



Connect with  
JSRI on  
[Twitter](#) &  
[Facebook](#)

Number 104

February 2020

## Getting in the Game On Advocacy and Activism

By Nik Mitchell, Ph.D.

### JSRI Future Activities

#### February 22

Fr. Fred Kammer, SJ will deliver the keynote on Environmental Justice at the Texas Mission Conference in San Antonio.

#### March 14

Fr. Kammer will keynote a conference on parish social ministry at Fontbonne University in St. Louis.

### JSRI Recent Activities

#### January 16

At the Spring 2020 Service Learning Fair Dr. Sue Weishar recruited 13 student volunteers to teach English with Café Con Ingles, a JSRI project that provides ESL and resource information to immigrant members of St. Anthony of Padua Church in Mid-City New Orleans.

#### January 17-19

Fr. Kammer and Ms. Mary Baudouin led the social justice retreat for Jesuit Volunteers of the mid-America region in Dover, Tennessee.

#### January 29

Dr. Dennis Kalob attended the monthly meeting of the social justice advocacy organization, Step-Up.

#### February 1

Dr. Weishar provided a talk on the collaboration between JSRI and Burning Bush: Catholic Sisters and Brothers for an End to Violence to members of Burning Bush at the Dominican Peace Center.

#### February 3-5

Fr. Kammer delivered several talks on economic justice to students, faculty, and parents at Jesuit High School in Sacramento, CA.

#### February 6

Dr. Weishar met with Ms. Dorothy Balsler, Director of Parish and Community Engagement Ministries at Catholic Charities Jackson, to discuss the Catholic Church's response to the August 2019 ICE raids in central Mississippi.

#### February 11

Dr. Weishar lectured in Dr. Eileen Doll's immigration class on Immigration to the U.S.: Patterns, Policies, and Present Realities.

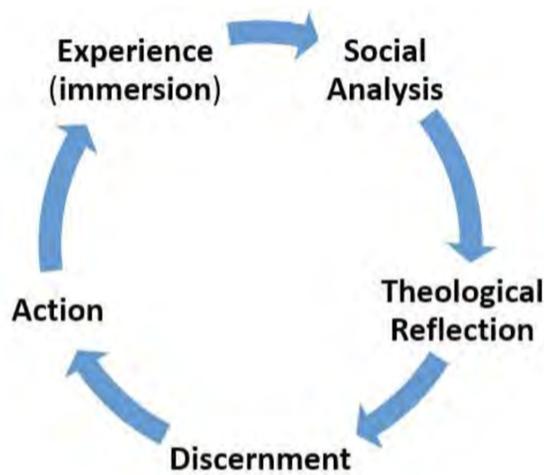
#### February 10-13

Dr. Kalob attended the annual gathering of the Commission for Social Development at the United Nations. He also attended the monthly meeting of the NGO Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons.

#### February 18

Fr. Kammer presented a social analysis of New Orleans to Boston College High School students on a service trip here.

As of the writing of this essay, the Democratic presidential primary is underway and the Louisiana Legislative session will begin on March 9. I considered writing about the necessity of doing our civic duty to vote. While this is true, I decided to go one-step further in how we discuss civic duty. If I have learned anything in my time and from my colleagues at JSRI, it is that if silence is all they hear from the people, lawmakers will assume that we agree with them. In this time of hyper-political awareness, I want to remind all of us of our civil duty to practice corporeal politics- to be present in the actual processes of law and public policy creation.



### The Pastoral Circle

Why should we care about the details of public policy creation? Public policies are always consequential and are measured in how they affect human beings. Have we gone to a doctor and been treated in a safe and sanitary manner? Do we wake up today and eat with no fear of consuming rotten food? Do we take a drink of water today and not consider if we will contract cholera? Are we in an interracial or other relationship with no fear of arrest for violating decency laws? If you answered yes to any of these questions, you have public policy to thank for that. If health care is restricted, people die. If food and water are contaminated, people die. If people are denied their civil rights, they may not die physically but oppression is just a slow death of the soul.

So how do we get involved? Through activism and advocacy.

One method of both activism and advocacy is the pastoral circle. [1]

The first step of the pastoral circle is **EXPERIENCE**. Lived experience is the foundation of all advocacy and activism. "How do the people feel about the quality of their life?" and "What is the quality of their life?" are the central questions that are considered here.

The second step is **SOCIAL ANALYSIS** which is the most critical and difficult step to master. How well do you know this topic, the support for it, and the resistance to it? This is where people often fall prey to platitudes and assumptions about people and systems. It is our responsibility to KNOW rather than assume.

The third step is **THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION**. How does our faith and moral compass demand we address this situation? Is this right or wrong or is it a shade of gray that demands careful navigation?

The fourth step is **DISCERNMENT LEADING TO ACTION**. "What can we do?"... "What should we do?"... "Should we be leaders or servants in this situation?"... "Are we seeking to change the policy or defend what already is?" These are some of the questions that come at the start of planning an action.

As the model is a circle, it is a constant process that seeks to improve upon methods and gain new insights from study and experience.

I cannot guarantee instant success. Most substantive change takes years, decades, and even centuries. I can guarantee you that the people who keep showing up inevitably win. Change is slow and often the structures we face are larger and more impersonal than we can imagine; but, until they are confronted, nothing will change.

[1] First developed in 1980 by Peter Henriot, SJ, and Joe Holland of the Center of Concern in Washington, DC, the Pastoral Circle has been widely used and even enhanced by the addition of "Discernment" by the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. It is rooted in and a further development of the "see, judge, act" of the Catholic Action movements originating in Europe in the early twentieth century.

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

Please send

feedback to [jsri@loyno.edu](mailto:jsri@loyno.edu)

[CLICK TO JOIN OUR ADVOCACY NETWORK](#)

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY NEW ORLEANS

As our number of enrolled students continues to rise, we need to make sure that each and every one has access to an exceptional educational experience. We can't do it without your help. [Give today!](#)

Published by the Jesuit Social Research Institute

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

6363 St. Charles Avenue | New Orleans, LA 70118

This email was sent to .  
To ensure that you continue receiving our emails, please add us to your address book or safe list.

[manage](#) your preferences | [opt out](#) of all Loyola e-newsletters

Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.