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### Just community a model of congregational development founded in catholic social teaching

Lynn M. Campbell  
*Regis University*

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**Regis University**  
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CONGREGATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*Just Community*

A model of Congregational Development

Founded in Catholic Social Teaching

A Professional Project Submitted

By

Lynn M. Campbell

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Master in Nonprofit Management

Regis University

October 14, 2006

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Abstract

This project identifies the benefits of integrating the Congregational Building Campaign with Catholic Social Teaching as a means of supporting the Catholic parish in responding to Second Vatican Council's call for social engagement on behalf of the parish. It includes a literature review of the necessity of lay leadership in the Catholic Church, the importance of understanding Catholic Social Teaching and parish social ministry, and the benefits of participation in community organizing. Data consists of a survey of parish participation in social ministry and case study summaries of participating churches in the Campaign. The author makes recommendations for a pilot program entitled "Just Community" aimed to increase participation of Catholic parishes in social ministry.

## Executive Summary

Parish social ministry is an essential element of parish life, and working for peace and justice is what makes a parish Catholic (Communities of Salt and Light, 1993). Despite this assertion, very often the work of justice and peace within the parish is isolated and only a small group of people select and address social issues. Of the parishes involved in parish social ministry, many participate in the charitable aspect of direct service, while neglecting the justice dimensions of social ministry: justice education, advocacy, and community organizing and empowerment.

Parish social ministry encourages parishioners to reflect and act on Catholic social teaching. According to the Catholic bishops of the United States, “Far too many Catholics are not familiar with the basic content of Catholic social teaching. More fundamentally, many Catholics do not adequately understand that the social teaching of the Church is an essential part of the Catholic faith” (Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions, 1998). Fewer opportunities for social justice and a lack of understanding of the Catholic social tradition contribute to a lack of involvement in social justice. Especially neglected is the aspect of community organizing.

Community organizing and empowerment is the least understood form of social ministry, yet it is a vital and powerful aspect of addressing the root causes of injustices. Interfaith community organizations bring together people with shared values and empower them to identify shared problems, determine solutions, and create change. They provide a strategy for parishes to heed the Vatican II call for congregations to get involved in their community. However, these organizations are not always successful in attracting or maintaining the participation of Catholic parishes, including those in the Hartford Archdiocese. When the organizations do connect to

the parish, they tend to draw leadership from the parish, while not contributing towards the development of the parish community.

One program in New England succeeds in renewing congregations and generating participation in community organizing. The Congregational Development Campaign developed by Julia Greene of the InterValley Project utilizes the “one-to-one” strategy to build relationships across the congregation, promote new leadership among the laity, and generate interest and involvement in facilitating social justice – all necessary tools for the future of the Catholic Church. Through this campaign, the selection of internal parish issues and social justice concerns come from the entire parish. Under the current leadership of Andrea Sheppard Lomba, Congregational Development Campaign Training Director, the campaign is a program for current members of an interfaith community organization, but has potential to serve as a program which encourages involvement in community organizing.

In order to initiate parish involvement in community organizing, Catholic social teaching needs integration into the life of the parish and encouragement from the pastor. The principles of Catholic social teaching need to be widely held in the parish in order to engage parishioners in all aspects of parish social ministry. In order to address the fact that these teachings are not widely held, the author has created a pilot program called “*Just Community*”. This program provides a foundational base of Catholic social teachings before, during, and after participation in the Congregational Development Campaign. It provides the supportive framework to involve parishioners in the public arena. A key component of the program is the support of the pastor. Just Community develops the internal parish community through bridging the gap to the external community and promoting a ministry for justice rooted in our baptism and faith commitment.

## Congregational Development and Catholic Social Teaching

The author of this paper and pilot program is a student in the Regis University Masters of Nonprofit Management program, for which this Senior Capstone project will partially fulfill her requirements for graduation. In this paper she will henceforth refer to herself as the author, and is also the parish social ministry chairperson in her Catholic parish. The author presented herself to the Office of Urban Affairs (OUA), the social justice office of the Archdiocese of Hartford, to undertake a project that would benefit the parish social ministry section of the OUA. Patricia Wallace, Program Director of OUA, recommended research in this area based upon her experience working with Catholic parishes and community organizations.

Parish social ministry is an essential element of parish life, allowing people to share their gifts and talent in and beyond the community while receiving the spiritual support of other parishioners. The ministry has its roots in Catholic social teaching and the discipleship of Jesus. Often the work of the ministry is limited to a small group of people that select and address the social issues. Parishes with social ministry committees do tremendous amounts of charitable work, but often neglect the justice component. Although the basis for Catholic Social Teaching is in justice the transition from charity to acts of justice is difficult.

Often Catholics are not aware of the justice component of social teaching and are uncomfortable with taking their faith into the areas of government and politics. The United States Catholic Bishops state “This poses a serious challenge for all Catholics, since it weakens our capacity to be a Church that is true to the demands of the Gospel. We need to do more to share the social mission and message of our Church” (Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions, 1998). Catholic parishes need to empower the leadership potential of the laity in order to respond to the bishops’ challenge.



Because the faithful are unaware of its relevance, community organizing and empowerment is an often-neglected justice aspect of social ministry. The Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD), funded by parish wide collections, is a major contributor to community organizations, yet the parishioners do not see the connection between the program and their lives. Interfaith community organizations, which empower people to address structural change, act as a source of social action involvement. However, these organizations are not always successful in attracting or maintaining the participation of Catholic parishes within the Hartford Archdiocese. There are four interfaith community organizations in the Archdiocese of Hartford, which are currently receiving, or have received, funding from the National and Local CCHD grants. Of the 216 parishes in the Archdiocese of Hartford, 19 (9%) are dues paying members of these organizations (see appendix A for data). As part of his job as the Executive Director for OUA, P. Joseph Smyth is Diocesan Director for CCHD for the Archdiocese of Hartford. He believes that when the organizations do connect to the parish they tend to draw leadership from the parish, while not contributing towards creating parish community or enhancing all aspects of parish social ministry.

#### Opportunity Statement

Invigorating the Catholic Church with lay leadership and attracting the parish to the social tradition of public presence requires an investment of resources into a parish program. The Congregational Development Campaign utilized by the InterValley Project, a network of interfaith organizations located in New England, is one such program. The campaign renews congregations by creating a sense of belonging, ownership in goals and actions, and opportunities for relationships within the congregation. The selection of internal congregational issues and social justice issues come from the congregation. It promotes a sense of community

and accountability among the parishioners, and develops leadership within the parish as well as for the local community organization.

While the Congregational Development Campaign is a strong program, it has a few limiting factors which may inhibit the participation of Catholic parishes. The campaign relies on pastor support and vision, and a congregation which understands that concern for justice is central to the Catholic faith. These are limiting factors because Catholics are not fully informed about the Church's social teachings (Davidson, 2005) and the ambivalence, reluctance, or disdain of most clergy toward the public arena keeps most churches in the sanctuary (Jacobson, 2001). A third limiting factor is that this is an interfaith program which, understandably, does not highlight Catholic social teaching. This limits the program's ability to address all aspects of parish social ministry. The ideal program for the Catholic Church creates a parish community which underscores the social dimension of the faith, and teaches people about all aspects of parish social ministry, including community organizing.

The purpose of this professional project is to determine if the Congregational Development Campaign is brought to a Catholic parish with an integration of Catholic social teaching, it will provide benefits necessary to today's Catholic parish, such as the recruitment and enablement of parish leaders to engage in all aspects of parish social ministry.

#### Methodology

The author chose four methods of data collection to draw conclusions in this project: (a) review of literature and internal documentation from InterValley Project; (b) interviews of JustFaith graduates, the campaign training director of InterValley Project, and the lead organizer for InterValley Project; (c) review and summation of raw data from the Office of Urban Affairs and; (d) phone interviews to four interfaith community organizations.

The purpose of this data collection was to determine the current commitment of Catholic parishes in the Hartford Archdiocese towards community organizing and the feasibility of adapting the campaign. The author chose personal interviews of JustFaith graduates to determine if a population which understands the social justice dimension of the Catholic faith is having success in engaging their parish in community organizing. The literature review determines the need for the Congregational Development Campaign and community organizing.

### *Parish Involvement*

The author reviewed and summarized the raw data of a recent parish social ministry survey conducted by the Office of Urban Affairs. Responders were leaders of parish social ministry committees, or, when no committee existed, a person of leadership with the greatest connection to the social ministry activities. Based on the 38 responses, 13% of the parishes in the Archdiocese of Hartford have four parish social ministry subcommittees of direct service, justice education, advocacy, and community organizing and empowerment. While 92% of the respondents are involved in direct service projects, only 21% indicate some level of involvement with community empowerment organizations. In regards to parishioner participation, 58% felt that most people in their parish were not involved in social ministry in some way and when asked if satisfied with their ability to get people involved in their committee 100% answered no (Archdiocese of Hartford, 2006).

In effort to obtain additional information of the parish's involvement in community organizing the author contacted the four interfaith community organizations in the Archdiocese of Hartford which are currently receiving, or have received, funding from the National and Local CCHD grants. In 2004-2005, The Greater Hartford Interfaith Coalition for Equity and Justice, Naugatuck Valley Project, and United Action Connecticut, Central CT Chapter, received funding

grants. Elm City Congregations Organized received funding in the past. These organizations provided the author with the names of current dues paying Catholic parish members. Out of 216 parishes in the Archdiocese of Hartford, 19 (9%) are dues paying members of these organizations (see appendix A for names).

In order to further verify the impact interfaith community organizations have on the parish, the author recommends additional research. The number of pastors of the dues-paying parishes that have been to week-long training will indicate the level of pastoral involvement. Also helpful would be the number of the lay leaders from those parishes that attended the week-long training, are in leadership positions in the community organizing group, are in positions of leadership in the parish, and, of those, how many regularly participate in the parish social ministry committee. These numbers would indicate if the participation in the community organization has done anything to improve the vision of the parish, the culture of the parish, and the leadership structure of the parish. Information from Catholic parishes which at one time were, but no longer are involved in community organizations would give insight into the difficulties parishes have with participation in community organizing.

To get a broader picture of what is going on in community organizing and the Catholic Church, the author utilized the JustFaith graduates list-serve. JustFaith is an extended justice education program successful in spiritually transforming people and equipping them with knowledge in social teaching and a desire to put their faith in action. In September 2006, eight members from all parts of the country responded to the author's email solicitation of information regarding their experience with community organizing. The question required a response only from those with such experience (see appendix B for text). Follow-through interviews reveal that graduates are too far ahead of their parish and do not have the support of the rest of their

community as they strive to address issues such as the systemic causes of poverty. They need power in numbers to create support and interest in parish social ministry and community organizing, and some feel isolated from their parish in their work for peace and justice. This population understands that community organizing is more likely to take place when a justice constitutive force exists and the pastor is committed. They view the pastor as the key element in the formula for successfully becoming involved with community organizing. If he is not onboard the task is harder to accomplish.

Mac Johnson, JustFaith graduate and former Archdiocese of Cincinnati Catholic Charities Community Organizing and Parish Social Ministry staff, is involved with the interfaith organization: AMOS Project. He sees the gift of growing inter-relationships and faith reflection, which occurs during the formative programs of Just Faith and Community Organizing, helpful in addressing whatever needs may develop in the parish (personal communication, September 21, 2006). Through community organizing effort he found the following:

In the assembly, parishioners now know each other more than we used to. Many initiatives have resulted from this: Small Christian community development, parishioner-to-parishioner support, lay people being commissioned in mass for missions, out-pouring of support for these missions, educational programs after these missions.

These discussions reveal that it takes more than one person, or even a small group of people who are committed to social justice, for the parish to successfully take part in community organizing.

*Congregational Development Campaign*

The Congregational Development Campaign is a service to members of the InterValley Project. Since this campaign is experiencing success, the author wanted to know the possibilities available to Catholic Churches in utilizing and adapting the campaign. The author held phone interviews with members of the InterValley Project. On September 19, 2006 she spoke with Andrea Sheppard Lomba, IVP Congregational Development Campaign Director. Lomba reinforced her concern that the pastor and the organizer must be clear in each other's expectations and that the pastor's support is crucial to the success of the Congregational Development Campaign. When asked if there was some room in the program for incorporation of Catholic social teaching themes, Lomba explained that the eight weekly campaign meetings lend themselves to the participant's creativity. This opens the possibility of integrating Catholic social teaching into the campaign.

To discuss this concept further, Kenneth Galdston, director and lead organizer of the InterValley Project (IVP) was contacted. Galdston is looking at different ways to move the campaign ahead. He is open to the option of the campaign serving as a means of initiating involvement in community organizing. He sees the campaign to be especially beneficial to consolidated parishes as a way to develop relationships and shared vision. Galdston is open to the suggestion of making the program accommodating and specific to particular faiths. According to Galdston, the current limiting factors towards participation are: newness of the campaign, intense commitment required of the campaign, and staffing. The congregation must really be committed to the campaign, and it works best if it takes place when the pastor visualizes its potential. According to Galdston, three organizers of the Naugatuck Valley Project

have training from Sheppard, and he believes that IVP has the capacity to teach more organizers in the campaign methods (personal communication, October 4, 2006).

## Review of Literature

### *Need for Laity Involvement*

Since the campaign contributes towards the leadership development of the laity both for the parish and for the community organization, the author researched the necessity for such involvement. The research indicates that Catholic parishes will need to increasingly rely on the leadership of the laity. Reverend John E. Linnan, C.X.V., Ph.D., Professor of theology, as cited in Pinsoneault, 2001, said “the way the Church currently organizes its pastoral care is not working because most of the work falls to six to ten percent of the Catholics”. Linnan argues that the clergy need to ensure the authenticity of faith, worship, and life of the community, but they do not need to have an exaggerated sense of responsibility. They can hold the church accountable to the people, renewing their sense of mission. To be effective, that effort may need to be supported by new structures, new models of communication, and new styles of leadership.

In order to identify and promote emerging pastoral leadership models that nurture and sustain vibrant and empowered Catholic parish communities in the United States, the Emerging Models Project is providing research into pastoral leadership models in today's parishes. The Emerging Models Project identifies vibrant parishes as having six key leadership characteristics: collaborative, ethical, inclusive, pastoral, prophetic, and welcoming (Emerging Models, 2006). Effective leadership is demonstrated through collaborative efforts to bring the Catholic tradition to the community. Leaders are also pastoral, caring for the needs of the community, while empowering the members of the community to care for one another. They respect the dignity of the person and the diversity of the community. Prophetic leaders move the parish in a direction

that is faithful to the Gospel and into mission. They are ecumenical, evangelistic, justice-focused, and mission directed, providing outreach to the community.

As part of the Emerging Models Project, on April 25-27, 2005, fifty pastoral leaders from the Northeast participated in a regional symposium on the Emerging Models of Pastoral Leadership. When envisioning the emerging models of ordained and lay ecclesial leadership to the Year 2025, participants focused primarily on increased dependency on the leadership of the laity and deacons, more diverse forms of orders, and servant model of leadership. They anticipate future trends in parish ministries to be more collaborative and intentional service ministries, and more awareness and emphasis on social justice and Catholic social teachings (Strategic Leadership Associates, 2005).

This vision of lay leadership is in contradiction to the current situation as perceived by many Catholics. Gautier (2005) reports of the research she did with D'Antonio, Hoge, and Davidson. Their survey of Catholics in the United States found that more than half (53 percent) agree at least somewhat with the statement "Most priests don't expect laity to be leaders, just followers," and 64 percent agree at least somewhat that Catholic church leaders are out of touch with the laity.

The statistics of parish membership, the shortage of priests, and demographic changes also indicate an opportunity for the laity to step up and take leadership in church activities. Currently more than a third of United States parishes share a pastor and indications are that this is a growing trend (Jewell, 2006). The continuing decline in the number of priests and the continuing increase in the number of laypeople will put the current priest shortage in a more serious situation in the years ahead (Davidson, 2005). Urban sprawl leads to parish consolidations, furthering the demands of the laity to step up and assist the pastor.



Church teaching supports the necessity of giving more responsibility and accountability to the laity. The Vatican II Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests speaks of the relationship between priests and the lay faithful. According to this document, “Priests are to be sincere in their appreciation and promotion of lay people’s dignity and of the special role the laity have to play in the church’s mission. They should be willing to listen to lay people ... and recognize their experience and competence in the different fields of human activity.” (Flannery, 1996, p. 333). The laity is necessary to continue all aspects of the church’s mission, including those which take the parishioner into the public arena.

### *Social Teaching and the Public Arena*

The literature review reveals a misunderstanding among Catholics regarding the social dimension of the faith. According to three National Studies of American Catholics done by Davidson et al, 62% agreed with the statement: “The Church should stick to religion and not be involved in economic or political issues”, while 76% agree that helping the needy is important part of their religious beliefs (Davidson, 2005). The challenge is for Catholics to see that poverty and injustice are structural problems resulting from political and economic policies and in order to “help the needy” the policies must be addressed in their respected arena. The findings of The American Catholics in the Public Square Project, conducted by the Commonwealth Foundation and the Faith and Reason Institute, convey insight about American Catholics in public life. Religious faith shapes Catholic's personal values, but their conclusions do not always reflect the official position of the church. Catholics are achieving greater access to the public square, but their understanding of Catholic social teachings has become diluted (Steinfels, 2004). Peggy Prevoznik Heins, director of parish social ministry for the Diocese of Wilmington, Delaware, has

authored a training program on "Salt and Light." She estimates that 80 to 90 percent of the people who begin her program have never even heard of Catholic social teaching (Clarke, 1997).

This research contradicts the mandate found in many encyclicals and documents reflecting Catholic social teaching. Over the past century, the Church has developed a body of social teachings. These teachings have their foundation in scripture, and are supported and enhanced by the popes, bishops, and other church leaders. Although too numerous to mention here, these documents provide insight to the connection between faith and politics and emphasize our responsibility to work in solidarity with the each other for the common good. The church enters the public arena because of its mandate from Jesus whose church is sent by its Lord to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing ...and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28: 19-20). The church is to make disciples who actually live by and observe the teachings of its Lord. "Our teaching calls us to protect human life, to defend the poor and vulnerable, and to work towards a more just society and a more peaceful world. For us, the duties of citizenship begin with gospel values and Catholic teaching." (Faithful Citizenship, 2004).

### *Congregation-Based Community Organizations*

One means for the Catholic community to enter the public arena is through congregation-based community organizations. This strategy has success with empowering people, developing leaders, and addressing social concerns. Congregation-based community organizing results in new sense stewardship, worship, mission, evangelization, and larger sense of church. The process of organizing utilizes the power of people to accomplish what the parish alone can not. In addition to helping people formulate a solution to their problems, it also reenergizes the church. According to Sister Susan Bowles, president of the Voice-Buffalo community

organization, many city parishes struggled on with small, mostly elderly congregations, even in neighborhoods populated with young families. Through Voice, she says the young are finding a new interest in church (McClory, 2000).

### *Congregation-Based Community Organizations and Clergy Involvement*

The Roundtable, the National association of diocesan social action directors, did a significant amount of research on community organizing and the Catholic parish. Their study and guide compiled by Fowler (1994) demonstrates the opportunities and limitations of the current model of community organizing. While results showed support for congregation-based organizing, the study cautions the audience that the key element in success in community organizing is clergy involvement. The study also comments on the Church's need of strategies to develop leadership and recognizes congregation-based organizing as one of the strategies with potential in this regard. The report also cautions that organizing can recruit leadership for the community organization but not for the parish. According to Fowler, from the Roundtable's perspective, congregational-based organizing is one of the most effective tools available to the Church to build constituency of justice and to enable people to achieve common goals.

Another source that outlines the necessity of clergy involvement in community organizing is Dennis Jacobson, the director of the Gamaliel National Clergy Caucus, a network of over 1,000 clergy that develops national and regional training events to ground the work of congregation-based community organizing and scripture. With fourteen years of experience in community organizing he is an expert in the field. Jacobson (2001) found the following:

If the pastoral leadership of the local church is resistant to a public arena ministry, even the best-intentioned laity will be fruitless in their efforts to engage their congregation in public arena issues. When clergy are not supportive it is almost

impossible to proceed. When they are passively supportive, organizing is possible, but the results will be mixed. But when the clergy sees organizing as a strategy to build the church and is an active participant in the process his leadership will inspire followers and enhance the success of the campaign. (p.15)

### *Congregational Development Campaign*

A new service available to community organizations is the Congregational Development Campaign (referred from this point forward as “Campaign”). The review of literature from InterValley Project determines if its benefits match the needs of today’s Catholic parishes while supporting the teachings of the Catholic Church. The Campaign was developed by Julia Greene (now lead Organizer of Merrimack Valley Project) of the InterValley Project. Under the current leadership of Andrea Sheppard Lomba, the Campaign is active in churches of all denominations, including the Catholic Church. Since its inception in 2001, eleven Greater Boston Interfaith Organization congregation members have participated in the campaign, four of which are Catholic parishes. Within the InterValley Project, six congregations have participated since 2003, three of which are Catholic parishes (InterValley Project, 2004).

The Campaign aims to strengthen congregations by building more effective relationships and leadership for action on the parish and community levels. A professional organizer trained in the campaign is necessary for the success of the program. It utilizes the “one-to-one” strategy to build relationships across the congregation by listening to the people we serve in the context of a relationship rather than a meeting with an agenda or a brief conversation after mass. Through these one-to-one visits, parish members connect with one another, getting to know each – their concerns, interests, their vision, and their story, not just what they feel needs to be done. This aspect of campaign supports canon code 212§3 ‘Obligations and Rights of All the Christian

Faithful': "To manifest their opinion on matters that pertain to the good of the church to their pastors and other Christian faithful, ... with reverence to their pastors and consideration for the common good and respect for persons." (McKenna, 2000).

Weekly campaign meetings, which provide opportunities for leadership development, follow the one-to-ones. The campaign concludes with additional listening opportunities through house meetings, and parish retreats or assemblies. This process allows the selection of internal parish issues and social justice concerns to come from the entire parish. Because the Campaign works towards developing leaders for internal parish issues, it respects canon law 222§1, the obligations and rights of all the Christian Faithful - to assist with the needs of the church. Through the training supplied by the organizer it follows canon law 231§1, the rights to receive appropriate formation for whatever ministries they exercise for the church.

The five case studies and the four clergy participant interviews reflect the benefits of the campaign. Greater interaction among people and the increased ease in which people interact with each other is evidence of the campaign's ability to develop a more cohesive parish community. Parishioners work as a team and become like a family, committed to building the parish community. Church becomes less a place they go to on Sunday a more a part of their everyday life. The congregation no longer centers on itself, but to make a difference in the community. Following the campaign there is a greater commitment towards the community organization, as evident by increased participation in actions and meetings.

The campaign has resulted in shifts in leadership as parishioners see their role as laity in determining the future of the parish. Existing parish leaders are energized and gain new vision. St. Anthony's Parish in Ansonia, Connecticut, participated in the campaign in 2003-2004. Father Patrick Berkey, pastor, illustrated the often-heard sentiment that if he had something to do in the

parish it was always the same people. But now since his participation in the campaign, he sees more new faces involved. He recommends this program for developing leaders and enthusiasm (InterValley Project, 2004).

Another benefit the campaign provides is the effect it has on the pastor. The pastor and the people establish trust between each other, and the groundwork is set for collaboration of responsibilities within the parish. During the campaign, the pastor participates in the one-to-ones, which offers the parishioners an opportunity to know him better. He must be willing let go of desire of control and model the behaviors Jesus wanted us to live-out, in order to sustain an environment where community can happen. Father Berkey thinks that having seminary interns participate in the Congregational Development Campaign would be a good preparation for ministry, as it changes the pastor's view of his role and the relationship he has with his people (InterValley Project, 2004). All interviewees concur with his sentiment that experience with the campaign will benefit the formation of the clergy.

St. Mark Catholic Church in Dorchester, Massachusetts experienced White Flight in the early 1980s followed by an immigrant influx. The congregants did not know each other and the parish lacked a common native language and culture. The pastor, Father Dan Finn, credits the campaign as bringing his parish together: "If it were not for the parish development campaign and hiring a parish development organizer on our staff, our church would probably be closing its doors today" (InterValley Project, 2004). Father Finn's vision for his church and support of the program were key in the success of the program.

In addition to the limiting factors stated in the introduction, results of the Campaign indicate a limited ability to strengthening the parish's social ministry. Some churches addressed their social concerns only through the Congregation-based community organizations, while

others were more comfortable focusing on internal actions. There was no mention of terminology “parish social ministry” or “Catholic social teaching” in the after campaign strategies.

### Results

The literature review and the collected data support the fact that parishes are not utilizing the potential of community organizing and empowerment, and that Catholics do not embrace the full scope of social ministry. The literature review also reveals that although a necessary factor in moving the parish forward towards this dimension, Catholic social teaching remains unfamiliar to the average Catholic. This concurs with the author’s own experience as a parish social ministry leader. The research also confirms that the Catholic Church will need to establish trained leadership of the laity to keep its parishes vibrant and capable of addressing all aspects of social ministry.

The Congregational Development Campaign has proven its success in developing leadership and a renewed sense of community. The results support the author’s thesis that if the Campaign integrates Catholic social teaching, the new program, if actively supported by the pastor, will assist the parish in growing its internal strength and parish social ministry, while meeting the call to share Catholic social teaching.

### Recommendations

The author responds to the results through the creation of a pilot program entitled Just Community. It is a model of parish development founded in Catholic social teaching. The model creates a parish environment that encourages individuals to make their own connections between faith and participation in the public arena, and issues of social justice. The Just Community model offers flexibility and options to best suit the parish. The author notes that this is a preliminary outline of the program. To achieve the greatest potential requires further collaboration with the InterValley Project and OUA staff.

The first adaptation of the campaign is the parish's employment of a community organizer trained in the Campaign. This allows for participation of parishes not currently members of interfaith organizations, and does not hold the parish committed to joining such organization. It also allows time for the parish to develop an understanding of the reasons to get involved in community organizing.

The first goal of the Just Community program is to enhance the parishioners' understanding of the social dimension of their faith. This is achieved through (a) the pastors' homilies and actions (b) parish wide educational programming that focus on Catholic social teaching, and (c) the integration of Catholic social teaching during and after the Campaign process. The pastor must be willing to stress the religion's prophetic role in society at least as much as its role in nurturing personal faith. He must install in the future leaders that working for social justice and caring for others are essential components of their faith.

Parish wide programming covers the following topics: social sin, subsidiarity, and community organizing. Basic instruction in the principles of Catholic social teaching is given to target parish groups before the campaign. It is the assumption that there exists a small social



concerns committee, or some lay leaders, already comfortable in the teaching and willing to provide assistance in this manner.

The integration of Catholic social teaching during the Campaign occurs at different stages. During the Fall Pre-campaign the planning and organizing team receives an overview of the basic principles. During the Winter Campaign participants in the weekly planning meeting study one theme of Catholic social teaching and determine how they will incorporate that theme into the weekly campaign meeting. At the first campaign meeting a short presentation is given regarding the seven themes of Catholic social teaching, as defined by the USCCB. At the remaining seven campaign meetings, the campaign theme relates to a social teaching theme. During the Spring Post-campaign house meeting, facilitators are trained in traditional group facilitation techniques as well as the difference between charity and justice, and skills of social analysis. They will use the values, insights, and applications of Catholic social teaching to guide the participants in the decision making portion of the campaign.

At the planning retreat or Issues Assembly working groups are formed for internal issues and community issues. It is from this point forward that the strengthening of parish social ministry begins. The three most crucial elements in building the parish's social ministry have been actualized: organizing leadership teams, identifying and recruiting leaders, and learning social analysis (Ulrich, 2001). The working groups discern the appropriate means of action, utilizing the four-prong approach to address social issues.

The author has established that pastoral support is necessary in engaging the parish in community organizing and in the Campaign. Because this support is crucial to the program, the author recommends that the presentation of Just Community program to the priests and deacons of the Catholic Church. Three ways to accomplish this are (a) a continuing education in-service

for the clergy, (b) an in-service as part of the deacon formation program, and (c) an opportunity for seminarians and deaconate candidates to experience the program as part of their field placement training. These recommendations are supported by the fact that in 1995 the Task Force on Catholic Social Teaching and Education of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops assessed that an effort must be made to ensure not only the understanding of documents but also a corresponding conversion of life. It is desirable that seminarians cultivate a deep spirituality that connects our celebration of the Eucharist with our commitment to justice in the world (Sharing Catholic Social Teaching, 1998).

The Just Community program utilizes two teaching tools supplied by the USCCB: Sharing Catholic Social Teaching Leaders Guide, and In the Footsteps of Jesus Resource manual on Catholic Social Teaching. These tools are very successful in the popular JustFaith program. It also encourages use of materials from Catholic Charities, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, and the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis Office for Social Justice.

### Conclusion

By incorporating the previously mentioned changes to the Congregational Development Campaign, a good program is made even stronger and more attractive to Catholic parishes. The Catholic parish has much to gain by its participation in the Just Community program. This program will help pastors develop a greater sense of community within the parish, enable the laity, increase participation in community organizing, and build a constituency of justice.

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Appendix A

2005-06 National and Local Catholic Campaign for Human Development Grants with a Focus on Faith-Based Organizing. Data based on phone calls with treasurers September 14– 21, 2006.

**Naugatuck Valley Project, Waterbury**

Total Catholic parishes in Hartford Archdiocese: 2, Total members: 28

Dues Paying	Exploring
St. John of Cross, Middlebury	St. Ann
St. John the Evangelist, Watertown	Blessed Sacrament
St. Margaret – owe last years dues – active participants	Sacred Heart – Southbury,
	Assumption
<i>St. Thomas Church – dropped, haven't paid dues in two years</i>	Sacred Heart Waterbury, active but haven't paid dues yet
	St. Peter & Paul
	St. Leo

**Greater Hartford Interfaith Coalition for Equity and Justice, Hartford**

Total dues paying Catholic Parishes in Hartford Archdiocese: 8  
 Northern Catholic Community of East Hartford (3 congregations)  
 St. Anne Immaculate  
 St. Augustine  
 St. Bridget  
 St. Timothy  
 St. James

**United Action Connecticut, Central CT Chapter**

Total dues paying Catholic Parishes in Hartford Archdiocese: 6  
 St Stanislaus, Meriden  
 Our Lady of Mercy, Plainville  
 Our Lady of Fatima, Yalesville  
 St. Mary, New Britain  
 Mary Our Queen, Plantsville  
 St. Joseph, Bristol

**Elm City Congregations Organized, New Haven (Past CCHD-Funded)**

Total dues paying Catholic Parishes in Hartford Archdiocese: 3  
 Sacred Heart, New Haven                      St. Mary, New Haven – no longer dues paying  
 Rose of Lima, New Haven  
 Ascension Church, Hamden  
*Our Lady of Mt Carmel, Hamden will be joining*

## Appendix B

Email post to JustFaith graduate list serve on September 19, 2006

“I am doing a project which involves improving the participation level of Catholic parishes in Interfaith Community Organizations while also enhancing a parish's social ministry. Through the Journey for Justice Program in JustFaith we get a glimpse of how these action groups operate to address root causes of injustice. Of all the aspects of parish social ministry, this one seems the most difficult to engage our parishioners in. As JustFaith graduates we may become involved in the work of these organizations, but not bring our parishes with us. I am looking for anyone who has attempted to engage their parish in an Interfaith Community Organization or have a parish with active involvement in this area and is willing to discuss with me.”