

PEACEWEAVER

Unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow.

Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland

January, 2012

Social Justice Office

News from Mary Ellen

As we prepare for the Chapter of 2012, I am struck by the promise that it holds and aware of the anxiety that is also present on this journey of hope. Though we are surrounded by the potency of women who are skilled beyond measure, infused by the Spirit, and alive with the charism of our foundress, we still struggle with the challenge of moving on unencumbered toward new awareness and deeper knowledge of what God is asking of us in the world. Perhaps, this piece will help us to image why we must respond to that call. I suggest that you read it as it is written and then substitute Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland. It would also be appropriate to substitute: Americans, Catholics and/or world citizens. It has a very profound invitation...

On the edge of time

Between the known of my (our) past:

People I can hardly bear to leave behind,

A job I know exactly how to handle,

A home that is a nest of security, and

The vast unknown of the future ahead;

People to work with and live with whom I will need to learn to love and to trust,

A job that seems almost unbelievably demanding of my talents and my time,

A home – I don't even know where my home will be.

Why do I feel I must go through this door?

Because God calls me?

All these years I've prayed that I could serve God in whatever I did.

Now God's opened this new door for this phase of my life – so I must go.

Risking, sacrificing, leaving behind, crying – I must go.

As I grew in my relationship with God, I finally had the courage to say,

Take my life and do with it what you will.

Now God's opened this new door, so I must go.

Expecting, hoping, adventuring, trusting, I must go.

How in the world will I manage?

Because I can believe!

Believing in the God whose will is wholeness,
Believing in the Christ who will guide me on this journey,

Believing in the Holy Spirit who gives us each the power

To do more than we can believe or ask for.

Believing all this, I step across the edge of time,

Through the doors to the future

On my journey to wholeness in Christ.

Mary Ellen Brinovec, OSU

Victims of Sex Trafficking Study Findings

The major findings of the Feasibility Study Regarding Housing and Services for Victims of Sex Trafficking concluded:

1. There is a need for safe housing and supportive services for victims in northeastern Ohio.
2. There is a significant lack of knowledge regarding human trafficking among professionals who deal with vulnerable populations in northeast Ohio, including basic information regarding the crime, its local reality, victim identification, effective intervention and resources available.
3. There is a lack of coordinated response team among service providers and law enforcement in northeast Ohio designed to address the specific needs of sex trafficking victims.

Honor Human Dignity

Human Trafficking and Abortion are both human rights issues.

January 11th is the National Human Trafficking Awareness Day. The crime of human trafficking occurs in Ohio as well as across the U.S. and around the world. It often goes unreported because of threats to the victims and a lack of awareness on the part of the public.

On **January 23rd** at 7:00 pm at the Cathedral, Bishop Lennon will be the celebrant and homilist for the new Mass of Giving Thanks to God for the Gift of Human Life. This Mass will offer prayers for healing and for human dignity from conception through natural death.

Tomato Workers

A typical tomato worker gets paid about fifty cents for every 32-pound bucket of tomatoes and would have to pick a bucket every 4 minutes for 10 hours a day to even come close to making \$10,000/year. Conditions are often hot and sunny with little access to shade or time for breaks, and the fields are likely to be infested with pesticides.

Two Immokalee Workers recently visited northern Ohio to highlight the issue of labor trafficking in the tomato fields of Florida. Their Fair Food Campaign is designed to urge buyers to pay one penny a pound more for the tomatoes they purchase and to sign a commitment to assure fair and just treatment of workers in the fields.

Over the past 9 years they have had success with Taco Bell, McDonald's, Subway and some other fast food restaurants as well as Whole Foods grocery stores. They are focusing their efforts on other grocery chains and are asking for basic rights like rest breaks, access to shade and protection from pesticides

Money on Incarceration or Rehabilitation?

Presently 2.3 million men and women are housed in prisons throughout the U.S. – the highest rate of incarceration in the world. Every year, according to the U.S. Dept of Justice, 650,000 people are released from state and federal prisons and many more from local jails. Reintegration often fails; half of all former state convicts will be incarcerated again within three years of their release. Though we still refer to departments of *corrections*, the penal system focuses on retribution more than rehabilitation.

Executions Decline

The number of new death sentences dropped dramatically in 2011, falling below 100 for the first time in the modern era of capital punishment.

The number of new death sentences imposed in 2011 stands at 78, a decline of about 75% since 1996, when 315 inmates were sentenced to death. Executions also continued to decline while developments in a variety of states illustrated the growing discomfort that many Americans have with the death penalty. Ohio, which recently experienced a rise in executions, saw its numbers drop by 38% from 2010 to 2011, in part because of more problems with its lethal injection process. Illinois became the 4th state in four years joining New Mexico, New Jersey and New York in abandoning the death penalty.

When Troy Davis was denied clemency, people around the world were shocked that in the U.S.

someone could be executed despite so much doubt about his guilt. Even former supporters of the death penalty found the process so inflexible and unresponsive that they were convinced the system is not working. President Jimmy Carter said, *If one of our fellow citizens can be executed with so much doubt surrounding his guilt, then the death penalty system in our country is unjust and outdated.*

Private Prison Efforts

A new report released by PICO shows how private prisons are lobbying state and federal officials to build more prisons, detain more immigrants and lock-up more non-violent offenders – all to create more profits for shareholders.

Building on analysis of the most recent data on private prison and campaign contributions, as well as previous research and news accounts, the report connects the dots between rising incarceration rates, increased detention of immigrants, growing private prison revenue, increased spending on political campaigns and lobbying and privileged access to policymakers.

Campaign for Immigration Reform

On the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe and in preparation for the Iowa caucuses, 10 communities of religious sisters issued billboards with a Gospel message, in addition to a statement calling on the president and Congress to make progress on comprehensive immigration reform. The billboards read, *I was an immigrant and you welcomed me, with a strike through a stranger* and signed *Jesus*. The verse is a take on Mt. 25:35 The sisters hope to promote welcoming communities and to let the public know where the sisters stand on immigration.

Justice Resources for Educators

Need a lesson plan, a case study, movie guide or prayer service? On the Center of Concern's Educ. for Justice website www.educationforjustice.org, there is access to more than 2,300 educational resources from a Catholic social teaching perspective.

Did You Know?

Time Warner, CBS, Verizon, Comcast, and other telecommunication and media corporations earn over \$1 billion a year from porn, through services like *video on demand*.

Stop Trafficking, December, 2011