

Info Alert 144

May 8, 2018

"Although it has been a disappointing year in many ways, full of bad news and soul-searching about the best way to move on, it turns out that the answer to making real progress was with us all along:

It is US. We are who we have been waiting for. We must continue to forge ahead together to reset society on a better track towards fulfilling the welcoming and generous promises of the American dream."

(Interfaith Worker Justice Newsletter, Spring, 2018)

Gratitude: And this US is you, all of our IHM's.

Thank you for your interest, prayer, so many actions for justice issues this year.

Such energy convinces and encourages us to continue this gospel work.

Education: Systemic Change and Interrelationships

Often, in Info Alerts, we speak of the urgent need for systemic change if justice is to be achieved, especially for the poor and marginalized. What do we mean by *systemic change*? The most broadly valid definition is "change that pervades **all** parts of a system, taking into account the interrelationships and interdependencies among the parts." So, let's identify some of the parts that must be addressed to create a just, humane, responsible society where the dignity of each person is respected and supported, according to Catholic Social Teaching. How are these parts related?

Interrelationships: Poverty is often caused by a "non-living" wage that fails to support a family. This breeds hunger and/or unhealthy eating habits due to a lack of healthy, affordable, nearby food stores. Thus poverty and unhealthy eating habits result in poor health. The resultant poor health might cause workers to miss time on the job so they frequently lose wages and sometimes the job itself. Also, the loss of workers' rights and bargaining power have contributed to wage stagnation. Health coverage and avenues to education become unattainable. Discouragement settles in and the cycle stifles growth, energy, and hope for future possibilities for the family.

Racism: Another systemic reality that challenges CST Principles is our country's incredibly entrenched racism, recently fueled by hate and "white supremacy" to a frightening, paralyzing degree. **This affects all of us.** Specifically, in areas of immigration and incarceration, our government has created more and more punitive immigration laws instead of addressing the system's flaws. The U.S. Criminal Justice system has produced a mass incarceration epidemic supposedly to "get tough" on crime. Again, statistics show that racism motivates our present society in these two areas, as well as in housing, health care, education, etc. Statistics show that these actions **do not** foster improvement for anyone, no matter the pigmentation of their skin. See **Action below** for suggestions on how you might affect systemic change on those issues that most touch your heart and your sense of justice.

Prayers please for Bishop George Murray, recently appointed Chair of USCCB Racism Committee, who was just diagnosed with acute leukemia. Bishop Fabre of Houston will replace him as chair

Prayer: Mary, Mother of God, we pray for your intercession on behalf of children around the world who live each day desperate for food, shelter, security, peace. Help mothers struggling to care for their children; grant us compassion to embrace families in their darkest hours. Amen.

Action: Perhaps over the coming months, you could call your government officials (1-202-224-3121) to "forge ahead together" by urging them to:

1. Stop the repeal of and improve the ACA so that everyone has access to quality health care.
2. Defeat the Tax Bill and call out the president's draconian budget proposal.
3. Vote against the Farm Bill which has harmful cuts to SNAP.
4. Restore DACA protections; remove the threat of deportation. Protect Dreamers.
5. Advocate for pay equity, fair scheduling, and paid family leave.

The following websites provide statistics on: **Hunger**, Food Research & Action Center, mambrose@frac.org
Living wages, Network, www.networklobby.org **Immigration**, JFI and fcnl.org/priorities **Racism**, USCCB