

Office for Social Action MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS



MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS NEWSLETTER

OFFICE FOR SOCIAL ACTION
SECRETARIAT FOR CATHOLIC LIFE AND EVANGELIZATION
DIOCESE OF ALLENTOWN



From the Assistant Director

Christian Hospitality The Window of Opportunity

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2008 reorganized Migration and Refugee Services' Office for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees and established the Secretariat of *Cultural Diversity in the Church*. Within the committee are five distinct subcommittees, Hispanic, African American, Native American, Asian and Pacific Island and Pastoral Care of Migrants, Refugees and Travelers. As you may recall, these offices were separate from each other prior to the reorganization. The objective of this restructuring was to bring these distinct subcommittees under one 'umbrella' and to share and discover the endless collaborative possibilities and cultural gifts that make up the Body of Christ.

This really is no surprise to me; the unity that is shared within our Multicultural Advisory Committee for the Diocese of Allentown has developed into a truly blessed diverse group. They have a deep respect for each other. When one cultural group has a community event or gathering the other cultural groups will attend and show their support. When our office sponsors an event, this group of faith-filled people willingly give of their time and talents. Our joint efforts focus on bringing Catholics from various culturally diverse communities into a fuller participation in the faith. They are active in their parish, their community and the diocese. They are keenly aware of the significance of parish involvement to be in the fullness of the Church.

Our Church mirrors our world, which exposes us to various races, ethnicities and cultures. *By appreciating our differences we recognize our sameness.* Through the ongoing initiatives of Multicultural Affairs in the Office for Social Action we have reached out not only to the 'newcomers' but also to the 'person in the pew'. All are welcome to the table; any events or programs sponsored by our office are open to all!

Multicultural Affairs strives to acknowledge the rich cultural diversity that exists in our parishes. We look to the parish community to encourage and foster parish participation to those who are new, forming the path towards entering leadership roles in the various levels of church life. Through inclusive welcoming efforts of the pastor, staff and parish family, the 'newcomers' have the opportunity to participate and integrate into the many ministries that are a part of parish life. A parish's hospitality is very nurturing to the 'newcomers' as they share their gifts of faith and culture with the parish community. Welcoming the stranger was a key element of discipleship called by Jesus Christ, as Catholics, hospitality then becomes a way of life for each of us!

*"Anyone who welcomes you, welcomes me and
anyone who welcomes me, welcomes the One who sent me."*

“The Gift You Have Received, Give as Gift!”

Sr. Patricia Kennedy, RSM, Office of Hispanic Affairs

Many years ago, as young novices preparing for our First Profession of Vows, we were asked to choose a gospel passage that spoke most clearly of our call as Sisters of Mercy. We found our response in the gospel of Matthew: “The gift you have received, give as gift” (Mt. 10:8). For us, this spoke most clearly of our desire to respond to God, through a life of service. That was over thirty years ago, and no matter how much I have changed, my world or my Church have changed, this gospel still speaks a truth about my call as a Sister of Mercy, and I would even dare to suggest, ...it speaks a truth for you as well.

Liturgically, we are caught in an in-between time. We find ourselves in the PAUSE after the season of Christmas and before the beginning of Lent! We are caught in the middle between light and darkness, winter and spring. And the Church, in her great wisdom offers to us a Feast to reflect on: The Presentation of Jesus, sometimes called Candlemas Day (February 2nd). This Feast by nature is multicultural and celebrates the encounter between Jesus, and Simeon and Anna, in the Temple of Jerusalem (Luke 2: 29-32). At the sight of Jesus, Simeon prays, “Now master you may let your servant go in peace, for my eyes have seen your salvation, a light to the nations and the glory of your people Israel.” Jesus is the light to the nations, the light to every culture and people. Traditionally, the Church blessed candles on February 2nd, dating back several centuries.

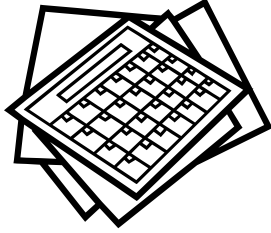
These candles were then given to families for their homes, so that they too could share the light of faith. Many cultures have incorporated this celebration in various ways...but it spans the spectrum from Europe, to Mexico, to Latin America, and even into the traditions of the United States.

The lighting of a candle is also intrinsic to the celebration of the sacrament of Baptism. Godparents receive the candle for the child, and hopefully, pass on the gift of faith to that child. They carry the light until the child is old enough to carry the light for himself, revealing Christ to others. Faith is a gift, given and received...and then given again. Through the Sacrament of Baptism, we are called to reveal the Light of Christ to all Peoples. It is a gift to be shared and given, time and time again. It is a personal call that demands a response.

In this pause between winter and spring, let us renew our baptismal commitment. Let us reveal Christ to the world. Let us be a light to the nations, and most of all, let us begin within our own local parishes and church. The Church needs you. Your gifts are indispensable to her mission. The multicultural reality of our Diocese needs professional and bilingual leaders to come forth from each culture so that we can become who we are: **One Body, One Church, in Christ.**

We have received the gift of Faith, and each individual culture is a gift to the Church. Through Baptism, we are called to participate in the growth and development *our* Multicultural Church ...*this* Church, in the Diocese of Allentown. Every call demands a response. “The gift you have received, give as gift.”





2010 Multicultural Celebration of Faith Prayer Service

The Office for Social Action's Ministry of Multicultural Affairs is planning a Multicultural Celebration of Faith to take place :

Sunday, October 24, 2010
Cathedral of
St. Catharine of Siena
18th and Turner Street, Allentown, PA 18104
3:00 PM



Look forward to sharing a prayer service followed by a social with our brothers and sisters of one faith who represent the many cultures that enrich our diocese.

This celebration will be particularly special because it will be the first Multicultural Celebration of Faith presided over by the Bishop of Allentown.

The Most Reverend John O. Barres, D.D.
will be the celebrant and homilist
for the prayer service.

Details to follow.

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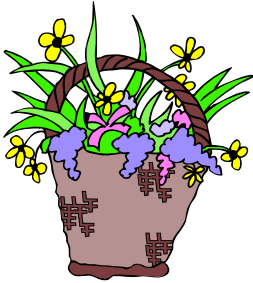


Multicultural Mission Statement

In response to the U.S Catholic Bishops' document, "*Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity*", the Ministry of Multicultural Affairs was established under the Office for Social Action. This ministry creates awareness of the rich ethnic diversity of the Diocese of Allentown and develops outreach programs and resource materials, which will challenge parishes and individuals to genuinely strive to welcome cultural diversity.

The Church's call to communion, solidarity and conversion to the "stranger in our midst" encourages the newcomer's inclusion and participation in a parish.

Flores de Mayo



The Filipino Catholic Community in the Diocese of Allentown (FCCDA) will be holding its 4th annual “Flores de Mayo” (Flowers of May) at St. Francis Retreat House, Easton on May 29, 2010. This year’s Flores de Mayo starts with the assembly of devotees and participants at 1:00 PM and Mass at 2:00 PM followed by a Santacruzán. A Santacruzán is a procession where young boys and girls in their Sunday best gather to commemorate the legendary events of the finding of the Holy Cross by Queen Helena. A fiesta fellowship featuring food, fun and games at the Pieta pavilion at the Friary, concludes the afternoon of festivities.

All are welcome!

Postcard Campaign to Support Immigration Reform

The Justice for Immigrants (JFI) campaign of the USCCB has made available postcards to use as a tool to build support for immigration reform in Congress. The goal of the postcard initiative is to enhance the ability of the church community, to advocate for immigration reform, and to encourage our Federal officials to enact legislation as soon as possible. In order to participate in the campaign, you can send an electronic version of the postcard directly from the website at www.justiceforimmigrants.org or for hard copy postcards, please call the Office for Social Action at 610-289-8900 x231.

Have you considered making a Lenten Day of Recollection?

The Rev. Richard Brensinger, M. Div., Parochial Vicar of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Bethlehem, will serve as Spiritual Director for a Lenten Day of Recollection on Thursday, March 25, from 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM at St. Francis Retreat House, 3918 Chipman Road, Easton. Following the theme, “Baptized to: Live Justice in the 21st Century,” the day will include talks, witness, reflection, Mass and an opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

A fee of \$25 includes lunch.

To register for the day, please call the Office for Social Action before March 15th – 610-289-8900 x221.



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