



Diocese of San José



Justice for Immigrants

Director's Report

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue No 6, April 2010

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JFI - PACT Legislative Actions

PACT and the Diocese of San José Justice for Immigrants have been working together since 2006.

The Justice for Immigrants campaign and PACT have worked together developing leaders for immigration reform. Leaders have participated in planning and facilitating prayer vigils, public actions and rallies, conducting research meetings with officials and participating in lobby efforts locally and in Washington, DC. The delegates led by Fr. Jon were Dione Rábago, Katy and Jill Malone, Juanita and Enrique Velasco, Patricia Basulto, Rosemary Comella, Inma Gomez Gonzalez, Jesse Castañeda, and Isabel Villavicencia. The delegates sacrificed their own financial resources to attend the trip, thus, no parish or diocesan funds were expended to support this effort.



Over 200,000 grassroots leaders
 Prophetic Words, Powerful Speeches and
 A Call to Action

Locally JFI and PACT leaders planned the Prayer Vigil for Comprehensive Immigration Reform at St. Julie Billiard Parish, San José with Bishop McGrath and helped organize and run the USCCB's Justice for Immigrants postcard campaign, collecting and delivering

nearly 20,000 postcards to our senators and representatives.

The JFI leadership is parish-based and coordinated through the support of PACT and Fr. Jon Pedigo, the Diocesan Director of the Justice for Immigrants campaign in the Diocese of San José.

JFI Mass for Immigrants with Cardinal Mahoney

Cardinal Mahoney presided over the Mass for Immigrants at St. Aloysios Church, in Washington, DC on March 21.

Thousands of faithful Catholics from throughout the nation attended the Mass for Immigrants that was organized by the Justice for Immigrants campaign. Dione Rábago, Fr. Jon and Katy Malone were present at the beginning of the mass, helping coordinate liturgical ministers and ushers. Buses from throughout the nation arrived at the mass. The PICO



National Network, Center for Community Change and Justice for Immigrants helped with the turnout for the liturgy. After the mass, Bishop John Wester spoke at the Interfaith Prayer Service and Cardinal Mahoney spoke at the National Rally for Immigration Reform.

Interfaith Service, Rally and March

The Interfaith Service, Rally and March to the Capitol had over 200,000 people in attendance. It was the largest rally on the *Washington Mall since President Obama's Inauguration*.

Early Sunday morning the San Jose delegation began the day with a small, intimate mass in the rented house where the delegation was staying. At 7:00 am all the delegates were out the door to attend a California Legislative Breakfast with California Congress members and over 400 delegates from throughout California representing various organizations. Fr. Jon participated in the legislative breakfast, offering one of the blessings.

After the breakfast the delegation split into two groups. Some went to the mass to help organize the ministers and the others went to a rally in front of the White House.

Four delegates from the Diocese of San José were on stage at the Interfaith Rally. Fr. Jon helped develop the Call to Worship and Prayer Ritual that welcomed the religious delegations from all parts of the country. There were delegates from all parts of the country from Honolulu to Houston. After the Interfaith Prayer Service, the rally began. Speaker after



speaker addressed the growing crowds. Organizers originally estimated 100,000 people would be in attendance. By the beginning of the rally, the crowd already exceeded that number. By 2 pm the crowd swelled to over 200,000 people. There were no violent altercations or mishaps. The march that followed the conclusion of the rally went from the Mall to the steps of the U.S. Capitol.

The delegates returned home exhausted and retired early because the following day they had to prepare for Immigrant Lobby Day.

Immigrant Lobby Day

Monday morning the delegates prepared for lobby visits with Senator Feinstein's staff and several California representatives. There were hundreds of delegations from nearly all 50 states that had appointments that day and tens of thousands of JFI postcards were delivered. The following day, Tuesday, there was a delegation that met with Senator Boxer. The Boxer delegation delivered thousands of postcards signed by the faithful of the Diocese of San José.

The JFI delegation personally met with Representative Zoe Lofgren and expressed gratitude for her support for the work she has done on immigration reform, reiterated our position on the things that we felt should be included in any legislation and asked her questions about her understanding of how we could be more effective in getting comprehensive immigration reform (CIR) to move through Congress.



What is Comprehensive Immigration Reform?

Global anti-poverty efforts

Many migrants are compelled to leave their homes out of economic necessity in order to provide even the most basic of needs for themselves and their families. International efforts should be designed to create conditions in which people do not have to leave their homes out of necessity. Trade, international economic aid, debt relief, and other types of economic policies should be pursued that result in people not having to migrate in desperation in order to survive.

Expanded opportunities to reunify families

U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents must endure many years of separation from close family members who they want to join them in the United States. The backlogs of available visas for family members results in waits of five, ten, fifteen, and more years of waiting for a visa to become available. There should be a reduction of the pending backlog and more visas available for family reunification purposes.

Temporary worker program

The U.S. economy depends upon the labor provided by migrants. Therefore, many migrants come to the United States to fill jobs. Immigrant advocates see this reality and call for a more rationale and humane system by which laborers from other countries can enter the country legally to fill positions in the labor force,



including on a temporary basis. Because the U.S. experience with temporary workers programs has been fraught with abuses, a temporary worker program should include:

- Path to permanent residency which is achievable/verifiable
- Family unity which allows immediate family members to join worker
- Job portability which allows workers to change employers
- Labor protections which apply to U.S. workers
- Enforcement mechanisms and resources to enforce worker's rights
- Wages and benefits which do not undercut domestic workers
- Mobility between U.S. and homeland and within U.S.
- Labor-market test to ensure U.S. workers are not harmed

Broad-based legalization

For those in this country without proper immigration documentation, opportunities should be provided for them to obtain legalization if they can demonstrate good moral character and have built up equities in this country. Such an "earned" legalization should be achievable and independently verifiable.

Restoration of due process

In recent years, immigrants have been subject to laws and policies that debase our country's fundamental commitment

to individual liberties and due process. These laws and policies, including detention for months without charges, secret hearings, and ethnic profiling, signal a sea of change in our government's policies and attitudes towards immigrants. We are a nation with a long, rich tradition of welcoming newcomers. Government policies that unfairly and inappropriately confuse immigration with terrorism do not make us safer, tarnish our heritage, and damage our standing abroad. Government must revisit these laws and to make the appropriate changes consistent with due process rights.

(Adapted from Justice for Immigrants Website)

New Directions in Moving Comprehensive Immigration Reform

Immigration reform has long been referred to as "The Third Rail of American Politics," meaning that legislators touching anything on immigration reform could get badly burned. Thus, even in the best political climates, immigration reform faces an uphill battle.

The political leadership has clearly stated that any immigration reform legislation must come out of the Senate, rather than from the House. This poses some difficulties with grass-roots organizations, such as our faith-based JFI group because senators typically do not give grass-roots organizations as much

direct access to the elected officials as do representatives. The JFI local strategy is built upon leaders sharing personal testimonies that clearly illustrate a specific point on why comprehensive reform is necessary.

Our local Representatives Honda and Lofgren have been generous in giving their attention to the immigration issue. JFI, PACT and other groups working on immigration reform will continue to work with our representatives and will press forward on working more directly with the Senate.

The focus of immigration reform at this point is on the Senate. At the time of final editing of this edition, the Schumer-Graham immigration proposal has not received a second Republican sponsor. Without bipartisan support, immigration reform legislation will lie dormant in the Senate.

Comprehensive immigration reform lobbyists have been told that any hope of getting comprehensive legislation passed would require a 60 vote majority in the Senate and would therefore have to be a bi-partisan friendly bill. The national Justice for Immigrants campaign is still pressing for legislation to move forward this spring. There are intense efforts behind the scenes to move the legislation forward by locating a second Republican sponsor.

Diocesan-level JFI campaigns throughout the country are supporting this effort by in-district visits to representatives and senators. There are strategies being developed within local dioceses for individuals who might be interested in



We Are One Family Under God

I was a stranger and you welcomed me.

— *Jesus Christ*

getting involved in both short-term and long-term plans.

How To Get Involved

There are many opportunities for parishioners to get involved in the immigration reform movement. JFI in our diocese needs people who are interested in leading discussion groups, presenting the JFI campaign to parishes, schools or community centers. JFI has grown to a point where we need to develop our own working database and communication platform to facilitate better coordination between leader contacts. Interested persons should email Fr. Jon Pedigo at jpedigo@dsj.org for more information on how to get involved.

Faith Messages on Immigration Reform

Powerful faith-based messages on immigration reform are posted on the Justice for Immigration website, including Bishop McGrath's homily that he delivered on February 26, at St. Julie Billiard Parish. The website is [justiceforimmigrants.org](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org)

[Bishop McGrath](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/documents/BishopHomily.pdf) homily (<http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/documents/BishopHomily.pdf>)

[Cardinal Mahoney's](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/documents/mahony-post-100319.pdf) Op Ed in the Washington Post (<http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/documents/mahony-post-100319.pdf>)

[Bishop John Wester's](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/documents/wester-politico-100319.pdf) Op Ed in Politico (<http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/documents/wester-politico-100319.pdf>)

[Fr. Jon Pedigo's](http://www.mercurynews.com/opinion/ci_14711458?nclick_check=1) Op Ed in Mercury News (http://www.mercurynews.com/opinion/ci_14711458?nclick_check=1)

Check out the [JFI Parish Tool Kit](http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/parish-kit.html) (<http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/parish-kit.html>)



Change Takes Faith and Action!
(The JFI San José delegation's motto)