing vigils and petitions to persuade the church to change its mind.” “Chicago-based Call To Action, the country’s largest Catholic Church justice organization, has joined with other groups on what it calls the Nun Justice Project.”

“The website — www.nunjustice.org — encourages members to organize or join vigils leading up to the Leadership Conference’s national board meeting, which starts May 29. The project’s goal is to get 57,000 signatures — one for every sister — on an online petition.” To learn more and sign the petition go to www.nunjustice.org

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Wisconsin Religious Leaders Call For a Season of Civility

[From the Wisconsin Council of Churches](#)

35 religious leaders from throughout Wisconsin call upon the citizens of our state to [enter a "Season of Civility"](#) amidst the partisan rancor of the current recall campaigns and the anticipated divisiveness of the fall election cycle. "As a result of extreme political polarization in Wisconsin, many in our congregations and communities feel marginalized or demonized by their neighbors on account of their economic status, occupation, or political beliefs," the statement says.

Rev. Scott Anderson, executive director of the Wisconsin Council of Churches, <http://www.wichurches.org/> which represents 14 Christian denominations, commented that "politics is not a zero sum game or a winner-take-all contest. Rather it is a joint effort to reach a workable consensus on how to advance the common good. From the perspective of Wisconsin's religious community, the current political environment is unacceptable in our public life."

[The "Call for a Season of Civility" statement](#) declares that the "ability to cooperate to solve common problems and achieve shared goals is now undermined by rampant disrespect, disinformation, distrust, and disregard for the interests and ideas of others." Calling for change, it draws a parallel between the religious values embodied in "the Golden Rule," to treat others as we would like to be treated, with the idea of democracy, which is based on regard for the value of each and every individual.

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Guest Opinion – The War on Terror: Has Anything Really Changed?

From Mark Peters

It's curious to me. I know so many liberals who were appalled (remember the old bumper sticker, "If you're not appalled you're not paying attention"?) by George W. Bush and his Iraq lies, deceptions, and atrocities. We seemed to be paying lots of attention then, because we were appalled indeed. We called Bush and Cheney war criminals. We got so worked up we protested in the streets, formed an organization, and lobbied our own reluctant archbishop to denounce the President's war-loving stance.

But here's where the puzzlement comes in: now that the war criminal is a "liberal" Democrat, nobody seems worked up about it much at all. Barack Obama has decided that the way to keep the "war on terror" going is to wage it by drones. And there's proof that he's much smarter than W: now that the body bags of citizens have pretty much stopped coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan, he's found pretty much unanimous support for the exact same post 9/11 policies that got his predecessor so much heat from the Left.

Noam Chomsky, who so pithily and brutally skewered the neo-cons who took over our foreign policy 10 years ago, had this to say recently: "If the Bush administration didn't like somebody, they'd kidnap them and send them to torture chambers. If the Obama administration decides they don't like somebody, they murder them." So, we've really made progress, haven't we? [Read The Full](#)

[Article.](#)

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The Tax Payers' Trillion Dollar Wars

From www.Nationofchange.org Elizabeth Rose, Op-Ed: A recent study by the University of Maryland found that three-quarters of Americans favored cutting military spending, including two-thirds of Republicans as well as nine in 10 Democrats. This study also confirmed that respondents generally underestimate the magnitude of the military budget, and that when they receive information about its size — for example, the \$642,500,000,000 that the House approved for the Pentagon — they're more likely to support Pentagon spending cuts. Read the article about the National Defense Authorization Act, which the House of Representatives recently approved at \$8 billion above agreed upon levels and 4 \$billion above what the Pentagon requested. [Read the Article](#)

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Reckoning with Torture

From Bill Moyers, May 25, 2012

After 9/11, the U.S. government turned to torture — in defiance of domestic and international laws — to extract information about and from terrorists and others who might follow after them. Were it not for defense attorneys and the work of human rights organizations, these prisoners would be ignored. The American Civil Liberties Union and the international literary and human rights group PEN have teamed up to comb through 150,000 declassified documents — as well as large collections of articles and transcripts — to produce The Torture Report: What the Documents Say About America's Post-9/11 Torture Program, written by PEN's Larry Siems. [Watch the](#)

[Moyers program Reckoning with Torture.](#)

PEN and the ACLU have also staged readings of excerpts from the documents and first-person testimony at the Sundance Film Festival in Utah and Lincoln Center here in New York. Those readings have been videotaped and are being made into a documentary by movie director Doug Liman called Reckoning with Torture. Liman is now asking people across the country to videotape their own readings of declassified memos and testimonies for the project. [Learn how to get involved.](#)

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Working on US Democrats - Abortion

[From Peace and Life Connections](#)

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter recently told radio talk show host Laura Ingraham: "I've signed a public letter calling for the Democratic Party at the next convention to espouse my position on abortion, which is to minimize the need for abortion and limit it only to women whose lives are in danger or who are pregnant as a result of rape or incest. I think if the Democratic Party would adopt that policy that would be acceptable to a lot of people who are now estranged from our party because of the abortion issue."

Democrats for Life (a CL member group) has responded by promoting a petition that urges the Democratic Party to change the Party platform to be more supportive of pro-life Democrats' views. Check out Democrats For Life of America and their petition to introduce "big tent" language into its platform on the issue of abortion. [Article in National Catholic Reporter](#).

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Interview with Cardinal Dolan on Immigration

[Check out the recent MSNBC interview of Cardinal Timothy Dolan](#), Archbishop of New York and President of the USCCB. In the video, the Cardinal makes some very good points about immigration. Links to the video are also on the Justice for Immigrants homepage www.justiceforimmigrants.org and JFI Facebook page.

Here is a link to the May 2012 edition of the USCCB Migration and Refugee Services "[Migration Memo](#)" with the latest news on issues surrounding the Justice for Immigrants campaign

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Limiting Options for Undocumented Youth

The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families has put together a very good publication entitled "[Limiting Options for Undocumented Youth: Tuition Policy Closing Doors](#)" that highlights how Wisconsin's tuition policy closes doors, limits opportunity and adds to economic loss in our state. The publication includes recommendations that we (1) reverse this policy decision and permit access to in-state tuition rates for undocumented students who meet certain criteria; (2) create additional ways for these youth to access other forms of financial aid; and (3) pass the national DREAM act that provides hope for youth who are Americans in all ways except for the lack of certain paperwork. [Publication](#)

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Messmer Schools Consider JROTC Program

[From Breaking the Silence/NonViolentCow](#)

The militarization of our education system has been growing since the end of the selective service system. The Department of Defense has programs for university, high school and middle school students. As we found out at Marquette University it is easier to stop a military program before it starts than after it is established in the school.

Messmer Catholic High schools, serving minorities and low income high schools is now considering signing a contract with the [Department of Defense for a JROTC program](#). Here are a number of reasons why this high school should say No to the Department of Defense. Although this is a Catholic High school, many of these reasons apply to all high schools, public and private. We welcome more reasons to Say No to the Military or flaws in the research and reasoning. bobsyouruncle@sbcglobal.net

Biological: As car insurance companies, the military and many educators know, the brains of young men and women are not fully developed until they are about 25 years old. The part of the brain that is not developed in high school youth is the "dorsal lateral prefrontal cortex". It plays a critical role in: decision making, problem solving and understanding future consequences of today's actions.

[For Six More Reasons Read the rest of the article – THEN...](#)

For more information or to join the campaign, contact Bob G. and Joe Rad at BreakingtheSilence@nonviolentcow.org and check out the [Messmer Today Magazine, Spring, p.20-21](#) for more information on the military invasion of Messmer and The Chicago Model of Militarizing Schools

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The USCCB Calls for Action to Defend Religious Liberty

No doubt you have heard in the news that the U.S. bishops have issued a call to action to all Catholics to defend religious liberty and to work to protect the First Freedom of the Bill of Rights. Many of you have also seen a [video distributed by an organization called "Catholics Called to Witness"](#) The video which is making its way around the net has been mistakenly assumed to be an ad by the Catholic Church. Their website is www.cc2W.org .

In the USCCB document "[Our First, Most Cherished Liberty](#)," the bishops call for "'A Fortnight for Freedom," the two-week period from June 21 to July 4—beginning with the feasts of St. Thomas More and St. John Fisher and ending with Independence Day—to focus "all the energies the Catholic community can muster" for religious liberty." In the document the bishops address a list of issues reflecting concerns about religious liberty from healthcare to immigration.

In support of a Fortnight of Freedom, [Archbishop ListECKI's issued a letter](#) and website page entitled "Protect Religious Freedom", which outlines action items for the campaign.

We'd like to hear your thoughtful comments on the USCCB's document [Our First Most Cherished Liberty, A Statement on Religious Liberty](#).

[Go to Catholics for Peace and Justice Civil Dialogue page](#) to share your thoughts.

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Village Green Street Fair - June 2

9am-3pm at State St. and Harwood Ave in Wauwatosa. Join us for a family-oriented outdoor festival that aims to provide information about green, organic, and eco-friendly products and services. Companies, artisans, entertainers, and speakers blend together in a fun and friendly environment to promote global interests and personal well-being. Visit villagegreenstreetfair.com for more information.

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Responding to Hunger: Creating Local Solutions – Jun 3

Take action against hunger in our community! An event for food advocates, activists, faith groups, social action committees and anyone interested in working for food justice. Sunday, June 3, 2012, 2 to 5 pm, Weasler auditorium at Marquette University, 1442 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee. Program will include a screening of the documentary "Food Stamped" and workshops on topics ranging from the Victory Garden Initiative and food preservation techniques to food justice advocacy by the Hunger Task Force and an update on the federal farm bill. Register online at www.milwaukeejewish.org. co-sponsors include the Hunger Task Force, Tikun Ha-Ir of Milwaukee, Jewish Council for Public Affairs and Tippecanoe Presbyterian Church and Interfaith Conference. [Event flyer with details](#) or for more information contact John Grochowski at john@g@milwaukeejewish.org or (414) 390-5781.

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Interfaith Dialogue, Hindu Temple tours, Indian Dinner – Jun 10

Interfaith relations expert Dr. Anantanand Rambachan from Saint Olaf College and a panel of local interfaith responders will lead a June 10 discussion of approaches, challenges and resources for interreligious dialogue. Interreligious Dialogue: A Friendship, will include the perspectives of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and more. The event is sponsored by the Interfaith Conference's Milwaukee Association for Interfaith Relations and the Hindu Temple of Wisconsin, and will be held at the temple in Pewaukee. There will be free tours of the temple from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m., the program from 2 to 5 p.m., and an optional Indian dinner at 5:30 p.m. The fee is \$10 for the program alone, and \$15 for the program and dinner. Dinner reservations are due June 3. Go to www.interfaithconference.org for information and registration.

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Voting with a Catholic Conscience – Theology on Tap – July 11

Theology-on-Tap, a speaker series for young adults, married and single, in their 20s and 30s, on July 11 will sponsor: Voting with a Catholic Conscience; Presented by Lincoln Rice. Session lasts from 7:00 – 9:00 PM with a short break around 8:00. Location: Krueger's Entertainment Center at N87 W16471 Appleton Ave. No need to register. Just bring yourself, a friend, and an open mind. There is no cost to attend. Snack and drink are free. This round is on us!

For a full list of sites and speakers, please visit: <http://www.johnpaul2center.org/NazarethProject/YoungAdult.htm>

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Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee Day at Miller Park – July 17

Tickets - \$11.50, T-shirts \$6.00. Help support the Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee and its interfaith dialogue, educational, environmental, peace and advocacy programs, while enjoying a Brewers game with your family, congregation or other group at a discounted price. Elevate your recreation to a higher plane by bringing a donation of food for the Hunger Task Force to the ballpark and raise public awareness that people of many faiths can come together in friendship by wearing an Interfaith "Going to Bat for a Better World" T-shirt. Deadline for ticket orders is June 15. [Event page and registration](#)

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Ground for Hope Interfaith Regional Conference – Oct. 21-22

Planning is well under way for Ground for Hope – Wisconsin, a regional environmental training conference Oct. 21-22 for clergy, seminarians, lay leaders and faith community members of many faiths and denominations. Renowned Native American environmental leader Winona LaDuke will give the keynote talk. There will be a large array of workshops on topics ranging from sacred texts and energy/climate issues facing Wisconsin to environmental justice and sustainable food for faith-based sites. Plus, there will be an optional Muslim iftar fast-breaking meal and optional eco-spirit bus tours to Milwaukee area sites where inspirational environmental and sustainability efforts are under way. The Interfaith Conference's Interfaith Earth Network and the national GreenFaith organization are planning this event with help from 16 major co-sponsors.

The first day will be at the Islamic Community Center, the second at the Archbishop Cousins Center. Prices and other details are being finalized. Go to www.greenfaith.org for updates. [Program details](#)

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Parish Social Ministry – Save the Date Nov 2/3

This November, our local Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and Catholic Charities USA is hosting a training on Parish Social Ministry at the Cousin's Center on Friday Nov 2 and Saturday Nov 3. [A "Save the Date" flyer is attached](#). Please let folks in your networks know.

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Reflection on the passing of Memorial Day

From Frank Pauc

On Pentecost I served as lector during the 10:30 Mass. Immediately after the liturgy was complete, a man approached me and said, "I'm going to tell the priest this too, but you didn't say one word about the troops! It's Memorial Day weekend! I'm so upset about this!" The parishioner rushed off before I could respond to his remarks. He was busy tracking down our priest. His passionate comments were not completely accurate; during the prayers of the faithful, we did ask God to remember those people that had given their lives in the service of our country. Apparently, that was not sufficient for this gentleman.

If I had had the opportunity, I would have told the irate parishioner that I had served in the Army, and that our son has seen combat in the Iraq war. Fortunately, our son has survived his battlefield experience. I agree wholeheartedly that we, as Catholics, should honor our soldiers and pray for them. We should do that on Memorial Day and every day.

If I could, I would ask our congregation to pray for our troops, and then take our prayer a bit further. We ought to also pray for the civilian non-combatants in our wars, the women and children who are killed or wounded simply because they get in the way of the fighting. If we can do that, then we might also find it in our hearts to pray for the enemies of our nation. Perhaps we could pray for the members of the Taliban who have died in battle, leaving behind widows and orphans. These people are also created in God's image, just like our son. God loves them too.

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Prayer

Lord lead me in your love and by the power of your spirit so that I may...

Listen to others with respect and openness knowing that You work through all people for the greater good.

Speak to ALL my sisters and brothers with civility, honoring the dignity imparted to them by you as our one Creator

Believe that my experience and understanding of what is truth may be just one ray of the full light of Wisdom You shed on the world.

Act with love by promoting positive civil discussion and by not contributing to the denigration of others through words or action.

And Lord help me to continue to grow in your love and grace so that I may be an instrument of your true peace to ALL people.

Amen.

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