

# JustSouth Monthly

JSRI Perspectives on FAITH DOING JUSTICE

LOYOLA  
UNIVERSITY  
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Number 44

February 2015

## Honor Our Sacred Obligation

### Raise the Minimum Wage

by Alex Mikulich, Ph.D.

SUPPORT US »

#### JSRI Upcoming Events

##### February 21

Fr. Kammer will address parishioners at St. Gabriel Parish in New Orleans on Catholic Social Thought.

##### February 28 & March 21

Fr. Kammer will provide two sessions on the social implications of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius for the Ignatian Spirituality Institute at Montserrat Retreat House in Lake Dallas, TX.

##### March 6

Fr. Kammer will address participants in the AJCU Honors Conference on the intersection of honors and social justice.

#### JSRI Recent Activities

##### February 5

Fr. Kammer, Mr. Bustamante, Ms. Baudouin, and Dr. Weishar helped lead the Catholic Teach-In on Migration for Young Catholics. Students from Dr. Lisbeth Philip's Certificate Program in Translation and Interpreting provided interpreting services. Students from Loyola

The question of the "State of the Dream" is often raised at annual celebrations of the Martin Luther King Holiday. I heard the question yet again at a recent panel discussion held at Dillard University. Dominant U.S. society, I responded, has never embraced Dr. King's "Dream" or the goals of the March on Washington.

The opportunity to enact the "Dream" still stands before us. There are many ways we can enact the Dream, one of which is raising the minimum wage to the level demanded by the March on Washington on March 28, 1963.

Dr. King began his speech to marchers by marking the 100th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, citing the great promises made in the Declaration of Independence and Constitution. This is the promise that all people would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. King stated:

*It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note in so far as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check: a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds."*

152 years after the Emancipation Proclamation, have we, as a nation, honored our sacred obligations to the promises of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness?

While we celebrate equal access to public accommodations, laws against racial discrimination in employment, and Black voting rights attained through the Civil Rights Act of

Honors Program, Spanish majors, and Service Learning students facilitated small groups.

### February 1

Dr. Weishar provided an orientation and training to ten Loyola Service Learning students who have volunteered to teach English to adult immigrant students with Café con Ingles.

### January 30-31

Dr. Mikulich co-facilitated an anti-racism workshop for Pax Christi USA.

### January 29

Dr. Weishar toured the Karnes County Residential Center in Karnes County, TX, where U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement began detaining women and children fleeing Central America in August 2014.

### January 27

Dr. Sue Weishar spoke to students at The Academy of Our Lady in Marrero about the child migrant crisis and the Church's teachings on migration.

### January 20

Dr. Mikulich served on a panel discussion about Dr. Martin Luther King's Dream at Dillard University as a part of the MLK Week of Peace.

### January 14

Dr. Weishar attended a meeting in New York City of Langeloth Foundation grantees working on prison reform issues.

Rights Act of 1965 (although these are under assault today), the key economic, housing, and education goals of the 1963 March on Washington remain unrealized (see [Unfinished March](#)).

Consider: The March on Washington demanded a national minimum wage of \$2 per hour--which is \$13 per hour in today's dollars. The federal minimum wage was last changed to \$7.25 per hour in 2009. Since Dr. King was assassinated, the median income gap of \$12,000 between Blacks and Whites has narrowed by only 3 cents on the dollar. At this rate of progress, income equality will not be achieved for 537 years.[1]

In his Special Report, "Too Much for Too Many: What does it cost families to live in Louisiana?" Alí Bustamante shows that 228,000 Louisiana families do not make enough wages to achieve a minimally decent living.[2] In 2013, over 39 percent of Louisiana workers made less than \$13 per hour. That is more than 772,000 of 1.9 million employed workers in Louisiana. The March on Washington demand of \$13 per hour would give these workers an automatic raise, lift them to a more decent living and help grow our economy.

One concrete way we can enact Dr. King's dream is to raise the minimum wage to the level demanded by the 1963 March on Washington. That would be a real way we could honor our sacred obligation to all Americans and truly celebrate Black History month!

**As Appeal to You from**  
JAMES FARMER  
Congress of Racial Equality  
JOHN LEWIS  
Student Non-violent  
Coordinating Committee  
ROY WILKINS  
National Association for the  
Advancement of Colored People  
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.  
Southern Christian Leadership Conference  
A. PHILIP RANDOLPH  
Negro American Labor Council  
WHITNEY YOUNG  
National Urban League

**to MARCH on  
WASHINGTON**  
WEDNESDAY AUGUST 28, 1963

*America faces a crisis ...  
Millions of Negroes are denied freedom ...  
Millions of citizens, black and white, are unemployed ...*

**We demand:** — Meaningful Civil Rights Laws  
— Massive Federal Works Program  
— Full and Fair Employment  
— Decent Housing  
— The Right to Vote  
— Adequate Integrated Education

In our community, groups and individuals are mobilizing for the August 28th demonstration. For information regarding your participation, call the local Coordinating Committee for the

**MARCH ON WASHINGTON  
FOR JOBS AND FREEDOM**

1417 You Street, N.W. ADans 2-2320

CO-CHAIRMEN  
Rev. Walter E. Fauntroy, Coordinator Edward A. Hiles  
Joseph A. Beavers Julius W. Hobson  
E. Charles Brown Sterling Tucker

[1]Dedrick Muhammad, 40 Years Later: The Unrealized American Dream (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Policy Studies, 2008), p. 5.

[2]Alí Bustamante, "[Too Much for Too Many: What does it cost families to live in Louisiana?](#)" JustSouth Quarterly (Winter 2014).