

JustSouth Monthly

JSRI Perspectives on FAITH DOING JUSTICE

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Mindful Solidarity Flattening the Curve and Bending the Arc

By Dennis Kalob, Ph.D.

JSRI Future Activities

May 28

Fr. Fred Kammer, SJ, JD will keynote the first "Justice League" on-line book discussion of his book *Doing Faithjustice* for the Ignatian Solidarity Network.

JSRI staff and associates—working from home—will continue monitoring local, state, and federal administrative, legislative, and judicial actions regarding our priority issues and the impact of Covid-19; participating in advocacy communications with authorities; recommending resources on our website and by social media; research and writing for our publications; and activating our advocacy network as appropriate.

JSRI Recent Activities

May 1 & 7

Dr. Dennis Kalob attended meetings (virtually) of the Care for Our Common Home Commission of the U.S. Central and Southern Jesuit Province.

May 6

Loyola student volunteer tutors with Cafe con Ingles, an ESL and community-building program at St. Anthony of Padua Church coordinated by Dr. Sue Weishar, submitted their supplemental Service Learning projects overseen by Dr. Eileen Doll, thus completing their Service Learning requirements for the semester.

May 6

Dr. Nicholas Mitchell submitted a testimony to the House and Governmental Affairs Committee in opposition to HR 58 restricting the Governor's power in emergencies.

May 12

Dr. Weishar participated in a meeting of the Jesuit Criminal Justice Network, an organization being led by the Jesuit Conference Office for Justice and Ecology.

May 13

Dr. Weishar moderated a [panel discussion](#), co-hosted by the Center for Migration Studies, Loyola's Immigration Law Clinic, and JSRI, on the "Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Vulnerable Immigrants and Refugees."

May 15

Fr. Kammer joined the other Jesuit Members of the Loyola University New Orleans Corporation to meet with President Tanya Tetlow and to receive and discuss her state of the university report.

May 20

Dr. Weishar participated in a meeting organized by the [Louisiana Stop Solitary Coalition](#) to plan a webinar on the health consequences of using solitary confinement to isolate infected prisoners during the pandemic.

In our current crisis, we have understood that if we all act together, we can impact the spread of the disease. Through physical distancing and masking, we can limit or at least slow the spread of the disease so as to not overwhelm the health care system, buy some time until effective therapies and a vaccine are developed, and reduce the death rate. Acting together, in a mindful solidarity that benefits ourselves and our neighbors, we can "flatten the curve" and limit the virus' destruction.



Flattening the curve is a collective endeavor that is all about the promotion of the common good—I benefit when we all benefit. The common good is a foundational concept in Catholic social teaching. As Fr. Fred Kammer, SJ has noted, it is "basic to our entire social ethics." [1]

To be an ethical Catholic—or human being for that matter—it is imperative that we act in consonance with what is in the collective good. And so, we need to continue to act in ways that help to reduce the spread of this deadly disease.

We must also advocate for our government (local, state, federal) to take the necessary steps to reduce the spread of the disease and limit its death rate. In addition, however, we must demand that public policies be enacted that address the economic harm done to workers, families and communities by the restrictions that have been put in place. The common good refers to economic matters, as well as to our health. We absolutely should not have to choose between physical health and economic survival. We can address both, as other countries have done.

Martin Luther King, Jr., being one of the great moral leaders of the 20th century, made the promotion of the common good a centerpiece of his life's work. He lived his life imagining and pursuing a better world for all. He concluded his Nobel Peace Prize lecture with these words:

Granted that we face a world crisis which leaves us standing so often amid the surging murmur of life's restless sea. But every crisis has both its dangers and its opportunities. It can spell either salvation or doom. In a dark confused world the kingdom of God may yet reign in the hearts of [all people]. [2]

King spoke those words more than 55 years ago in a very different time, but they resonate today. We are at our own moment of crisis that "has its dangers and opportunities." The dangers are mostly clear, but not so clear are the opportunities.

The opportunities at this time require that we first recognize through our collective suffering here and around the world, our common humanity and the necessity of working to fulfill the common good—to protect each other's health and economic security. If this crisis helps us to see much better than before how our own life is inextricably linked to the lives of others across the street and around the globe, then that realization can lead to all sorts of collective actions for the common good and we can build a better world.

King understood that "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." [3] However, he also understood that it does not happen magically. We must work together to bend that arc—to bring justice amidst this pandemic and in the years after.

[1] Fred Kammer, SJ, JD. (forthcoming, summer 2020). *Catholic Social Thought and the Coronavirus*. JustSouth Quarterly.

[2] Martin Luther King, Jr. Nobel Peace Prize lecture delivered in Oslo, Norway, December 11, 1964.

[3] From a speech Dr. King delivered to a gathering of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Atlanta, GA, August 16, 1967.

Monthly articles reflect the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of Loyola University New Orleans.

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Office Phone: 504- 864-7746 | E-mail: jsri@loyno.edu | Website: www.loyno.edu/jsri
Mailing Address: 6363 St. Charles Avenue, Campus Box 94, New Orleans, LA 70118

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