

Call to Justice: “JusticeGram” of the Salvatorian Family USA

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God Gave Us Two Feet!

Sr. Jean Schafer, SDS

It is hard to stand on one foot for long periods of time. Hence God gave us two! Our Catholic Faith has also given us TWO important means for bringing about the Reign of God in our global community. But many of us continue to use only one means and then wonder why our work is never done.

The implication? We need BOTH justice AND charity. Charity alone may be satisfying, but it can also be tiring and repetitive with no sign of change.

God is urging us to step into the realm of justice work. Studying the issues will help us see more clearly where injustice perpetuates exploitation of persons and of nature. Then the question becomes – what will we do?

The diagram offers the comparison.

- **Justice action means meddling in politics.**
- **Justice action means speaking out for the voiceless; advocating to give them a voice.**
- **Justice action may cause the loss of some friends and strain some family ties.**
- **Justice action is not for the timid!**



Yet, there is no better time to have both feet on the ground and to put our best foot forward – the one that brings about REAL CHANGE and EMPOWERMENT. That balance, that push forward will hasten the Reign of God!

“...*Omnibus et ubique*... an essential component of our society: **Universality.”**

Talks of Fr. Jordan, 17 February 1899

Saying “yes” to the “preferential option for the poor”

Fr. Virginus Osuagwu, SDS

My social justice experience in Maryland/DC has been multi-dimensional. I could easily itemize them - **Ministry of the Word** (preaching), and **Collaboration & Advocacy**.

My passion for the social justice dimension of the gospel is rooted in my understanding of and experience of Jesus the Savior who comes to bring good news to the poor, heal the broken hearted, give voice to the voiceless, restore the status of women and let the oppressed experience the freedom of the sons and daughters of God (Lk 4: 18-19; Rom 8: 21)

The ministry of the Word/preaching provides me the opportunity to address troubling social issues - racism, discrimination and hate, gun

April 22, 2021
Earth Day

In *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis clearly ties the health of Mother Earth and all that exists upon it to the plight of those who are disempowered, marginalized and impoverished. Scientists agree: our time to fix the damage happening to Mother Earth is slipping away. We can see how humanity’s treatment of Mother Earth will impact our generation and generations to come. Honor Mother Earth with one of these:

- Join the Global Catholic Climate Movement (<https://catholicclimatemovement.global>)
- Watch and pray with the YouTube series of short videos “Nature is Speaking.” (<https://tinyurl.com/JusticeGram>)
- Take the *Laudato Si* Pledge (<https://livelaudatosi.org/>)



Fr. Virginus: Ministry of the Word

violence, inhuman policies that oppress those on the margins— by courageously and respectfully using our most potent weapon, the Word of God.

I collaborate with the Archdiocese of Washington and Pax Christi in my social justice work. I am the designated spiritual support for three refugee families through the Pax Christi movement. I serve as a member of the *Voice of Africans in Diaspora*, and the *Steering Committee for Pastoral Leaders*.

I have also spoken on *Gun Violence* at a local parish. As I shared my story as a gun violence victim in front of large audience, I felt like God was using the darkest moment of my life to shed on something that is politically polarizing. I also spoke and led prayer for the celebration of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception in front of the Nicaraguan embassy to protest the corruption of the government. >>

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My hope is to build solid relationships in social justice ministry (advocacy, teaching, preaching) that will create a strong Salvatorian presence communicating the goodness and kindness of Jesus the Savior through our unique Salvatorian values of inclusivity, equality, love, kindness, and universality.



Not just a starfish in the sea...

Heather Holton, SDS

As a Lay Salvatorian and the current Director of the Salvatorian Mission Warehouse (SalvatorianMissionWarehouse.org) which has built on its strong SDS history that has included countless Salvatorian Brothers, Sisters, Priests, and Lay members, it's sometimes easy to lose sight of SMW's impact. We deal with poverty and injustice on such a large scale.

Sometimes it feels like we're tossing a single starfish into the ocean. Yet, I regularly receive photos from our partners showing people receiving life-changing supplies like wheelchairs, school desks, or even a pair of shoes. With the gift of corporate donations of goods and the help of hundreds of volunteers and donors, we send our international mission partners about one shipping container per week.

They are filled with food, clothing, medical equipment, school supplies, and more. I cannot deny the pull of this ministry. It also lets me be enveloped in the Salvatorian Family so completely.

Until global justice empowers and enables people in poor countries to have the resources and freedom to feed, clothe and care for themselves through their own resilience, we at the Warehouse will continue to help them know the love of Jesus. That love gives them hope.



Working for Justice

Sr. Ellen Sinclair, SDS

I was motivated to become a lawyer because I saw it as a way to work for justice. As a Salvatorian I still work for justice. As a pro bono attorney I help clients navigate a system that is too complicated and many times seems weighted against them. I use my legal skills to hopefully get justice for this one person, on this one matter, at >>



You're Reading a Salvatorian Family Publication



In response to our JLG call to focus on Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC), we produce this quarterly newsletter for members of our SDS Family. We invite our members to **talk, pray, and act** on the issues we highlight. Use the links to learn more.

@ Prayer or @ UR Parish

- ◇ **As we respond to the many needs of our world, may we become ever more aware of our power and our privilege, tools that can help create systemic change.**
- ◇ **When we bang against systemic injustice, let us find courage and creativity to respond, even when issues seem too complex.**
- ◇ **As we consider how best to use our time, talents, and treasure, may we be guided and motivated by the insights and leadership of Pope Francis and others in our church.**
- ◇ **As we celebrate Earth Day (April 22), help us to become ever better stewards of creation.**

[cont. from p. 3]

this time. I have assisted green card holders in applying for citizenship, individuals with disabilities in applying for social security, first responders in preparing wills, and most recently, dozens of tenants facing evictions. The client having an attorney helps “even the field” and often allows for a more positive outcome.

However, my pro bono attorney work is only a part of how I am working for justice. Most of the social justice ministry I have been involved with as a Salvatorian is not related to being an attorney and is no different than any other Salvatorian or parishioner – serving on committees, writing letters, staying informed, attending actions, etc.

Systemic justice works for the common good at a variety of levels. To be success-

ful it requires many to work together. We work for systemic justice on a global scale with our involvement with UNANIMA International, where I serve as the SDS board member.

On the national level there are many organizations working for systemic justice. A few I support include Network, Justice for Immigrants, and U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking. There are myriad other national organizations.

On the state/local level I participate with Black Lives Are Sacred, LCWR Legislative Network, my parish justice and peace committee, and Catholic Coalition for Migrants and Refugees. When many people work together, we are able to make changes to the systems that are causing the injustice.



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