

Call To Action of Michigan Newsletter

Spring 2008



P.O. Box 12161, Hamtramck, Michigan, 48212

www.cta-mi.org

REGIONAL CONTACTS STATE OF MICHIGAN

President

Jeannine Daly
mikedaly@tir.com
248-651-7075

Detroit Metro

Eileen Burns
eb120246@sbcglobal.net
313-963-0448

Detroit Metro North

Jeannine/Mike Daly
mikedaly@tir.com
248-651-7075

Grand Rapids

Jerry O'Bee
jerry@jerryobee.com
616-676-0749

Lansing

Karen Schrauben
kroses@comcast.net
517-627-5534
Janet Glisson
j.behappy@comcast.net
517-484-0443

Kalamazoo

Jim Rose
jrose121@juno.com
(269) 544-2486

Saginaw

Ron & Rosemary Moon
roseron@sbcglobal.net
(989) 781-0921

Washtenaw

Arnie Messing
arniemessing@comcast.net
(810) 227-4609

Up North

John Chuchman
231-633-3464
poetman@torchlake.com

Michigan Call To Action State Conference "08"

"CATHOLIC AND AMERICAN: AN EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE" is the title of Tom Robert's keynote address for our Conference. Tom Roberts is news editor of the National Catholic Reporter. He will address BOTH and how we relate to the hierarchy and how we define ourselves as Catholics. How fortunate to have him as our main speaker and how timely his message!

Tom Roberts is a nationally and internationally known Catholic American. He comes to our Conference just before the general election of a new U.S. President and Vice-President and only a few months following Pope Benedict XVI's visit to the United States. As reporter and writer for many years about Church matters, whether in Rome or other parts of the Catholic world, he will be able to share with us a wealth of knowledge and experience to enlighten us and help us blend gospel values with living in the United States and calling ourselves Catholic. Talk about an opportunity to participate in an exciting event! Once again Call to Action of Michigan has found a jewel and has arranged to have him in our midst for our Fall Conference.

On Friday evening, Lena Woltering (FOSIL) will present new information about Synods and on other timely topics, since her last visit with us. Her presentation will be followed by entertainment and refreshments, as our Fall Conference will include some time to relax and enjoy.

It will be held on Friday evening, September 19th and Saturday, September 20th at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Episcopal/Anglican Church, 4800 Woodward Ave, across from the Detroit Art Institute, Detroit, MI. As in past Conferences a celebration of Eucharist in a special way is in planning stages. Music and entertainment will be provided as part of the Friday evening gathering. Cost for the full weekend is \$50.00.

Mike and Jeannine Daley have offered to serve as hospitality coordinators and will attempt to find lodging for out-of-towners in the homes of local members. If you are interested in staying with a member, please call 248-651-7075. More details to come in Summer Newsletter, but for now seal the dates, the time and the place. Plan now for our Fall Conference.

Mark Your Calendars...

Call To Action State Conference 2008

in Detroit on Friday evening, September 19 and Saturday, September 20, 2008.
Keynote Speaker: Tom Roberts, Editor of the National Catholic Reporter.

From Saginaw ...

Saginaw Morwood adventure:

We met at St. Andrew Catholic Church, (where all our CTA activities happen). There were about 50 attendees. Michael holds his audience in almost rapt attention because of his revolutionary and exciting theology. It was a very successful evening with most remaining for punch, coffee & goodies. Conversation was animated and excited. All the books and DVDs were sold. It's interesting to think how our church would look if Michael's message took hold. Hmm!

Other news from Saginaw:

Although we plan to meet until June, and take a summer break, our 8th annual Mary Magdalene celebration in July is the centerpiece of summer. Plans are underway.

Members of our branch took part in passing out flyers from the War Resisters League explaining how our tax money is spent.

At the risk of sounding like a name dropper, we were pleased to welcome Bishop Untener's sister into our branch. We also are working on some research looking into the numbers of Catholics who have departed regular parish participation in the diocese. Also, with the help of another new member, who is teaching at MI State, we hope to get more information from the younger generation of our area concerning their faith journeys.

Have a great summer, enjoy all the politics (ha ha).
Love from Saginaw.

From Lansing ...

CTA Lansing hosted Michael Morwood, March 5. Fifty five (55) attended, ranging in age from high school to seniors, as well as persons from different Christian denominations. The diversity did lend a wonderful dimension to our evening as a whole and especially the question and answer session. It was great.

Our April meeting was a lively discussion of an article from the Network or Spiritual Progressives by Rabbi Michael Lemer. A most stimulating exchange followed by all present. On next meeting, May 15th, will conclude the discussion and move on to consider 'actions' our local people may wish to pursue.

June 26th, 7 to 9 p.m., our Branch is hosting an evening with John Chuchman. "Spirituality Everywhere, Even Outside of Church" will be the main topic of discussion following his presentation. All are invited. Contact Karen Schrauben or Janet Glisson.

During the summer months we are planning a picnic...just to keep in touch and share what is happening within our group. We will begin our more formal meetings again in September on the 3rd Thursday of each month.

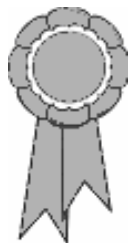
Karen Schrauben

IN THE SPIRIT AWARD

Almost ten years ago CTA-MI began presenting the IN THE SPIRIT award at its annual conference. As usual, you can participate in the selection process by nominating someone 'according to the criteria below'. Your nomination must be received by June 30, 2008. (Don't file this away in a "TO DO" cranny.) The board will select from your submissions. Be sure to include the full name, address, and phone (and cell) number and email address of your nominee in your letter. We need also your name, address, phones and email information.

CRITERIA: Catholic CTA-MI member who:

- Ø Loves and follows the teachings of Jesus.
- Ø Is active in efforts to reform the Roman Catholic Church.
- Ø Is familiar with and promotes the ideals of the Second Vatican Council as
- Ø Proclaimed in the Ash Wednesday, 1990 signature ad in the The New York Times.
- Ø Is knowledgeable of and supports the Michigan Call to Action Vision Statement.
- Ø Perseveres under injustice by the official Church.
- Ø Is an inspiration to friends and the wider community around her/him.



Send to: Julia Ann Archer, 22259 Morley, Dearborn, MI 48124. Thank you for your participation.

ACTION ALERT:

DEMONSTRATION AT THE ORDINATION OF PRIESTS' MASS

MAY 10, 2008 - 8:45 A.M. - BLESSED SACRAMENT CATHEDRAL
9844 WOODWARD AVE. DETROIT MICHIGAN

On Saturday, May 10, 2008 five celibate males will be ordained. CTA will recognize this day as we protest the fact that only the male, unmarried half of God's people are seen as worthy of the call to priesthood. There are women and married men who also hear God's call to priestly ordination, but are prohibited by the institutional Church from living their vocation. They are threatened with job loss from Catholic institutions and excommunication from the Church for merely discussing their support for women's ordination.

In solidarity we will gather at 8:45 AM and walk in front of the Cathedral until 10:15 AM. **Walk with us** and witness to the necessity for the inclusion of all women and men called by God to priestly ordination. We would like to have a big turnout this year for this silent witness **and it depends on you** so please join us. Following the demonstration we will gather for refreshments at Gail Hafner's home on Boston Blvd. Information: juliaaarcher@sbcglobal.net or 313-562-2423

This is part of a letter CTA-MI will send to the five ordinandi:

Dear Reverend....,

Call to Action of Michigan congratulates you on your call to serve God in the priesthood. Our prayers and good wishes are with you and your family on this special day.

However there is deep sadness in the hearts of many people. Call To Action of Michigan members believe there are countless other men and women who have been called to priesthood, but are denied ordination because of man-made laws and prejudice. This attitude of the institutional Church is a form of elitism similar to a country club that refuses admission to women, people of color or homosexuals. We find this regrettable.

We are concerned for the faithful who are not ministered to because of the shortage of priests and the clustering and closing of parishes. We believe that the very sacramental life of our Church is at stake. Call to Action of Michigan members cannot in good conscience stand by and not speak out.

Peace,

Michigan Call To Action Board of Directors.

Metro Detroit members celebrated Holy Thursday with a Seder Meal/Eucharist ritual at Gerry Sellman's. It was a very meaningful way to enter into this holy day.



*The Seder plate – **Matzo** (unleavened hearts), **Harosis** (represents the mortar of our lives in new structures we attempt to build), **Egg** (birth and rebirth), **Parsley** (earthliness), **Maror** or **Horseradish** (bitterness of our experience).*



In the ceremony, we added an orange to our ritual. A young woman asked a male Rabbi if she could become a Rabbi. His response was, "When there is an orange on the Seder plate, that is when a woman can become a Rabbi." There is an orange on our Seder plate. At our Seder, it will always sit by the traditional food signifying oppression, struggle and hope.

From Metro Detroit ...

Members will be supporting those who feel the call to ordination and walk in silent protest on Saturday, May 10. (See article on ordination). This is one of the ways we can stand in solidarity with those who feel called to priesthood.

Our next meeting is Sunday, May 4 at 2:00 p.m. at Gerry Sellman's. We will watch a Richard Rohr DVD on Politics and Spirituality, followed by a prayer and potluck.

Our group is also working on putting together a resource manual for wake services and funeral liturgies. If you would like to share any materials, please e-mail Eileen Burns at Eb120246@sbcglobal.net. We feel this is a worthwhile thing for us to do – since we are all getting older and we want to have a “Coming Home” service that reflects who we are. Besides, with the priest shortage, CTA members and other people of faith may be officiating at one another's funerals...

Peace and Justice

“In 2003 I illegally invaded the sovereign nation of Iraq with 1st Tank battalion 1st Marine Division. My commander in chief unleashed the world's fiercest fighting force upon the country and people of Iraq, and now those of us used and betrayed by him are demanding justice.

Four and a half years after our opening “shock and awe” Bush's lies are known throughout the world, and yet he continues to act with impunity. Four and half years later the Bush regime has unleashed a hell upon a country of Iraq that only those who have been there can truly understand.

As a two-tour combat veteran of this brutal war, I have a responsibility to speak honestly and openly about what has been done and what continues to be done in our name. We veterans know that this war is not the one being sanitized on the nightly news. It has nothing to do with the liberation of the people of Iraq; instead it has everything to do with subjugation and domination of these people in the name of U.S. imperial economic and strategic interests.

We did not go to war with the country of Iraq; we went to war with the people of Iraq. During the initial invasion we killed women. We killed children. We senselessly killed farm animals. We were the United States Marine Corps, not the Peace Corps, and we left a swath of death and destruction in our wake all the way to Baghdad.

Let me say again so that there is no misunderstanding. I stand here today as a former U.S. Marine saying we are killing women and children in Iraq. This is the true nature of war. War lends itself to atrocities. Don't think you can use an organization designed to kill other human beings for anything humanitarian. That has never been our mission. That was crystal clear from the moment I was forced to bury the crate of humanitarian food given to me in Kuwait.

Four and a half years later we as soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines are done. We are done being told under threat of court martial to run over children that get in the way of our speeding convoys.” (By Matt Howard)

Matt Howard attained the rank of corporal in the United States Marine Corps. He gave this statement at a protest at the Statehouse. He now heads the Vermont chapter for Iraq Veterans Against the War. His article goes on to say “---the Vietnam War ended when soldiers put down their weapons and refused to fight; when pilots dropped their bombs in the ocean---we are reeducating the public to let them know that the power ultimately lies with the people”.

Thanks for the reflection, Matt Howard, giving courage to all Christian faithful and all CTA people to continue the mission to work for peace and justice in all places. Amen.

**CTA April 20, 2008
Rochester-North Metro
and Metro Detroit**

Meeting on Racism



A group of 26 CTA Rochester-North Metro and Metro Detroit members gathered April 20, 2008, at the home of Mike and Jeannie Daly, to listen and ask questions of Sr. Mary Ann Dixon, an Adrian Dominican who recently completed her Doctor of Ministry from the Ecumenical Theological Seminary in Detroit. Her dissertation, entitled, “For Whites Only: Knowing Our Place” was the foundation of her presentation.

She described her journey to awareness of “white privilege” and “white entitlement” starting in her youth with “whispers” in her family about pregnancies, coloreds and Jews. Her early teaching assignment placed her in contact with her superiors who participated in the walk from Selma to Montgomery. As a “liberal” she felt she understood racial inequalities issues.

Most of us are not aware of the advantage we have simply by being white. In fact we were born on third base and think we’ve hit a triple. Being white has given us unquestioned access.

Only now, 40 plus years later, has her life experience, including three visits to Kenya, and studying at an inter-city seminary, made her aware of how far we have to go to even begin to create an awareness of discrepancies which exist within our nation and especially in our geographic area.

Sr. Mary Ann will soon retire from St. John Fisher Chapel Parish where she has served as Director of Religious Education for the last 13 years.

There has been very little Episcopal moral leadership on this unconscious, unearned privilege which is a significant barrier in our efforts at overcoming racism – especially in this region which has the distinction of being the most racially polarized region of the United States.

We don't realize that our nation’s glory has been forged on the backs of non-whites. Our notion of manifest destiny allowed us to take the land and kill the indigenous people. Did anyone ask, “Why?”

Suggested Reading on White Privilege

Interrupting White Privilege:

Catholic Theologians Break the Silence

Laurie Cassidy & Alex Mikulich, editors

Published by Orbis: Maryknoll, NY

The Heart of Whiteness, by Robert Jensen

Published by City Lights: San Francisco

Understanding White Privilege, by Frances E. Kendall

Published by Routledge: New York

The Wages of Whiteness, by David Roediger

Published by Verso: New York

White Like Me, by Tim Wise

Published by Soft Skull Press: Brooklyn



After Morwood Visit

A Reflection by Sr. Beth Rindler

“Where did you learn about Jesus? God? I first heard of him by way of my family. Everyone in my family, aunts, uncles, cousins were all Catholic (Roman Catholic). We went to church every Sunday, received our First Communion, went to Confession, etc. When I became a Franciscan Sisters of the Poor I cannot say I was able to know Jesus better until the time following Vatican II. I was glad to hear the prayers prayed in church in English instead of Latin and I could read the Scriptures for myself instead of always hearing some one else’s interpretation of the texts. Even though the prayers were not prayed in English in church, I can honestly say that frequently I did not understand what I was saying or what the priest was saying. Somehow I learned that these words were holy and that they were my connection with God. Even to the simple prayers of the Our Father and the Hail Mary, I did not know completely what they actually said or meant, but I still considered them as prayers that somehow was pleasing to God.

Now when I hear the term dogma or doctrine, I am not clear as to what this is all about. I have come to know that scholars known as theologians need to be careful when they write about theology in my Church. Sometimes I wish I understood better the specifics that the men in the Vatican are talking about when they criticize the writings of some of these theologians. When I hear the use of words like “ambiguity” or that these writings can cause confusion in the minds of the faithful, I wish I knew what these concepts were that they are talking about amongst themselves. In the past I tended to distrust or fear the writings of these theologians because of my trust in the opinions or thoughts of the men in the Vatican. However, as I have pursued studies myself in the world of philosophy and theology I wish I knew specifically the reasons as to why there is disputation between some theologians and some men in the Vatican. I often wonder why the men in the Vatican do not speak more clearly and publicly as to what specific issues are in dispute.

Being able to read the Scriptures rather than having them always interpreted for me has given me a very different image of Jesus. He is a person I admire very much. I am most impressed as to how he lived his life when he was here as a human being as recorded in the Gospels. It might seem strange to hear me say that I felt that in a sense I could imitate him. I am thinking of the ways in which he expressed his love for others. The poor and social outcasts never seemed beyond his embrace. This give me much food for thought and prayer.

Signs of Hope: Good Pope John

Attending Mass recently in a neighboring parish the priest suggested that the main anniversary of 2008 was that of the election of Pope John XXIII (October 28, 1958). He reminded us that the day after his election Pope John paid a visit to Regine Coeli prison in Rome. The Pope was making the point that his papacy would be paying less attention to the trappings of power and more to the needs of the most needy.

We have to pray for and fight for the 'windows to be opened' to resist the current drive by those in the Church who seek to overturn the changes of Vatican II and take us back to the past.



Call To Action of Michigan
P.O. Box 12161
Hamtramck, Michigan, 48212

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