



Mission Update



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Ants Carrying an Elephant

By Sister Janice McLaughlin, MM

Let me preface my remarks with some words of appreciation for USCMA. Perhaps it's more than a happy coincidence that I was invited to address the previous Mission Congress just as I was beginning my six year term in leadership with the Maryknoll Sisters. That Congress, held in 2010 in Albuquerque, New Mexico, introduced me to this network of people like myself – kindred spirits who shared a common experience of mission and a worldwide vision. I had only recently returned from Zimbabwe where I had spent almost 30 years and felt like a stranger in the United States.

USCMA became a safe harbor for me and it was a pleasure and privilege to serve on the Board. I looked forward to these annual conferences as a way to recharge my batteries and to get ideas and inspiration to propel me through the year. As I conclude my time with you, I wish to thank you all most sincerely for the encouragement and support that I have received. I hope all of you here feel equally committed and will go back to your communities to share what you experienced and to recruit more members to join USCMA.

As I wrap up this conference on a topic very close to my heart (Gospel Justice), I'm reminded of a proverb that I learned from a Sister from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in Central Africa. The proverb says: "It is only by uniting together that ants can carry an elephant." Let me repeat – It's only by uniting together that ants can carry an elephant. During this Conference we have heard about the many elephants in our society, our church and our world that are weighing us down.

The proverb reminds us that we can bring change if we join with others; it reminds us that it's not enough to know scripture and the social teachings of the Church but that we must put them into practice in our lives and in our society if we want to make a difference. That was Fr. Greenfield's message to us this morning



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– our reflection and prayer must lead to social living. We did so at this Conference when we approved a resolution on “Just and Compassionate Immigration Reform.” There are many other elephants that we can carry if we come together and work for a common cause.

I am struck by the skillful blending of all the different pieces of this gathering to create a coherent and meaningful whole. The prophetic message of Gospel Justice was woven into the prayers, keynote presentations, dialog sessions and home community meetings to form a pattern that catches the eye, touches the heart and opens the mind.

Like this colorful piece of cloth from East Africa (a kitenge), it grabs our attention and helps us to focus on what is essential; to see rightly. Perhaps our eyes were opened wider to recognize that our call to mission is also a call to put justice at the front and center of our ministry – to carry those elephants of unjust structures, policies and practices that weigh people down, those modern day crosses that so many people on our planet are forced to bear.

Donald Senior’s comprehensive overview of the vision of justice in scripture, both Old and New Testaments, provided a solid framework or foundation for understanding this ministry in the light of the Gospel. He told us that the Hebrew term for justice or righteousness appears more than 500 times and is not an abstract term but is very personal and rooted in the history of Israel. Social mission, Fr. Senior stated, is at the heart of the Church’s mission and is rooted in God’s vision for Israel and in Jesus’ ministry.

Closing that first evening with the Mission Award to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), we celebrated a courageous and steadfast commitment to justice, even in the face of opposition. We honored women religious for their fidelity to the Gospel call to hear and respond to the cry of the poor. The LCWR has surely shown us how to carry the elephants in our midst in prophetic and effective ways.

On Saturday, Marie Dennis moved us to the level of the heart, sharing examples that she had witnessed in various crisis situations; places where the wounds of war are still raw and even bleeding. She challenged us to keep going to the margins and crossing borders in order to know and feel the reality there. Letting our hearts be broken, she reminded us, opens us to see life through the eyes of the people we accompany in mission; to be evangelized, as was Archbishop Romero, by these experiences so that we are ready to witness to the need for transformation, regardless of the cost.

Martyrdom is very much a reality in our world today. Recently three Xavierian Missionaries of Mary were murdered in Burundi, for example, and three Dominican Sisters in Iraq died after they were forced to flee when the town in which they lived was attacked by ISIS forces. No, martyrdom is not a relic of the past but is visible today. Marie told us of the courage and love of aid workers, doctors, nurses and the ‘burial boys’ who risk their lives to care for those with the Ebola virus. Quoting Jim Wallis, Marie concluded that touching the pain of others is the key to change.

In our home communities, we exchanged stories of pain, compassion, empathy, anger and frustration that were transformed into acts of solidarity, love and hope. In our dialog sessions we learned skills and information to help us better practice Gospel justice. In our prayers we affirmed the need to share our gifts, to be inclusive in our relations, to be open to missionary encounters and to reach out to the excluded, despised and neglected.



*Sr. Janice McLaughlin, MM speaking to the 2014 USCMA Annual Conference Participants.
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*Stage design inspired by Mt 25: 35-36 at the 2014 USCMA Annual Conference.
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*Teresita Gonzalez de la Maza and Fr. Michael Montoya, MJ at the 2014 USCMA Annual Conference.
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We added another thread to our colorful pattern as Fr. Greenfield creatively depicted the relationship between the various elements of our justice ministry, making my task easier. The intriguing and puzzling title of his presentation “The Algebra of Mission” unfolded to reveal a clear description of our call as messengers of the Gospel.

As we leave today, I am reminded of some words of wisdom from two modern day prophets. The first is from Pope Francis in *The Joy of the Gospel*. It sums up what we’ve been hearing and sharing:

“Sometimes we are tempted to be that kind of Christian who keeps the Lord’s wounds at arm’s length. Yet Jesus wants us to touch human misery, to touch the suffering flesh of others. He hopes that we will stop looking for those personal or communal niches which shelter us from the maelstrom of human misfortune and instead enter into the reality of other people’s lives and know the power of tenderness. Whenever we do so, our lives become wonderfully complicated and we experience intensely what it is to be a people, to be part of a people.” (#270)

We who have been missionaries know so well those wonderful complications that we experience in our new homes where we become one with the people who so generously open their homes and their hearts to welcome us in our adopted lands.

Let me conclude with more words of wisdom and hope from one of my favorite mentors and guides - Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, who knows how to unite with others to achieve a difficult goal – like ending apartheid in South Africa. That was truly a huge elephant to carry! Tutu reminds us that we are meant to be God’s partners in creating a more human and just world:

“God is transfiguring the world right this very moment through us because God believes in us and because God loves us.... And as we share God’s love with our brothers and sisters, there is no tyrant that can resist us, no oppression that cannot be ended, no hunger that cannot be fed, no wound that cannot be healed, no hatred that cannot be turned to love, no dream that cannot be fulfilled.” (God Has a Dream, A Vision of Hope for Our Time)

Let us go forth with courage and steadfast love, resolved to be both faithful and effective. Let us continue to dream of a better life for all and work together to make it happen. *Truly, we can carry many elephants!*



*Srs. Janice McLaughlin, MM and Joan Mumaw, IHM at the 2014 USCMA Annual Conference.
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*Scott Wright and Susan Gunn (Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach) leading the Saturday Morning Prayer at the 2014 USCMA Annual Conference.
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USCMA: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

By Rev. Don Ward, SJ
USCMA Board Member



As we celebrate the presence of our Incarnate God and prepare for the coming year, each of us has so much to reflect upon, be grateful for, and so much to be hopeful about. I believe, that this feeling was stated so well by Sr. Janice McLaughlin, MM in her closing comments at the 2014 USCMA Annual Conference in Alexandria. Janice quoted a Central African proverb, "It is only by uniting together that ants can carry an elephant."

Reflecting on my time as a board member, I recall so many examples of USCMA members working together to build up our sense of being a mission community, sharing how our baptism calls us to be in mission, and the recognition of the beauty and diversity of the missionary activity found in the Church in the United States. All of these examples show how we, like the ants in the proverb, can work together and achieve great things, and I am so thankful to be a part of our association. These examples also give me hope that while the coming year will be full of challenges for USCMA, as a community we continue to be great witnesses to Jesus' mission in our world and our Church.

One of the most important tasks facing the board this coming year will be uncovering the right person to replace Fr. Jack, our beloved executive director. Much has been said about Jack's leadership during the time he has held his position and much more will be said in the coming months, but no words of appreciation can adequately capture the unique style of his most gentle guidance of our organization. A most positive and open person himself, Jack has communicated, through his sense of service and responsibility to the vocation of mission which USCMA embodies, namely: the urgent need to seek all the means available, traditional and prophetic, so that our fundamental Christian calling be made known to and be accomplished by all our membership and by the countless men and women who count us among their friends and co-workers. While this search will no doubt be a daunting task, I feel confident that we are up to this task based on the energy that I have sensed in general among the members of our entire organization and, in particular, among the diverse and talented board members.

While the board searches for USCMA's next Executive Director, we have also been looking to USCMA's exciting future. This future has me thinking about that Central African proverb again. As the Board of Directors, we feel very deeply that we are your representatives, chosen so that the ideas and the passions of all USCMA members might be enfolded in word and action for the good of our community. A new call is made now by the board, as we begin a new year, for the participation of each member of USCMA to work on a new vision for the organization and the formation of the concrete goals needed to see that vision become reality. Your contribution is greatly needed so that the whole USCMA community can share in the visioning process leading to the formulation of USCMA's new strategic plan and goals which will be the driving force of USCMA for the foreseeable future. Two online surveys are being conducted. Their purpose is to assure that each member can be part of the dream so that together our vision might better inspire us to be 'church on mission' in the coming years. We look forward to your thoughts and comments.

Christmas is upon us - a new birth in our world, in our church. This mystery calls us to newness in our awareness that this reality present in the lives of believers does create 'new heavens and a new earth'. The example which we have been given by our dear Francis, the Bishop of Rome, has given us an amazing insight into what power is contained in this birth. It is the power of new courage, of new energy, of new enthusiasm, of a new confidence in understanding who we are and that what we do really is important. Our community, universal and local, is being called to a new exciting moment in mission. May Emmanuel be with us all as we endeavor to respond.

Christmas Joy and the Joy of Living Jesus' Mission

by Fr. John R. Nuelle, MS
Executive Director

Joy is often experienced as a deep-seated emotion that comes bounding to the surface when our desires reach fulfillment. It can be expressed in a wide gamut of reactions from outbursts of singing, dancing, jumping, and shouting to quiet interior "tears of joy." As we approach the celebration of birth of Jesus over 2000 years ago, the predominant emotion remains on of joy – Joy to the world, the Lord has come!

Together with the USCMA staff and board, my prayer for you cannot be expressed more deeply than by paraphrasing the introductory words of Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation: May the Joy of the Gospel fill your hearts and lives as you encounter Jesus to celebrate his birthday;

- ~ the joy Elizabeth voiced as she proclaimed "blessed" both Mary and the unborn child in her womb
- ~ the joy John expressed as he leaped in Elizabeth's womb during this encounter
- ~ the rejoicing Mary acknowledged in her "Magnificat"
- ~ the exuberant exaltation by all of creation when Mary gave birth to Jesus, causing heavenly hosts to announce good news of great joy for people on earth: the birth of the savior – who is Messiah and Lord.

One can only imagine Mary's joy when she first held in her arms her son Jesus. As always, joy came with the fulfillment of the promise: [Isaiah 7:14] "the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel" – God more intimately present in creation than ever before.

One can only imagine Jesus' joy – a prelude to so much healing joy he would both feel and dispense – as he handed the scroll back to the attendant in the synagogue of his hometown and proclaimed the fulfillment of another of Isaiah's prophecies: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord." [Luke 4:18-19]

One can only imagine Mary's joy when she recognized – and no doubt held in her arms once again –her risen son; the tears of pain turned into tears of joy!

All these expressions of joy are Gospel – Good News – every day for us when we encounter Jesus. May the joy of this Christmas celebration be only a prelude of the joys to come.



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Looking Toward the Future: USCMA's Strategic Planning Process

by Amy Woolam-Echeverria
*USCMA Member-at-Large,
Strategic Planning Committee Chair*

This Advent, I participated in events organized by the Columban Fathers in Lima, Peru, for the COP20 Climate Change conference. I had the gift of visiting a former Columban parish that was situated in what was the old city landfill. Life is precarious and vulnerable in Villa Maria, until you walk in to the parish where the entire altar has been transformed into a Nativity complete with waterfalls, plants, lights, and nearly life size figurines. The display was striking from my cultural perspective which usually reduces the Nativity to a small display on a table. I was totally captured by this incarnation of the Incarnation!



Just like the Nativity in Villa Maria, USCMA is the incarnation of its members. Since 2008, USCMA's Statement of Values, Principles and Priorities have shaped and formed the work of USCMA. It states that:

The United States Catholic Mission Association unites and supports people committed to the cross-cultural and global mission of Jesus Christ in service to the Church and the world.

The signs of our times call us to focus our engagement in Christian mission and to foster and support existing and new forms of cross-cultural and inter-religious partnerships. At the heart of mission is a spirituality that summons us to accompany the poorest in the world, to raise our collective voice, to engage the new secularity and to seek alternatives within the process of globalization. As missionaries, we have a unique ability to move humanity toward transforming global community and to help overcome the polarities that characterize our era.

USCMA is an association open to mission sending congregations and societies, diocesan mission offices, individual missionaries, and others interested in cross-cultural and global solidarity. We seek to provide a forum in which people with a variety of experiences in mission can welcome, celebrate faith, inspire, educate and challenge one another to continue growing in our efforts to further the mission of Jesus.

Last year, the Board of Directors began reviewing this vision and looking toward the future of Mission in the Church here in the United States. Now, USCMA is undergoing a strategic planning process which includes a two part survey of membership and partner organizations. The first survey focuses on current USCMA programming and resources. This survey went out to members by email on December 1st and can be accessed online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/P85GHF2>.

The second survey will be sent early in the New Year and will focus on visioning for the future. As a member of USCMA, your participation in this process is essential as we discern how the voice of the Spirit is calling USCMA to faithful missionary discipleship. We invite you to shape the evolving work of USCMA in to the future which is a missionary response to the needs of world today.

The Algebra of Mission: CSM + CST = CSL

Christian Scripture Meditating + Catholic Social Teaching = Church Social Living

by Rev. James J. Greenfield, OSFS
CMSM President

As we conclude our time together for this annual mission conference, I trust we all know by now the overall theme of this conference: “Gospel Justice: A Living Challenge to the Church in Mission.” In my presentation this morning, I develop three topics that constitute—what I am calling—an “algebra of mission,” namely that meditating on and praying with Scripture, complemented by an understanding and personal integration of Catholic Social Teaching, gives us a clear road map for living together as Church, a true People of God. Or, more simply, if you throw a Bible and the Church’s Compendium of Social Teaching into a blender, out would pop a missionary with a game plan for Christian living.

I. CSM: Christian Scripture Meditating

The Holy Spirit is the God of justice and has been breathing on unsuspecting and unsuspecting disciples from the dawn of creation, from when Jesus handed over his Spirit from the cross, and at the first Pentecost, to name just a few moments.

We see, especially, in the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, which some Scripture scholars say should actually be called the Acts of the Holy Spirit, that the Spirit of God breathes life and energy into the early disciples to help them address immediate needs: taking care of widows, healing the sick, and sharing all in common. The Holy Spirit inspired those disciples as they went from being fearful and pusillanimous to becoming mature women and men who were heroic—thinking and acting in magnanimous ways—all of this coming from the radical inspiration of Jesus in his paschal mystery, into which we are all baptized!

This first of my three-part conversation with you this morning invites us to look always to the Scriptures to discover the meaning of Gospel justice. And, specifically as missionaries, when we do, we discover that the Holy Spirit does not really solve the problems we face each day, but as the song goes, stirs and troubles the waters we wade in from the moment of our baptism. What do I mean? Listen to the poetry, “When We Let the Spirit Lead Us,” by Alice Walker:

**When we let Spirit lead us
 it is impossible to know
 where we are being led.
 All we know
 all we can believe
 all we can hope
 is that we are going home
 that wherever Spirit takes us is where we live.**

We cannot choose when to be alive. We are born and live in this time and place, and as both Don Senior and Marie Dennis stated in their talks, it is a rather uncertain era. I especially loved Marie’s description that we live in a time that is “breath-takingly” complex – how true!

We know global crisis, institutional decline, and some very peculiar dynamics in the U.S. including political ineffectiveness, as well as a variety of challenges within our church. The deep-down tensions between the west and the Muslim world and the alarming economic disparities between the northern and southern hemispheres,



Rev. James Greenfield, OSFS speaking to the 2014 USCMA Annual Conference Participants.

as Don Senior put it. We also know the destruction of peoples' lives by poverty and violence and all the stressors of living in our world today.

But this moment is our time, the only time we have. And, the Holy Spirit stirred and troubled the waters of our baptisms to leave us with a sense that we need to do something – not everything, but something! This is the problem that I suggest we all wrestle with – what am I to do in this vast universe of ours? How do I bring the justice of God to the zip code I live or mission in? Yes, the Holy Spirit takes us to places near and far and wide.

Christian Scripture Meditating

Look to Scriptures to discover the meaning of Gospel justice.

Let's take a look at Acts 2:1-13, and even meditate on it, as I think it is a superb text to conclude this weekend of engagement on living the challenge of gospel justice as a Church in mission. As I do so, I will rely heavily on the scholarship of Dr. Laurie Brink, a Dominican sister and professor of Scripture at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.

Acts 2:1-13

When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together.

And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them.

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language.

They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, "Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans? Then how does each of us hear them in his own native language? We are Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya near Cyrene, as well as travelers from Rome, both Jews and converts to Judaism, Cretans and Arabs, yet we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God."

They were all astounded and bewildered, and said to one another, "What does this mean?"

But others said, scoffing, "They have had too much new wine."



Rev. James Greenfield, OSFS speaking to the 2014 USCMA Annual Conference Participants.

Note that as Acts opens, the disciples were huddled in that upper room, and as I said earlier, they were at prayer – not playing BINGO or some other Catholic activity that sometimes can trump contemplative prayer in church gatherings! They were fearful in their outlook on the future. In Acts 1, Jesus had appeared to them and promised that they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit to become witnesses of the resurrection in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth (cf. Acts 1:8). As St. Paul reminds us, our true citizenship is in heaven, not in the country that our passport announces.

We're all loving Pope Francis – how many days since March 13, 2013 has someone NOT asked you what do you think of this new Pope? But, "there is no leadership-training program for popes-to-be. I don't think he got a New Pope Handbook or Pontificate for Dummies as soon as white smoke started pumping into the Vatican sky. His fellow cardinals applauded his election, sent him to the Room of Tears to vest himself in white and to give him some prayerful privacy to recollect himself, parted the red curtains and then pushed (well, escorted) him onto the loggia of St. Peter's Basilica to assume leadership of 1.2 billion Catholics" (C. Lowney, *Pope Francis: Why He Leads the Way He Leads*, 2013).

And, like the pope, we sometimes find ourselves thrust onto that metaphorical balcony: step up, it's time to

lead this parish, this mission, this diocese, or, as the case may be, the whole Catholic Church. The Pope wants a church bruised and dirty and he says to us in Italian, *avanti*, meaning let's go!

Looking at the experience of those early disciples after the resurrection is instructive for us. They had nothing, not a body to cling to, not a creed to profess, not a Catechism to consult, not liturgical rubrics by which to pray, nor 2000 years of tradition to reflect on.

No, they had their web of relationships centered in Jesus, their memories of life with him, and the Spirit calling them to life amid death. We are called to reclaim this post-resurrection pneumatology. It is relational and creative.

In that section from Acts, some time has gone by and the disciples are back in the upper room. St. Luke tells us they were "all together in the same place." But, if everyone is together, aren't they in the same place?

One can see that the Acts of the Apostles is not really about a group-hugging set of disciples who are in the same place geographically; rather, it is a window into fervent and prayerful disciples who do not always agree (cf. Brink). And, I believe the same can be said of us—as we, missionaries from many locales, we are gathered here in this same place but we do not always agree. Think of the Synod on Family and Evangelization which concluded in late October 2014!

Listen to Pope Francis:

[This Synod] has been "a journey" – and like every journey there were moments of running fast, as if wanting to conquer time and reach the goal as soon as possible; other moments of fatigue, as if wanting to say "enough"; other moments of enthusiasm and ardor. There were moments of profound consolation listening to the testimony of true pastors, who wisely carry in their hearts the joys and the tears of their faithful people. Moments of consolation and grace and comfort hearing the testimonies of the families who have participated in the Synod and have shared with us the beauty and the joy of their married life. A journey where the stronger feel compelled to help the less strong, where the more experienced are led to serve others, even through confrontations. And since it is a journey of human beings, with the consolations there were also moments of desolation, of tensions and temptations.

Back to Luke --- he also uses the word *suddenly* when referring to the noise that came from the sky. "Suddenly" is a word that means without warning or unexpectedly. Brink points out that when we hear this word we usually think of a heart attack, a stroke, a car accident. But, in this text, there is a rushing wind coming down from heaven that fills the entire room. And, in this scene, there are the tongues of fire that rested on everyone in the room. Each one of them in that room received the gift of the Spirit, not just the Apostles, but everyone in the room is filled with the Spirit. Even St. Peter quotes the Prophet Joel as saying that God "will pour out a portion of my spirit upon all flesh" (Acts 2:17). Upon ALL flesh – no stratification here. God's largess meets the fear of those gathered. Brink states, "this motley crew from Galilee, a rag-tag group of fishermen and peasants, suddenly, unexpectedly, can speak other languages."

Christian Scripture Meditating

We are called to be missionaries for God's word, to inculturate it, so that it may be heard.



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And, the "Holy Spirit gave the Apostles and disciples the ability to speak multiple languages," (Brink) but those gathered outside did not receive a gift to hear in those many languages. Thus, "the responsibility for translating the Word of God is not upon the hearers but upon the preachers. We are called through the gifts of the Holy Spirit to be missionaries for God's word, to inculturate it, so that it may be heard" (Brink).

This past summer I listened to Sherry Weddell who discussed her newest book, *Forming Intentional Disciples* (2012). One thesis of her book is that forming intentional disciples is not forming a spiritual elite but to create a spiritual culture that openly honors both the inward and outward dimensions of sacraments and liturgy. She posits that so many Catholics are sacramentalized but not evangelized. This is another way of saying that as missionaries of God's word, it is incumbent upon us that we create that spiritual culture so that God's word may be heard.

Brink, rather humorously, says the list of nations from where the pious Jews have assembled reads like a drop-down window for Expedia.com. And, how often have we sat through a Liturgy of the Word when the lector strangles the pronunciation of these places. But the list demonstrates that holiness is to be found even in the most remote corners of the Roman Empire – the world. Many traveled great distances to be present for the Festival of Pentecost, and they are utterly amazed that so far from home, they find someone speaking their language. The same for us – we come here from the Washington Metro area, Wilmington DE and NC, Virginia Beach, Philadelphia, etc. to listen to one another – through prayer and the breaking of the bread.

Catholic Social Teaching

- *We are made in the image of God.*
- *We affirm the dignity of each person.*

“In a real sense, then, Pentecost was not, contrary to what is usually called the ‘birthday of the church’; rather, the church is born only as the disciples of Jesus gradually and painfully realize that they are called beyond themselves to all peoples” (Brink). This essential, baptism-impelled call to go beyond the self to others is grounded in the fundamental dignity inherent in all of God's creation, which brings us to our second movement, Catholic Social Teaching.

II. Catholic Social Teaching

The phrase, “Catholic Social Teaching,” is usually applied to a limited body of literature written in the modern era dealing primarily with issues of life in modern society. The moral theologian and Franciscan priest, Ken Himes, says it best when it comes to the foci for CST: “Human beings are made in the image of God and that the God who is Creator of all entered into history through the Son and became human. In other words, the doctrines of creation and incarnation, central affirmations of our creed, lead us to affirm the dignity of each person” (K. Himes. *101 Questions & Answers on Catholic Social Teaching, 2nd ed.*, 2013).

Himes says no official list of documents exists, but *Rerum novarum* is on everyone's list which is Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical. In it, Leo attempted to persuade Catholics to concentrate less on politics and more on the social question. He insisted that wages be determined not by economic considerations alone, but by taking into account the basic needs of the individual – introducing the notion of human rights in the economic order.

Some say CST is the Church's best-kept secret, but I am not sure that is apt today. I suggest that the list of teachings is more elastic and many Catholics really do intuit these teachings.



Again, Ken Himes states that “the Church does not take up social issues because it is driven by some partisan agenda, but as a result of the theological claim that human beings are creatures of dignity and worth. If that claim is not to be reduced to pious sentimentality, then it must lead its adherents to work for the promotion of people's dignity and protection from whatever threatens that dignity.” So, this is the story of the development of CST.

And it is so important to avoid pious sentimentality. Nathan Mitchel who writes for *Worship*, in his *Amen Corner*

says it bluntly: “Perhaps the greatest threat to Christian Eucharist is precisely a moral numbness that prevents our seeing God’s presence in the least and littlest, that prevents our seeing the Risen One among the most vulnerable citizens of our chaotic world. The greatest threat to Eucharist is world hunger. It is not for nothing that the great Indian teacher of nonviolence, Mohandas K. Gandhi, once said that ‘if Christ ever comes to India, he’s better come as bread’” (Nathan Mitchell, Vol. 86, 3, 2012).

Flowing naturally from all of this is the belief that our God is a God of justice who always acts in history to set relationships right, defend the poor, the weak, the widow, the wanderer, and the oppressed—and is still acting in this fashion. And, since God acts this way, we believe that certain human rights emerge as a result of our human dignity. It was St. John XXIII who first attempted to list the human rights endorsed by the Church in his classic *Pacem in Terris*; and St. John Paul II who provided an updated roster of some of the most important human rights in 1979 before the United Nations General Assembly: life, liberty, and security of the person, right to food, clothing, housing, sufficient health care, rest, leisure, right to freedom of expression, education and culture; the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, etc.



Again, John XXIII wrote in that same encyclical that “in our time the common good is chiefly guaranteed when personal rights and duties are maintained.” Himes comments that human rights spell out the standards of personal well being that any conception of the common good must embrace.

Catholic Social Teaching

Pope Bl. Paul VI-

1. *Promoting human development is integral to the Church’s mission, not something added or peripheral.*
2. *Authentic human development concerns the whole person in every dimension (personal, social, political, economic, and spiritual).*

Just a few weeks ago, retired Bishop Howard Hubbard of Albany, New York, writing on the beatification of Pope Paul VI, said that Pope Paul uniquely understood that Vatican II was largely a European and North American dominated agenda. Paul knew the social question must become worldwide. Thus, he was on the side of any effort for the development of poor nations—and poor peoples. What an honor that Pope Benedict XVI referred to Paul’s encyclical *Populorum Progressio* as the “*Rerum Novarum* of the present age” of globalization. And, we know globalization may make us neighbors – but does it really make us brothers and sisters? Furthermore, Pope Benedict XVI heaped high praise on Pope Paul in what he said, as Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, issued in 1891, launched the modern period of papal social teaching. In *Populorum Progressio*, Paul VI underlined the indispensable importance of the Gospel for building a society according to peace and justice.

Paul VI’s vision communicated two important truths:

1. Promoting human development is integral to the Church’s mission, not something added or peripheral.
2. Authentic human development concerns the whole person in every dimension (personal, social, political, economic, and spiritual).

These two truths are not only foundational to our lives as disciples, Christians, and thoughtful citizens of the world. I would suggest that they are essential elements of the very Kingdom of God and certainly constitutive dimensions—of the highest order—the personality of the missionary.

On a lighthearted note, I recall an Al Smith dinner in New York a few years ago which featured Stephen Colbert. Knowing there is a lot of ribbing at this annual event, Colbert commented on Cardinal Dolan’s vestiture by saying, “I have great respect for you, Cardinal Dolan, though I do have to say, sir, it is not easy when you are wearing that outfit.” The cardinal, in his house cassock, gave a broad grin. “In that cape and red sash, you look like a matador

who's really let himself go," Colbert said.

The dinner welcomed President Obama and Governor Romney, one of only four face-to-face encounters they had before the 2012 election; and, this was with the Catholic Church for a Catholic Charities dinner! Quips abounded, and my favorite was that Cardinal Dolan would have preferred Governor Christy to be there instead of Romney so he would look thin.

Concluding the evening, Cardinal Dolan described the church as a big tent encompassing lots of people, ideas, thoughts, and beauty. He spoke of the Catholic Church in the public square as being concerned with the "uns": unemployed, uninsured, unwanted child, unwed mother, unborn baby in mother's womb, un-housed, undocumented, unhealthy, unfed, under-educated. Yes, we are a church of the "uns," and whether it is our work on behalf of immigration reform, eradicating poverty, stopping war, or dealing with the environmental destruction all around us, we need, as Marie Dennis challenged us yesterday, to engage our hearts and ask not only WHY but WHAT can we do?



© 2014 Rev. Arthur Carillo, CP
USCMA members at the Mission Award Dinner honoring LCWR at the 2014 USCMA Annual Conference Participants.

As one way of answering the WHAT question, a part of my process for developing this talk was to view websites of colleges who feature CST. I wanted to see what is being done to involve young adults in this arena. On Fordham University's webpage I noted *The Francis and Ann Curran's Center for American Catholic Studies* which states:

2016 will mark the 125th anniversary of Pope Leo XIII's groundbreaking encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, "On the Conditions of Labor." This document initiated a new era of public dialogue and engagement between the Catholic Church and the modern "social question"—the opportunities, problems, and dangers wrought by the industrial revolution. Leo used the Catholic tradition to engage and evaluate the modern economy's nature and purposes, as well as the roles of states and citizens, businesses and workers, and civic associations and families in addressing economies' capacity to generate reasonable levels of material well-being and flourishing for all. Recognizing the vast differentials of power across a complex, international, and increasingly global economic system, Leo focused particular attention on the plight of the poor and workers struggling to eke out basic livings for themselves and their families.

Thus, since the time of Pope Leo XIII and *Rerum Novarum*, the Church has continued to reflect on and to promote this engagement and dialogue. And a defining feature of CST has been its confidence in all people's capacity to understand, embrace, and collaborate toward the common good in its cultural, political, economic, and ecological aspects.

I conclude this second part of my conversation placing Pope Francis in our view. In his apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, he says that the economy should serve the human person and not the other way around, and that profit is not the highest motive in economic activity:

The Church which goes forth is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice. An evangelizing community gets involved by word and deed in people's daily lives; it bridges distances; it is willing to abase itself, if necessary; and it embraces human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others (EG #24, p. 13).

A great talk by a church ecclesiologist, Dr. Richard Gaillardetz of Boston College, titled "A Missionary Council has inspired a Missionary Pope to Create a Missionary Church" is worth some consideration here:

It's interesting, if you were to go back and look at the corpus of Pope John Paul II's writings, the passage that John Paul II quoted more than any other was *Gaudium et Spes* §22, which is a Christological text about

how Jesus Christ comes to reveal humanity to itself. It's a beautiful passage.

I suspect that when we get to the end of Francis' pontificate and people look back and say, "What passage from Vatican II did Francis cite more often?" The early returns suggest that it will be *Ad Gentes* §2.

Ad Gentes is the *Decree on the Missionary Life of the Church* is the most profound ecclesiological text of the Council, approved at the end, and so, in some ways, it takes in a lot of the Council's teaching.

And *Ad Gentes* §2 makes a very bold statement. It says, "The Church is missionary by its very nature." And Francis has already quoted that on a number of occasions. Now that might seem to you to be a rather tame, or abstract, or even, in some ways, traditional statement, because, of course, we think of mission in terms of "The Missions." And many of us grew up as Catholics, supporting the missions, always prefaced by "The Foreign Missions." Mission work is what you do somewhere else. And it's largely about two things: winning souls to Christ; and what was called the *plantatio ecclesiae*, planting of new churches in unchurched countries.

Gaillardetz continues:

But *Ad Gentes* §2 is recovering a much more profound biblical insight that perhaps, as Steven Bevens has put it, "It is not so accurate to say Christ founded the Church and gave it a mission; but rather, Christ called forth disciples, sent them in mission, and consented for there to be a Church in service of the mission."

So, Pope Francis is direct in saying the Church needs to be reformed in light of mission – but listen to his clarity:

We don't reform the Church just to make it more administratively efficient. In fact, one of my real concerns about the reform of the curia is there is going to be a mighty temptation on the part of the Council of Cardinals to think of reform precisely an organizational flow chart. I have a real concern that some of those reforms of the curia are going to be about efficiency, better communication, overcoming silos in the Vatican.

Pope Francis is blunt: what leads to a change of heart in Christians, is precisely missionary spirit."

III. Church Social Living

Here we get to the heart of the matter. All of the aforementioned can seem an intellectual conversation—it needs to become a personal transformation. Now, here's where we get to the heart of the matter. Roger Bergman, a professor at Creighton University, published a book titled *Catholic Social Learning: Educating the Faith that does Justice*. He argues that the canon for Catholic social teaching spreads to six hundred pages, yet fewer than two pages are devoted to Catholic social learning or pedagogy. How do we correct this gross imbalance? How do we educate the faith that does justice? How is commitment to social justice provoked and sustained over a lifetime? Bergman raises these incredibly provocative questions, and I hope this third and final part of my conversation with you is a response to some of these worthwhile questions.

Transformation happens in the presence of images and relationships—not concepts. If we want to inspire others to change the world we need to transform them – not change ideas in their heads! We need to see others in mission to come to love being in mission ourselves. As an Oblate of St. Francis de Sales, I have heard people say that Salesian spirituality is "better caught than taught," because it is such an interior spirituality. And, as I prepared this talk, I thought of how I have come to appropriate what it means to be a Salesian through role models of men I have lived with over the past 30 years who all model it in different ways.

Picking up again on Sherry Weddell whom I mentioned in Part 1, Archbishop Diarmud Martin of Dublin says something similar: Ireland is the most catechized country in Europe, but the least evangelized."

Pope Francis:

I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No

one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her; since no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord (EG 3).

Gabriel Marcel, the French existentialist philosopher who turned to religion late in life explained the roots of his radical shift: “It happened through personal encounters. Nothing else ever changes anyone in an important way.”

This is why encounter experiences are so important to help people see and touch an issue rather than just read about it. As Greg Boyle, SJ says in *Tattoos on the Heart*, “You can’t demonize someone you know.”

Professor of ethics at Boston College, Jesuit priest Tom Massaro, wrote that the guild of Catholic social ethicists and teachers of CST could stand to profit from the reminder that there is no substitute for attention to personal encounter in social justice education and ministry. Ideas are valuable, but right thinking must be complemented with direct human experience.

Go back to that Pentecost text that I discussed earlier: Steve Bevans of Catholic Theological Union says, “In a real sense, then, Pentecost was not, contrary to what is usually said, the ‘birthday of the church;’ rather, the church is born only as the disciples of Jesus gradually and painfully realize that they are called beyond themselves to all. This suggests that mission is the essence of life. Bevans even goes on to say that mission is God’s job-description! Pointedly, as we may have heard before, but we need to hear it more frequently—the mission has a Church ... the Church does not have a mission.

We are graced with a desire to be missionaries, proclaiming the Good News with renewed enthusiasm and commitment. Anything less is unworthy of our baptism. And, again, it is our baptism that missions us for mission.

I heard once that if you had to explain the entirety of the proceedings at Vatican Council II you could simply use one word – **BAPTISM**.

In his excellent book, *Ecclesiology for a Global Church*, Richard Gaillardetz discusses the recovery of the priority of baptism, discipleship, and mission at Vatican II. He suggests that “even though the Council tried to deal with the second-class status of the laity, it still had not done so as they prepared the document on the Church. The early drafts discussed “States of Evangelical Perfection” and those who pursued the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience were presumed to achieve the highest level of holiness. But, there was virtually no consideration of the 99+ percent of the church who were not called to religious life or ordination. But, as we know, that tenor change dramatically. The consistent theme of the council was that any adequate reflection on the universal call to holiness must begin with Christian baptism” (p. 186).

So, let’s look at the *Rite of Baptism* itself. I will highlight briefly the five rituals at the center of the rite and illustrate how this primary sacrament of initiation is, at its core, a sacrament of mission. I consider the baptism of a child, named Meghan, in this instance.

Baptism and the Call to Mission

1. A question ... *enter into a vast network of permanently changed relationships!*
2. Anointing with Chrism ... *nothing will undo our eternal connections!*
3. White Garment ... *putting on compassion, kindness, humility, patience, bear with one another!*
4. Lighted Candle ... *keeping the flame of faith alive!*
5. Ephphetha ... *deliberate missioning ... open the mouth to proclaim faith!*

There is deep, deep value in explicating, in ritual fashion, the mission-based elements implicit in this sacrament

and the Christian life which it initiates. As we may recall after the renewal of baptismal vows, there are five key moments.

First, there is the baptizing of the child with the Trinitarian formula. However, this is preceded with a question; in fact, it is a repeated question to the parents: “Is it your will that Meghan should be baptized in the faith of the Church, which we have all professed with you?” When they affirm it, the child is baptized. I think that the question is telling. Parents are reminded that their child is entering into a vast and infinite network of relationships at whose foundation is mutual responsibility. Like a family takes care of each other, this vast family of faith will take care of each other. This is where the basic theme of solidarity emerges from CST!

Second, the anointing with chrism. As the child’s head is anointed with sacred chrism the following prayer is prayed:

God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has freed you from sin, given you a new birth by water and the Holy Spirit, and welcomed you into his holy people. He now anoints you with the chrism of salvation. As Christ was anointed Priest, Prophet, and King, so may you live always as a member of his body, sharing everlasting life. Amen.

Note the relational words again: *welcomed you into his holy people and may you live always as a member of his body, sharing everlasting life.* This is a significant assertion: We baptized are eternally related. Nothing will ever undo our eternal interconnections. Not our denials, sins, even death. We belong to God—and one another!—forever. Furthermore, we will always, always have royal dignity, which must be respected, honored, and advanced at all times. This in itself is a mission!

Third, clothing with the white garment. Again, the prayer:

Meghan, you have become a new creation, and have clothed yourself in Christ. See in this white garment the outward sign of your Christian dignity. With your family and friends to help you by word and example, bring that dignity unstained into the everlasting life of heave. Amen.

Indeed, this is not just about the white garment. Recall Paul’s letter to the local Church at Colossae:

Put on, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another, as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, that is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you

A Summary of Catholic Social Teaching Documents

Rerum Novarum (On the Condition of Labor)

Pope Leo XIII, 1891

Quadragesimo Anno (After Forty Years)

Pope Pius XI, 1931

Mater et Magistra (Christianity and Social Progress)

Pope St. John XXIII, 1961

Pacem in Terris (Peace on Earth)

Pope St. John XXIII, 1963

Gaudium et Spes (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World)

Vatican Council II, 1965

Populorum Progressio (On the Development of Peoples)

Pope Bl. Paul VI, 1967

Octogesima Adveniens (A Call to Action)

Pope Bl. Paul VI, 1971

Justitia in Mundo (Justice in the World)

Synod of Bishops, 1971

Laborem Exercens (On Human Work)

Pope St. John Paul II, 1981

Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (On Social Concern)

Pope St. John Paul II, 1987

Centesimus Annus (The Hundredth Year)

Pope St. John Paul II, 1991

Deus Caritas Est (God Is Love)

Pope Benedict XVI, 2005

Caritas in Veritate (Love in Truth)

Pope Benedict XVI, 2009

Evangeli Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel)

Pope Francis, 2014

were also called in on Body (3:12-14).

Once again, sound qualifications and excellent exhortations for missionaries whether in Colossae or the cities and towns where we are missioned more than 2,000 years later.

Fourth, the lightened candle. Usually the task of tallest godparent, lighting the baptismal candle to the words “Receive the light of Christ” is a clear commissioning within the missioning that is baptism. The parents and godparents are charged, if you will, with keeping the flame of faith alive.

And, finally, the last movement of the explicatory rites, is the Ephphetha or the Prayer over Ears and Mouth. This marks the end of the actual baptism ceremony, for only the Lord’s Prayer and Blessing remain. In this simple prayer with the celebrant touching the child’s ears and mouth, we see the deliberate missioning in which we now participate:

*The Lord Jesus made the deaf hear and the mute speak. May he soon touch your ears to receive his word, and your mouth **to proclaim his faith**, to the praise and glory of God the Father.*

“To proclaim his faith”—no wonder these words conclude the Rite of Baptism. This is the mission. This is God’s mission, and it is given to us. It is the punctuation mark on the ceremony, and it is the exclamation point for the Christian mission!

*The Lord Jesus
Christ made the deaf
hear and the mute speak
... may he touch your ears
to receive his word, and your
mouth to proclaim his faith,
to the praise and glory of
God.*

Earlier this morning, I mentioned that Jesus handed over his Spirit from the cross. It is this cross and the resurrection into which we are baptized and through which we grow into our vocations, that countless array of charisms in the church to bless the world and advance the mission given to us in baptism. St. Francis de Sales tells us that “the Church is a garden patterned with unlimited flowers.” This beautiful image from this doctor of the Church illustrates the vast diversity that is both available and necessary in the loving, fulfilling work enabled through the grace of the Holy Spirit. As missionaries, we all cooperate in and through the grace of God.

I conclude with how I began, with the algebra of mission. I think it is fair to offer here a full disclosure: I am not a mathematician. In fact, I am really not that good in math. But I do like most basic elements of algebra: Something, usually letters, represent something else. A friend of mine once quipped, “I loved math until they threw in the letters.” Yes, it is important to have the ability for one thing to be represented by something else. On one hand, letters are wholly different from numbers. Yet, on another, they are so related that they actually equal—share full identity with—what they are representing.

We are like that with our God and with God’s mission. Yes, we are wholly different from our Triune God. Yet, made in God’s image, we are so related that we, through our creation expressed in baptism, share an identity with God that is loving, Christic, and creative. This is both a divine esteeming and a sacred trusting given to us by the Trinity. Imagine, we have been entrusted with the mission of God! Our response continues to unfold, for God is counting on us to get the job done. And, so are our brothers and sisters:

Fellow missionaries, let’s get to work!

USCMA Executive Director Search

The United States Catholic Mission Association seeks an Executive Director with strong cross cultural mission experience who will work with the board and staff to promote the vision and mission of the organization. The position offers numerous opportunities for national leadership in the areas of mission and global solidarity.

As the chief executive officer of the USCMA, the Executive Director directs, coordinates and oversees the ongoing administration of the staff and Association. He/she leads the implementation of annual conference, programs in collaboration with members, staff, board and mission partners to accomplish the vision and mission of the Association. The Executive Director represents the Association at official functions of the Church, government and other organizations; serves on boards and as liaison with other organizations dedicated to similar purposes. He/she is responsible for the financial development of the organization.

Requirements:

Master's degree or higher. Preferred areas of studies are theology, missiology, or cross-cultural studies. The ideal candidate will have strong leadership and collaborative ability, good administrative experience, strong verbal and written skills, database experience (eTapestry preferred), strong Microsoft Office skills, experience with Adobe Master Suite and a familiarity with the Catholic Church's teachings, structures and organizations. The availability to travel and at times be able to work nights and weekends is essential.

For consideration, please submit a letter of application, Curriculum vitae or resume, salary requirements and contact information for references to Search Committee, via e-mail to uscma@uscatholicmission.org.

Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

The anticipated start date for the position is October 2015.

EOE/AA Employer

USCMA's Mission Update

is a quarterly newsletter from the US Catholic Mission Association that provides information and reflections for its members. The Mission Update includes articles, reflections, and a Periodic Paper on mission trends and spirituality, global concerns, mission education and/or formation, and updates on groups involved with mission education and global solidarity.

Periodic Papers are a quarterly series of papers, usually written by USCMA members, and appear in the Mission Update on the praxis, theology, and content of mission activity.

Mission Updates are published by the:

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Please send inquiries and submissions for the Mission Update and Periodic Papers to:

uscma@uscatholicmission.org

Job Opportunities

Associate Director, Lay Mission-Helpers

Lay Mission-Helpers is seeking applications for a full-time Associate Director /Development Officer with strong fund development interest and skills. This position, based in Los Angeles, will involve some international travel to mission sites in Africa and Latin America. Past international mission experience is a plus for this position. A strong understanding of the Catholic Church's teachings, structures, and organizations is desired. Reporting directly to the Executive Director, the Associate Director is responsible for advancing the mission of LMH by identifying, attracting, and securing revenue from individual donors and foundations. The AD will also be responsible for the supervision of Special Events, the Annual Fund, Major & Planned Gifts.

Qualifications:

Personal integrity; high energy; effective communication with a passion for mission; Good physical and mental health; Bachelor's degree; advanced or professional degree and/or fundraising certificate preferred; 3+ years of proven and quantifiable record in fundraising experience; ability to perform complex and/or multi-task assignments of support; experience with Word, Excel, and budget preparation desirable; a high capacity for attention to accuracy and detail; strong management skills with a demonstrated ability to plan, organize, lead, and provide feedback to staff; well-developed people and communication skills.

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Submit CV to: director@laymissionhelpers.org
www.laymissionhelpers.org

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The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops is seeking an Associate Director for the Office of National Collections/Director for Catholic Home Missions. This position staffs the Subcommittee on Catholic Home Missions and administers the Subcommittee's grant initiatives. The Associate Director supervises a grant specialist to support the Subcommittee and manages a \$9 million grant program from receipts of an annual national collection. The Associate Director manages the grant process, assesses the needs of applicants and develops and maintains relationships with home mission dioceses and collaborating organizations. The Associate Director assists the Executive Director with the Africa grant program and oversees Subcommittee on Africa consultant work.

Requirements:

Bachelor's degree in Theology, Humanities, Finance/development; Master's degree preferred, but extensive experience in the field can substitute; minimum 7 years' experience working with U.S. mission dioceses and/or other mission agencies; strong planning, budgeting and supervisory skills; knowledge of the Catholic Church's teachings, structures and practices; fundraising at the parish or diocesan level very helpful; experience in writing and public speaking; experience with the Church in Africa. Candidate must be able to read and analyze audited financial statements, be highly organized and willing and able to work collaboratively with peers, colleagues and others to achieve mission, goals and objectives.

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The 2014 USCMA Conference DVD set is available for **\$17.50** (*shipping included*) and can be ordered using the “[donate today](#)” button on our webpage. Simply put 2014 USCMA Conference DVD in the comment section and we will mail you your DVD when it comes in.

If you have any questions, please contact USCMA's Associate Director, [Stephen Scott](#).

Study Guide to the Aparecida Document

In his latest Papal Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis speaks about the importance of the Aparecida Document published by CELAM, of which Pope Francis was a member before his election.

The Study Guide is in both English and Spanish (offered in a bilingual edition) and is perfect for group discussions, parish trainings and further study into what it means to be a missionary.

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2012: **Forging New Paths- Interreligious Dialogue**

2009: **Behold, I Create a New Heaven and a New Earth... Seeing Mission with New Eyes**

2008: **Mission: A Journey of Hope**

2007: **“Are Not Our Hearts Burning?”**

We also have DVDs of the Keynotes from: **Mission Congress 2010- God's Mission, Many Faces: A Portrait of US Catholics in Mission**

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As we continue Jesus' mission, working together to proclaim his Gospel of love, peace, and joy, we pray that your faith will bring you to gift Jesus to everyone hungering and thirsting for the life that only he can bring.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

from the staff of the United States Catholic Mission Association.