

# JustSouth Monthly

JSRI Perspectives on FAITH DOING JUSTICE



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## The Catholic Social Ministry Gathering (CSMG): 2019

By Dr. Dennis Kalob

### JSRI Future Activities

#### March 13

Fr. Fred Kammer will deliver a lecture on the Jesuit theme of faith-doing-justice as part of the Loyola Lenten series.

### JSRI Recent Activities

#### January 31

Dr. Sue Weishar participated in a planning meeting for the Solitary Watch research project involving Louisiana prisons.

#### February 2

Fr. Kammer and Dr. Weishar were guest speakers at the Catholic Teach-In on Immigration at St. Jerome Catholic Church in Kenner, organized by St. Jerome parishioners Kevin Cahalan and Charlie Freel.

#### February 2-5

Dr. Dennis Kalob attended the annual Catholic Social Ministry Gathering in Washington, D.C.

#### February 4-5

Fr. Kammer hosted the JVC national board meeting in New Orleans.

#### February 6

Dr. Weishar attended a meeting of the Board of Directors of El Pueblo, a program serving vulnerable immigrants on the Mississippi Coast.

#### February 10

Dr. Weishar provided an orientation and training for ten Loyola Service Learning students who have volunteered to teach ESL with Café con Ingles, a ministry of St. Anthony of Padua Church, Sunday mornings for the spring semester.

#### February 11-13

Dr. Kalob attended the opening three days of the meetings of the Commission for Social Development at the United Nations in New York.

#### February 12

Dr. Kalob attended a meeting in New York of the NGO Committee to Stop Trafficking in Persons.

#### February 14 & 26

Dr. Kalob attended meetings of the activist group, Step Up Louisiana, to work on issues pertaining to raising the minimum wage.

#### February 19

Fr. Kammer provided a brief social analysis of New Orleans to visiting students from BC High School.

#### February 20

Dr. Weishar participated in a planning meeting of the Ethical Policing is Courageous Conference, to be held June 19 and 20 at Loyola Law School.

#### February 21

Dr. Weishar attended the Cura Loyola opening reception in the Diboll Art Gallery.

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In early February, nearly 600 Catholics from 42 states gathered in Washington, D.C. to learn more about and discuss a variety of social issues and policies in light of Catholic Social Teaching. Participants came from parishes, diocesan offices, schools and local, state and national Catholic charitable and justice-oriented organizations. The theme of this year's Catholic Social Ministry Gathering was *Let Justice Flow: A Call to Restore and Reconcile*.



Catholic Social Ministry Gathering 2019

Among the issues discussed were racism, poverty, and immigration—each fundamental to JSRI's mission. These topics and others were presented in plenaries and/or in breakout sessions over the course of the first three days of the gathering.

On our last day, many of the conference participants went to Capitol Hill to meet with their representatives or their staff and lobby on particular pieces of legislation and general actions we hope they will undertake on pressing justice issues.

Our lobbying effort focused on the priorities of the Catholic Bishops, which they shared with us during the conference. Their domestic policy priorities include:

- Finding a solution to protect the DREAMERS with a path to citizenship.
- Finding a permanent protective solution for those under Temporary Protective Status (such as those from El Salvador, Honduras and Haiti).
- Maintaining funding for critical nutrition programs such as SNAP and WIC
- Addressing the affordable housing crisis.
- Protecting the environment, including passing the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act.

For more information on each of these priorities and to find ways you can advocate on these important social and moral issues, you can go to [this page](#) on the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) website.

Climate change is certainly a critically important topic that we discussed and on which we lobbied. For those of us from Louisiana and Texas it is particularly important and challenging. These two states are major oil and gas producers—contributors to the global climate crisis. They are also among those areas of the nation most at risk from major hurricanes and rising sea levels.

"Today," Pope Francis reminds us, "we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as the hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor." So we must understand that climate change, though impacting virtually all corners of the earth, disproportionately impacts the poorest of our brothers and sisters. They are already vulnerable and they will be hit the hardest as droughts, storms, and damage to agriculture spread. And we also must be sensitive to and assist those workers who may be affected as we make the necessary shift away from fossil fuels to renewable energy.

It should be noted that the CSMG was a lot more than a discussion of social issues and our advocacy on Capitol Hill. It was also an opportunity to reflect upon our relationship with others, with Creation, and with God. It was a time to share, laugh and sometimes cry together, as we consider the state of the human family, the condition of our planet, and our individual and collective responsibilities to care for and love each other and to serve God.

Finally, below are several wonderful resources that were shared at the gathering:

- [Open Wide Our Hearts: The Enduring Call to Love, a Pastoral Letter Against Racism from the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops](#).
- [www.povertyusa.org](#) is a project of the USCCB on poverty in America.
- [Network](#) is the Catholic Social Justice Lobby founded by Catholic Sisters and the force behind "Nuns on the Bus."
- Catholic Charities USA provides vital help through their office of [Immigration and Refugee Services](#).
- Justice for workers is the aim of the [Catholic Labor Network](#).

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)

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