

Catholics for Peace and Justice

MARCH 2013 Newsletter



We want to extend a huge thank you to everyone who participated in the Social Justice Ministry World Café this past weekend. The conversations helped all of us to put into focus ideas for new directions and supporting resources. We are in the process of documenting the notes from table conversations, the large café conversation and surveys. In the interim, you can read a synopsis of the event and a few of the emerging ideas below.

As we continue our journey through Lent, we'd like to bring your attention to a day of reflection entitled "An Encounter with Oscar Romero", which will take place on Saturday, March 9. During this day we will learn about the life of Romero and reflect on how his faith and actions can be an inspiration for our life's journey.

For April, we invite you to mark your calendars for "Finding Our Place in the Web of Life" on Saturday, April 13. Our presenter Margaret Swedish will lead us on a path to understanding how we are all connected to each other, God and creation and then explore the implications of that truth in our own lives and that of our communities.

Blessings on your ministry

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World Café – We Are All In This Together – Some Things We Learned

Sixty Five people from more than 40 churches and organizations from Elkorn to West Bend to Pewaukee, to Milwaukee, Oak Creek and more were in attendance. The gathering, which we called a World Café conversation, had its conception in both the Catholics for Peace and Justice Leadership Council visioning and the response to a survey CPJ put out to all of you almost two years ago. What we heard was a desire for those working in social justice ministry/human concerns to connect with each other, to network and share ideas – and the response we had to this event showed that need has not diminished. Our message for the morning - no matter what our victories and struggles, in the bigger picture, in the eyes of God “We are all in this together”.

The success of a World Café process hinges on each participant’s sharing of their individual wisdom, experience and ideas that collide and spark the conversation. Participants began this conversation at their first table with discussion about what they and their organization are doing well. They were then asked to move and intermingle with others at two subsequent tables to talk about their concerns, struggles, and frustrations as well as what resources would be helpful toward performing their intended ministry and how we might work together as a larger community. In between table conversations were presentations from Mary Krolkowski about CPJ and Rob Shelledy and Kathy Shine about the Archdiocese of Milwaukee Social Justice Ministry. In the end the three rounds of table conversations were summarized in one large group Café Conversation.

Here are just a beginning of some of the ideas, issues and conversations that surfaced: No surprise, we are doing direct service, meal programs and food pantries well. The fact that we were getting together to network and discuss desires and directions was also positive. At the same time there was concern about not reaching out enough to a diverse group of people including teens and younger adults. It was felt that we should all be working on getting teens involved in social justice ministry [Should we be developing close relationships with our youth ministers and DREs?]. There was discussion about building relationships with cluster parishes, but also going beyond to build relationships and programs in our communities with other faith based groups [interfaith] - for which some groups gave examples – as well as with business/business leaders and other community organizations to build support for specific programs.

These are just a few tidbits of our conversation. As we finish compiling the conversations and ideas we will be placing the information on our website and including links to these ideas and others that sparked from the conversation in our coming newsletters. Many thanks to all who participated.

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Finding Our Place In The Web of Life

A Day of Reflection: Saturday, April 13, 9 am -3 pm with Margaret Swedish at the MU Alumni Memorial Union, 1400 W. Wisconsin Ave. Cost: Free Will Donation at the door. New discoveries of the vastness of the universe have reshaped our sense of place and purpose as humans living on this one small planet in one of billions of galaxies. Meanwhile, as we make these discoveries, we are encountering ecological crises across our planet that are threatening the future of life, and they, too, are becoming our teachers, revealing us to ourselves. We will explore these dynamics and what they tell us about this moment of transition, the implications for the journey of faith. Our presenter Margaret Swedish was director of the Religious Task Force on Central America and Mexico in Washington DC from 1981-2004, a national organization founded by Catholic religious leaders that addressed issues of human rights and US military and economic policy in the region. Since 2006 her work has been focused on the ecological crises now confronting humanity, offering presentations, workshops, and retreats through her project, Spirituality and Ecological Hope. Sponsored by Catholics for Peace and Justice and The Marquette Center for Peacemaking. [Flyer](#) [More Information and On Line Registration](#) Contact: Jim Gill at 262-547-6555 x306 or jjgill@stmarywk.org

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Justice for Immigrants Campaign

If you or your church or organization is not yet involved with the Justice for Immigrants Campaign, you can get involved by going to www.justiceforimmigrants.org and contacting Rob Shelledy shelledyr@archmil.org 414-758-2286 at the Archdiocese of Milwaukee Office of Social Justice Ministry or Milwaukee Campaign Chairperson S. Josephe Flynn jflynn@ssndcp.org . More ideas, links and resources are available on [our website](#) /advocacy / immigration ..

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Understanding Immigration Reform – More Resources

While the discussions about changing immigration policy often seem complex, people of faith must do all they can to educate others about what's at stake in this debate. Here are the latest resources from Christians for Comprehensive Immigration Reform [CCIR] to help you talk with others about the need for immigration reform:

Research and Studies:

[How long is the immigration 'line'? As long as 24 years.](#)

[New Report Shows That Border Benchmarks Already Have Been Met](#)

[Why Immigration Reform Won't Increase Government Spending](#)

[The Economic Benefits of Naturalization for Immigrants and the Economy](#)

[Setting the Record Straight on Immigration and Border Enforcement](#)

[How Millions Could Get Cut Out of Immigration Reform](#)

[Legalize Who?: A Portrait of the 11 Million Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States](#)

[Economic Benefits Of Immigration Reform Outweigh Costs](#)

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Immigration and Customs Enforcement Frees Detainees As Sequester Looms

[Huffington Post 02/25/2013 WASHINGTON](#) -- Immigration and Customs Enforcement released some people from immigrant detention facilities across the country on Monday in response to looming federal budget cuts."In order to make the best use of our limited detention resources in the current fiscal climate and to manage our detention population under current congressionally mandated levels, ICE has directed field offices to review the detained population to ensure it is in line with available funding," agency spokeswoman Gillian

Christensen said in a statement. ICE and the Department of Homeland Security are analyzing spending as congressional inaction increases the likelihood of so-called budget sequestration -- across-the-board spending cuts that begin on March 1. Detaining immigrants is an expensive business, with an average daily cost of \$122 to \$164 per person, according to the American Civil Liberties Union. Alternatives, including ankle bracelets and parole, are far cheaper. Christensen declined to say how many undocumented immigrants were freed on Monday or to give their locations. She said they have been "placed on an appropriate, more cost-effective form of supervised release." ICE did not drop the cases against the individuals and will still deport them if ordered by an immigration judge, she said. [Full Article](#)

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Organizing for Action on Gun Violence – Mar 4

Over the past week, Organizing for Action volunteers have been holding events across the county in support of President Obama's plan to address gun violence. This Monday, the Eastside OFA in Milwaukee will be kicking off their efforts to promote commonsense gun violence prevention measures with a rally and press conference

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And we need you there! Please join us: Monday, March 4th at 12:00PM In front of the Columbia/St. Mary's Emergency Room Near the corner of North Avenue and Lake Drive. With all of us standing together, calling for change, our message will be loud and clear. And our members of Congress will know that we expect them to protect our families and our communities, by supporting background checks on all gun sales. Bring your energy, bring your voice, and bring a sign! Learn more about anti-gun violence through WAVE at

<http://www.waveedfund.org/>

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The 11x15 Campaign: Information and How to Get Involved

In Wisconsin, we know we have too many people in our prisons and we know the solution. We know that Treatment Alternatives and Diversions (TAD) work. They are cheaper and more effective than jail and prison time for low-risk offenders. Every day we wait for change is a day of wasted money and wasted human potential. We are not any safer. Our state's incarceration rate has grown dramatically in recent decades. The system we now have is wasteful (we spend more than twice as much per year on Corrections as our neighbors in Minnesota, though we have similar populations), it is ineffective (our overuse of prisons and jails makes us less safe than we would be if we used more alternatives), and it is unfair (the racial disparities in Wisconsin's prison system are among the worst in the nation).

Incarceration comes with a cost. We pay a huge human price for our overuse of incarceration. Families and communities have been destroyed. Costs have risen dramatically. The cost of Corrections in Wisconsin has risen from under \$200 million per year in 1990 to more than \$1.3 billion in 2011. There are effective options. The good news is that alternatives to incarceration that are being proven effective every day in our state. Counties have established numerous programs: drug treatment courts, mental health courts, day report centers, universal screening, mental health courts, and more. We are learning, decisively and overwhelmingly, that alternatives to incarceration are effective by most any measure: To Learn More and Get Involved go to <http://prayforjusticeinwi.org/> and see information below for March 14 Action Day in Madison.

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CPJ Members Attend Common Ground Suburban Rural Caucus

On Sunday, February 10th Catholics for Peace and Justice members were a part of 85 Common Ground members and guests at the first Suburban/Rural Caucus at Good Shepherd Catholic Church in Menomonee Falls. The purpose of the caucus was to share stories about the pressures facing families and communities in the suburban and rural areas in and around the Milwaukee region. In addition, attendees identified which of the issues areas they want to work on moving forward: seniors, transportation, youth/family stress, workforce education and/or affordable housing. Commitments were made to conduct a minimum of 45 Discovery in Group meetings, in which Common Ground members will meet with both groups impacted by the issues area

and/or experts in a particular field. Feedback and new ideas from these meetings will help the caucus focus on an issues campaign in the near future.

To join the CPJ Common Ground Team For more information contact Mary Kleist at maryakleist@sbcglobal.net or Debra Schneider at djschneider@wi.rr.com
Find more on Common Ground Campaigns at www.commongroundwi.org
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Resolution to Stop Military Aid to Israel

The Friends of Palestine WI and End the Occupation are initiating a request to the Milwaukee Common Council asking them to pass a Resolution to Stop Military Aid to Israel. We are inviting Milwaukee residents to join us in this effort by contacting your Milwaukee alderperson to vote 'Yes' on this resolution. The website, now available at www.milwaukeeeneeds.org, explains the rationale for this Petition. The Action Page will be activated soon, about mid-March. The US sends Israel over \$3 billion every year for military aid. This money is used to support Israel's occupation of Palestine and the Holy Land. The occupation forces destroy homes, orchards, infrastructure, and violate the human rights of Palestinians. Milwaukee's share of this aid is \$7 million every year. Why would any taxpayer choose to have their tax money used in this way, especially in view of Milwaukee's urgent financial needs? While it is true that the City Council cannot directly change this policy, they can make their displeasure known to Pres. Obama and our Congress members. History shows that most major policy changes have their beginning at the local level where the voice of the people is more likely to be heard. If you agree that this policy needs changing, please join us in this effort, by going to www.milwaukeeeneeds.org and asking your Alderperson to vote 'Yes' on this Resolution. For more information contact S. Virgine Lawinger at svirgine@earthlink.net
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Violence Against Women Act Needs Your Support

The Violence Against Women Act is a life-saving piece of legislation. VAWA supports the work of law enforcement officers, prosecutors, courts, shelters and other programs to stem domestic and dating violence, sexual assault and stalking. It has been proven to save lives.

Among the disappointments of the gridlocked 112th Congress was the failure to pass the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. Recently the Senate, recognizing the urgent need to reauthorize this law, came together to pass their version of the bill, known as S. 47. This is an excellent bill that would continue the work of VAWA but also includes much-needed improvements in addressing housing, campus sexual assault provisions, and much-needed enhancements for programs serving communities of color, immigrants, victims in tribal communities and LGBT survivors of violence.

The House however has chosen to introduce an alternative version of VAWA. Disappointingly, many of the critical protections included in the Senate version are omitted from the House VAWA bill. Action -Urge your representative in the House to support the Senate version of the Violence Against Women Act, which includes strengthened protections for vulnerable populations that are currently under served – communities of color, immigrant victims of violence, tribal communities and LGBT survivors. Email your House Representative or call the Capitol Switchboard at 202-224-3121 and ask to be connected to your House Representative.
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Changing Poverty into Opportunity

Jim Wallis, CEO of "Sojourners" suggests that after comprehensive Immigration reform, we should begin work on a bipartisan moral commitment to end poverty. "And it's time to make another moral commitment in the midst of our growing economic recovery — to include poor families and change poverty into opportunity. Fighting poverty must not be a partisan issue. When we look at both the causes and the solutions, this battle should bring both liberals and conservatives together. Overcoming poverty, by creating opportunity, happens

because of three very basic things that most of us can agree on: family, education, and work. All three are crucial and necessary in moving people out of poverty and into opportunity.” [Full Article](#)

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Loaves & Fishes Day of Action March 20, 2013

A Moral Budget: It Doesn't take a Miracle – An opportunity presented by Network Lobby to get involved with a national campaign to bring faith values into conversations about the federal budget. Washington is in gridlock over the federal budget. Politicians are squabbling over taxes and spending cuts. Influencing the negotiations feels impossible, and yet the consequences of these budget decisions will deeply affect our communities, especially the most vulnerable among us. The faith community must raise its voice. We know that "it doesn't take a miracle" to pass a moral budget. On March 20, 2013, faith groups large and small from across the country will participate in a day of action to raise the voices of our communities and demand a moral budget that asks the wealthy to pay their fair share. Whether it's a press conference outside your legislator's office delivering a basket of loaves and fish, or a discussion in your congregation about federal budget priorities and social media push, you can help illustrate the miracle of the loaves and fishes to influence the budget debate in Washington. Together, we will create a powerful narrative that Congress will not be able to ignore. For more information, event ideas & suggestions, and a list of the resources that will be provided to you, look at the Loaves & Fishes Day of Action [Community Information Sheet](#).

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The Collection Challenge – an Earth Day Project for Youth in Congregations From Interfaith Earth Network Newsletter

Help keep thousands of athletic shoes out of landfills. The Interfaith Earth Network is urging all congregations to aid Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful (www.kgmb.org) in its Recycle Your Sneakers program. Collected shoes will be used to make surface material for playgrounds, basketball courts or running tracks in Milwaukee.

[Read more.](#)

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Praying Pacem in Terris on the 40th Anniversary of the Encyclical

From Pax Christi USA - In 1963 when, in the midst of the Vietnam War, racial tension, the Cuban missile crisis, the feminist movement and the Cold War, Pope John XXIII addressed his encyclical to all people of good will, and not just to the Catholic population as his predecessors had done. His message of economic, social/cultural, and political rights became the foundation for the growing peace movement that would take root in the U.S. some 10 years later, i.e. Pax Christi USA.. [The free resource from Pax Christi is available here.](#)

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In the Wake of a New Pope - The Global Catholic Population -

Over the past century, the number of Catholics around the globe has more than tripled, from an estimated 291 million in 1910 to nearly 1.1 billion as of 2010, [according to a comprehensive demographic study by the Pew Research Center](#). But over the same period, the world's overall population also has risen rapidly. As a result, Catholics have made up a remarkably stable share of all people on Earth. In 1910, Catholics comprised about half (48%) of all Christians and 17% of the world's total population, according to historical estimates from the World Christian Database. A century later, the Pew Research study found, Catholics still comprise about half (50%) of Christians worldwide and 16% of the total global population. What has changed substantially over the past century is the geographic distribution of the world's Catholics. In 1910, Europe was home to about two-thirds of all Catholics, and nearly nine-in-ten lived either in Europe (65%) or Latin America (24%). By 2010, by contrast, only about a quarter of all Catholics (24%) were in Europe. The largest share (39%) were in Latin America and the Caribbean.

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Winter Farmers' Market and Brunch at St. Sebs – Mar 3

Sunday, March 3rd - Market: 9:00—12:30pm, Brunch: 9:00—12:00pm. Market Products include Natural meats, farm fresh eggs, cheese, produce, preserves, pastries, cookies, honey, syrups, granola, flour, coffee, natural soaps, & more! BRUNCH: Potato Egg Strata, Irish Oatmeal with steel-cut Oats, Silver dollar Pancakes, Yogurt with Honey and Granola, Home-made cookies, Locally-roasted Coffee, Tea, Milk, Cider or Juice. Suggested Donation - \$10 ages 13 and older; \$6 ages 12-5; \$30 max per family; Free: 4 yrs old and under . Pre-sale: by contacting Lena Stephenson at (414) 403-7131 On Facebook: 'St Sebastian Catholic Parish Winter Farmer's Market' [Flyer](#)

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10th Annual Sustainability Summit and Exposition – Mar 7 & 8

March 7, 2013 to March 8, 2013 – University of Wisconsin Milwaukee School of Continuing Education Conference Center. 10 workshops over two days focused on sustainability. [More Information](#)

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Immigration 101 – Presentation by S. Josephe Marie Flynn – Mar 8

Friday, March 8, 2013 from 4:00 – 5:00 pm at Notre Dame of Elm Grove – All Purpose Room, 13105 Watertown Plank Road, Elm Grove. Continue your International Women's Day commemoration by joining the School Sisters of Notre Dame for this presentation! S. Josephe Marie Flynn, Chair of the Justice for Immigrants committee of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, will give a presentation about the immigration situation in our country, the latest on reform efforts, and what you can do to make a difference. All are welcome! No reservations required. Contact Tim Dewane at tdewane@ssndcp.org for more information.

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Archbishop Romero Workshop- Mar 9

Saturday, March 9, 8 am to 3 pm at St. Mary Hales Corners Parish. In El Salvador in the late 1970's, Archbishop Óscar Romero was a voice of the poor and the disappeared. In this workshop, we will learn about his internal and external struggles to be a true pastor and to accompany the Salvadoran people in the struggle for justice. We will reflect on the meaning his life can have for us, and how his journey can inspire and challenge us today. The day will include: Screening of the new film, Monseñor, The Last Journey of Óscar Romero, which features rare footage of Romero and interviews with those who were directly impacted by his life and work. Presentations about Romero and his legacy by leading Romero scholar Rev. Robert Pelton, CSC; Professor Margaret Pfeil, and Sociologist Victor Maqqe. (Click here for speaker bios) Group discussion and reflection, Lunch. Cost \$10. Event Registration and Program Details Sponsored by Office for World Mission of the Milwaukee Archdiocese with the support of Catholics for Peace and Justice and others. [FLYER](#)

[MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION](#)

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Local Farmer Open House – Mar 9

Get a share of the harvest! Meet local farmers and learn how you can buy directly from a farmer through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). The Local Farmer Open House is a unique, once-a-year event when Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farmers are all together in one place, ready to talk to you! If you are new to CSAs or have been subscribing for years, this event is for you. Attend workshops and stay for lunch! Food available to purchase. Urban Ecology Center at Riverside Park, Saturday, March 9th 11 am to 4 pm.

Free. [More Information](#)

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WISDOM's Madison Action Day - People of Faith United for Justice – Mar 14

Thursday, March 14, 2013, 9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church, 312 Wisconsin Avenue, Madison. People of Faith United for Justice is a day-long gathering to learn, discuss, pray and advocate together for social justice issues of importance to all people of Wisconsin. As a new legislature starts work on the next state

budget, our representatives need to hear our values, priorities, and concerns. Together, we can ensure that our commitment to compassion and justice is reflected in that budget. Plenary session with Rev. Bryon Massingale, Professor of Theology at MU. The focus for this action day is our 11x15 Campaign to reduce Wisconsin's prison population to 11,000 by 2015 by making state funding available to local municipalities so they can provide treatment alternatives for non-violent offenders with underlying mental health and substance abuse issues. [FLYER](#) [REGISTRATION](#)

[Further information on 11X15 CAMPAIGN:](#)

[11x15 Health Impact Assessment Summary](#), Dec 2012 - [11x15 Brochure](#), Jan 2013 - [11x15 FAQ's](#)

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Advocate and Lobby for Kids Day March 21, 2013

Registration is open for Advocate and Lobby for Kids Day. We need you in Madison to learn what is in the state budget for kids and meet with your legislators. We will start at 9 AM at First United Methodist Church in Madison, two blocks from the Capitol. After you have learned about the state budget, we will provide legislative advocacy training. In the afternoon, you will head to the Capitol to meet with your legislators and their staff. WCCF provides advocacy training materials, breakfast and lunch for all advocates. [Register for Advocate and Lobby for Kids Day](#). [Check out the new WCCF Legislative Advocacy Guide](#).

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Awakening the Dreamer Facilitator Training – March 22-24

March 17-19: Lake Lucerne Retreat Center, Neshkoro and March 22-24: Menasha/Appleton

The Awakening the Dreamer Symposium inspires and educates participants around the world to bring forth an environmentally sustainable, socially just, and spiritually fulfilling world. The understanding that we are, every one of us, connected to each other. Each of us wants to live a fulfilling life and to have a positive impact on our families and communities. In addition to grounding participants in the material of the ATD Symposium, this facilitator training is also useful for anyone wishing to renew and refresh their commitment to a more sustainable world thru the lens of community, spirit, the environment and social justice. The weekend is rich with fun, supportive, thought-provoking, community building exercises. The flow of the facilitator training is designed to continually enable you to discover how YOU can be more effective in bringing into action your vision of a sustainable world. [LEARN MORE](#)

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Transformation in a Time of Uncertainty – March 23

Come and join us for a one-day program, Saturday, March 23, 2013 • 9:00 am - 4:00 pm, Troubadour Room, St. Francis Convent, 3221 S. Lake Dr. • St. Francis, Wisconsin 53235. Explore the time we are living in through a process that taps into your faith and spirituality. The Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi will host the Institute for Communal Contemplation and Dialogue program, "Transformation in a Time of Uncertainty" Nancy Sylvester, IHM, President and Founder of the Institute will be the presenter. The fee for the program is \$50, and includes lunch. [Registration Form](#). For further information email titumilw@gmail.com.

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Scribe of Social Conscience: Steinbeck Plus Seventy-five with Paul McComas– Mar 25

March 25, 2013, 7:00 p.m., Marquette University AMU Ballroom D. Three-quarters of a century after the publication of "the great American novella" Of Mice and Men (1937) and the epic Depression-era protest novel The Grapes of Wrath (1939), we'll take a fresh look at both of these masterpieces, along with three other books by John Steinbeck. Author-actor-educator Paul McComas presents dramatic readings from all five classics, as well as providing analysis of the Salinas, California native's work, particularly Steinbeck's status as a master chronicler of—and avid advocate for—"the have-nots." With his unflinching insistence that each of us is, indeed must be, our brothers' and our sisters' keepers, Steinbeck 75 years later could hardly be more timely . . . or more necessary. Milwaukee native Paul McComas is the author of four acclaimed books: Since 1998, he's taught writing, literature, and film, winning awards from National-Louis and Northwestern universities. A

recipient of the Mental Health Association's Distinguished Service Award, he serves on the National Leadership Council of the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network (RAINN). This event is free and open to the public. No registration needed. For more information, contact the Marquette University Center for Peacemaking at peacemaking@marquette.edu or (414) 288-8444.

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Catholics at the Capitol – April 10, 2013

The registration is now available for "Catholics at the Capitol: Reclaiming the Common Good in the Year of Faith 2013" to be held on Wednesday, April 10, 2013, at the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center in Madison. The keynote speaker will be the Most Reverend Peter F. Christensen. Registration is \$37 per person and includes a continental breakfast and lunch. Secondary or full-time post-secondary students can register for \$12. The registration deadline is April 1, 2013. Registration materials are available on our website:

www.wisconsincatholic.org. [Registration Flyer](#)

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Finding Our Place In The Web of Life – April 13

A Day of Reflection: Saturday, April 13, 9 am -3 pm with Margaret Swedish at the MU Alumni Memorial Union, 1400 W. Wisconsin Ave. Cost: Free Will Donation at the door. New discoveries of the vastness of the universe have reshaped our sense of place and purpose as humans living on this one small planet in one of billions of galaxies. Meanwhile, as we make these discoveries, we are encountering ecological crises across our planet that are threatening the future of life, and they, too, are becoming our teachers, revealing us to ourselves. We will explore these dynamics and what they tell us about this moment of transition, the implications for the journey of faith. Margaret Swedish was director of the Religious Task Force on Central America and Mexico in Washington DC from 1981-2004, a national organization founded by Catholic religious leaders that addressed issues of human rights and US military and economic policy in the region. Since 2006 her work has been focused on the ecological crises now confronting humanity, offering presentations, workshops, and retreats through her project, Spirituality and Ecological Hope. Sponsored by Catholics for Peace and Justice and The Marquette Center for Peacemaking. [Flyer](#) [On Line Registration](#) Contact Jim Gill at 262-547-6555 x306 or

jgill@stmarywk.org

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Reflection

A Letter to the Editor at the Catholic Herald by Frank Pauc

The Catholic Herald has recently printed a series of articles under the title of "Groundwork for a New Beginning". The articles have dealt with different aspects of the archdiocese's bankruptcy reorganization. The articles have been informative. It has been interesting for me to learn about the legal proceedings, and to read about the various maneuvers of the lawyers. The bankruptcy is real life courtroom drama, affecting many different people. How could it not be interesting?

I have also found the articles to be disturbing in a subtle way. When I read about the enormous amount of energy and effort the archdiocese has put into these legal matters, it makes me wonder how effort goes into other areas of the life of the archdiocese. The articles make me feel like this bankruptcy reorganization is a life or death matter for the archdiocese. It seems like the need to preserve the property and assets of the Catholic community is paramount. I don't see much in the articles that refers to people, or to the Gospels. When I finish reading one of the reports, I say to myself, "It's all about the money."

What is the worst possible thing that could happen to the archdiocese? What if we lost all the physical assets of the archdiocese? What if we suddenly became poor? Would we still have faith? Yes. Would we still be brothers and sisters in Christ? Yes. Would we start to care more about people than about things? Maybe. Would that really be so bad?

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Prayer

From Catholic Relief Services

Loving God, transform my heart so I may be open to all your graces during this Year of Faith. As I experience the abundance of your favor, may I desire to praise and worship you even more. May I live each day in the fullness of the Gospel, loving you and loving my neighbor.

Jesus, help me encounter you profoundly with a burning desire to love and serve you in the poorest of the poor. May I discover, over and over, the infinite value of each person. Let me strive to be in perfect solidarity with you—as you are with me—so I can be your ambassador of love to the world.

Holy Spirit, empower me to advocate for children who have no voice in this world, so each of us can live with the dignity inherent in us. Amen