

“We propose that the Superior General and Council ‘direct the course of the Institute’ toward a lived-out stance of social justice by being an example of justice to those they serve and by the formation of policy which is expressive of the Congregation’s concern for justice.”

“We propose that the Superior General and Council establish a Commission for Justice to be a resource for them, educating them through information and experience, and calling them to an ever greater integration of Gospel justice and Congregational policy.” (General Chapter, 1979)

December, 2009

Dear Sisters,

Since the approval of these proposals at the Chapter of 1979 our Congregation has endeavored to be faithful to moving toward a lived-out stance of social justice and an ever greater integration of Gospel justice and Congregational policy. Over these three decades we have engaged the issues of racism, economic justice, preferential option for those who are poor, feminism, capital punishment, human trafficking, water, Earth and immigration, to name *only* a few. We have benefited from the voices of so many who have challenged us:

- ♥ Thomas Berry
- ♥ Miriam Therese MacGillis OP
- ♥ Bette Moslander CSJ
- ♥ Peter Henriot SJ
- ♥ Maria Augusta Neal SND
- ♥ Mary Evelyn Tucker and many, many others

Thirty years and much justice-learning and advocacy later we celebrate the vibrancy of our Congregational justice ministry as an integral aspect of our mission. As we commemorate this milestone in our Congregational history, we offer profound gratitude to the members of the Commission for Justice. They have educated and challenged us over these past three decades to integrate a concern for justice in our day-to-day living. We are especially grateful to Sister Dorothea Newell whose commitment and passion to further the pursuit of justice in our Congregation has stretched us beyond our comfort zone and borne fruit for the life of our world.

As you are already aware from previous communications from the Commission for Justice, a celebration of our Congregational justice ministry will take place on April 10, 2010. Because our justice ministry is one that involves all of us, the 30th Anniversary Committee is providing several opportunities for us to prepare for this event.

- 1. Prayer:** In January, February and March a prayer will be provided. Included in this mailing is the January prayer that is based on justice issues of the 1980s. A companion piece for this prayer includes excerpts from talks we heard during that decade – voices that challenged us then and continue to challenge us today. Discussion questions are also included and invite us into a continuous cycle of reflection and action, the fruit of Chapter 2009. We encourage creativity in the use of this prayer and companion piece. (eg. Cluster content, part of a house meeting, a separate meeting, conversation at the dinner table or other informal conversation, for morning/evening prayer *over several days*.) The prayer needs more time than what is usually allotted for morning/evening prayer.

2. **Advocacy:** Since Humane Immigration Reform is a current focus of our justice ministry, we are asking each local community to participate in the *Justice for Immigrants* Postcard Campaign, sponsored by the USCCB and to seek approval from your pastor to involve your parish in this endeavor. Information about the campaign accompanies this mailing and will also be available on the justice resource page of our website.

3. **Pictures:** We invite local communities and/or individual sisters to send pictures showing you engaged in some justice work in your local community, in the parish, and/or in your ministry. For example:
 - ◆ a local community using earth-friendly cleaning products or tending to an herb garden
 - ◆ a parish event such as a poor person's supper or presentation on a justice topic
 - ◆ students involved in Change for Global Change, Earth Day activity, etc.

Pictures should be sent electronically (i.e. a digital picture) by March 1st to mhamm@ssjphila.org. We will use these pictures on April 10th.

As a General Council we are grateful for all the ways the Commission for Justice and the local Justice Contacts have acted in service to our Congregation over these past three decades. We look forward to the celebration on April 10th that will inspire and challenge us as we enter our fourth decade of justice ministry.

Gratefully,
Anne, Mary, Carol, Gee, and Connie

