

Beyond the Boundaries

Reflecting our Faith through Awareness, Collaboration, and Advocacy to Achieve Justice

Fall 2005

Bishop Rozanski, D.D.
Program Director

*Lord, with thankfulness
for your guidance,*

We ask your grace to

*Fan into flame our love
for justice,*

*Strengthen us to encourage
one another,*

Guide our actions, and

*Fill us with energy to do
your work.*

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A true revolution of values will soon cause us to question the fairness and justice of many of our past and present policies. On the one hand, we are called to play the Good Samaritan on life's roadside, but that will be only an initial act.

One day we must come to see that the whole Jericho Road must be transformed so that men and women will not be constantly beaten and robbed as they make their journey on life's highway.

True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring.

A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily on the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth.

A Time to Break the Silence, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr

Effecting Positive Change

Workshop with Reverend Eric Law, November 5 at St. Gabriel's Parish Hall 8:15-check in; Workshop- 8:45 a.m.-3 p.m.

A special opportunity to hear Rev. Law provide an overview of guiding principles on respectful communications and share his insights on collaborative techniques to both honor and benefit from differences. Table groups will use case studies, applicable to various situations that challenge our ministries, to apply the principles in developing practical steps to achieve positive relationships.

Participants were so enthusiastic about Rev. Law's workshop last April that we are confident you will find this workshop well worth your time. The location is convenient, just off Beltway Exit 17. St.



Gabriel's Parish Hall is located at 6950 Dogwood Road, Woodlawn. Fee - \$30; financial assistance available. RSVP: 410/947-7215 or www.pfmjpi.org.

What's Next?

After your parish group finished the Beyond the Boundaries Discussion Series, were there questions on what to do next? Groups report the dialogue helped develop relationships based on mutual interests, shared experiences, and trust. Their discussions heightened awareness of issues and the principles of our faith, energizing people with a keen desire to make a positive difference.

But, the issues can seem so broad, intertwined, and overwhelming, that it's difficult to know where or how to start. A challenge we face is to be fully aware of the injustices that God calls to our attention and to accept the grace to collaboratively develop and implement strategies to change inequities.

The best way to progress is to develop a plan. This plan does not need unique solutions. It often works better if

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What's Next? . . .continued

Our Community

“ We must not only meet immediate needs, but also seize the opportunity to redevelop communities in ways that are more secure, economically viable, egalitarian, and environmentally sound.”

Smart Growth America.



groups can join in current efforts, capitalizing on the talents of members.

Sometimes a bigger task than addressing the issues is to determine what we can do—both individually and collectively—to take action to change injustices in our community.

What talents and expertise are available among members of the BtB Discussion group, parish, or community? The strength of the group depends on each person's willingness to contribute their skills, even going beyond their comfort zone, to work for positive change.

What potential solutions did your group identify? Are these ideas an outgrowth of a collaboration for a more realistic approach and outcome?

A clear purpose, coupled with a willingness to go beyond our own boundaries, to work collaboratively reflecting diversity, is key for each group's success.

Affordable housing in mixed-income neighborhoods, the top priority of most participants and a basic necessity, is the key focus for Beyond the Boundaries. Education, jobs, fair wages, transportation, and other interdependent areas are also vital for providing equitable opportunities.

BtB groups throughout the region join together to advocate for equitable policies and practices within jurisdictions, and at state and federal levels. Groups also undertake a variety of advocacy work within their local area, working with other faith or community groups. These coalitions, based on mutual interests, yield more effective results with decision makers. (See "BtB Parish Groups" for examples of group activities.)

Beyond the Boundaries' role is to link participants with advocacy opportunities to address causes of injustice.

How can we help you move forward? We're available to help you determine the best ways to continue a dialogue, raise awareness within your community, and address the challenges that affect all of us.

Contact us at 443/623-1355 or
BeyondtheBoundaries@archbalt.org

The devastation caused by the hurricanes certainly underscored the disparity in our society. More than ever, the effects of concentrated poverty are brought into focus. People wonder how and why poor people are in such vulnerable positions. Perhaps the question is why were we not concerned even before the storm damage flashed this disparity on the news?

Decades of policies led to economic and social segregation with poor people concentrated in deprived areas. We don't have to travel far to see it first hand. Baltimore ranks 13th highest of the fifty largest cities in the U.S. with a 22.7% rate of concentrated poverty. Thirty neighborhoods are "extreme poverty neighborhoods" where 40% of the population are below the federal poverty threshold (\$19,158 for four people), per the just-released Brookings Institute report. Can you imagine living on \$19,158 for even one person?

Let's use this stark situation to reinforce our determination to work for neighborhoods of choice and connection, rather than relocating concentrations of poverty. *"Communities of choice in which people of lower incomes can find a place to start and, as their incomes rise, a place to stay. They are also communities to which people of higher incomes can move, for their amenities, location, and housing value. Neighborhoods of connection link families to opportunities...good schools...and good jobs."* as described in the Brookings Institute report; October 2005.

House Keys 4 Employees is a new program intended to help Maryland workers purchase a home in this state. Eligible homebuyers may receive a zero percent deferred loan of up to \$5000, matching participating employer's \$5000 contribution, towards a down payment and closing costs.

Beyond the Boundaries Parish Groups

St. Bernadette's BtB Group

sponsored several BtB Discussion Groups over the past few years. Last year, they began a new Core Group to take part in the BtB Discussion Series. Their dialogue was so successful that they are continuing with presentations on local issues to involve more parishioners. They also participated in advocacy for the County affordable housing legislation with an effective letter-writing campaign. Their current focus is drug prevention and treatment. St. Bernadette's will sponsor:

Drug Prevention: Causes & Remedies

Speaker: Fran Phillips,

Anne Arundel County Health Office

November 30, 7 p.m.

St. Bernadette's Parish Hall,

801 Stevenson Road, Severn

(just a few minutes from the beltway, off I-97).

Fran will outline what causes people to turn to drugs, and the best resources for addiction problems. Participants will be invited to dialogue on how to apply BtB principles to counter drug abuse.

Info: Call 410/544-1007 or 410/987-1371

Beyond the Boundaries Housing Strategy

BtB is moving forward to promote affordable housing in mixed-income neighborhoods throughout the Archdiocese. Region leaders will invite leaders from each parish to develop a strategy to promote affordable housing for their jurisdiction.

We're seeking people willing to work for equitable housing policies. Are you able to increase understanding of the need for affordable housing within your parish and community?

Your contribution is welcomed. Call 443/623-1355 to see how you can make a difference.

Churches without Boundaries

was formed by the BtB Core Group from St. Mary's, Annapolis as an inclusive coalition of faith representatives who collaborate to raise awareness and change systemic injustices in the Greater Annapolis area. CwB brings together over a dozen faith groups in this diverse, inclusive coalition.

Committees were formed to address issues most important to the members. These are: Affordable Housing, Education, Health Care, Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment, and Youth Recreation Committees.

Committees develop advocacy strategies and engage all members who, in turn, engage their respective, diverse faith communities to promote justice. This method broadens support for a more effective coalition.

Members and their faith groups played a significant role in the passage of Inclusionary Zoning legislation for the City of Annapolis—a major accomplishment! CwB, along with BtB leaders, led the Workforce Housing Coalition for legislation in Anne Arundel County. Members and their churches were actively involved in advocacy for affordable housing with letter campaigns, meeting with public officials, attending hearings, and testifying. The CwB Housing Committee continues to build understanding of the need for affordable housing advocacy, preparing for the next legislative effort. (The next Housing Committee meeting will be held in early November. Call 443/623-1355 for details.)

Each committee has notable successes in advocating for just practices and policies. CwB continues to grow and exert influence for the best interest of all in the community.

Churches without Boundaries is sponsoring:

A Faith Approach to Discrimination

November 10— 7 p.m.

St. John Neumann Social Hall

620 North Bestgate Road, Annapolis



*Churches
without
Boundaries is an
inclusive
coalition of faith
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Greater
Annapolis area.
Through
strengthened
and broadened
relationships,
we share our
talents and gifts
to advocate for
just
opportunities
for all
children of God.*

Beyond the Boundaries

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Calendar

November 5: “Effecting Positive Change” Workshop with Rev. Eric Law. Check in: 8:15; workshop 8:45 a.m.—3 p.m. Rev. Law will share insights on ways to improve communications and value our differences, in an interactive presentation. Table groups will take part in group dialogue, using case studies that reflect situations we face daily, to further respectful communications and develop strategies for positive change.
Location: St. Gabriel’s Parish Hall; 6950 Dogwood Road (Woodlawn), Baltimore.
The \$30.00 fee includes breakfast and lunch. Financial assistance is available.
Register online at www.PFMjpi.org or call 410/947-7215.

November 10, 7 p.m., “A Faith Approach to Discrimination” sponsored by Churches without Boundaries. Featured speakers will consider the history of discrimination and how it affects our lives now. Table group dialogue will generate ideas to remedy unjust situations.
Location: St. John Neumann Social Hall, 620 North Bestgate Road, Annapolis.
For more information, call 443/623-1355.

November 30, 7 p.m. Drug Prevention: Causes & Remedies with Fran Phillips, Anne Arundel County Health Office. Fran will outline what causes people to turn to drugs and the best resources for addiction problems. Following questions and answers, participants will take part in a dialogue to consider ways to prevent and treat drug addiction problems.
Location: St. Bernadette’s Parish Hall, 801 Stevenson Road, Severn (just a few minutes from the beltway, off I-97).
Sponsored by St. Bernadette’s Beyond the Boundaries Group. For information, call 410/544-1007 or 410/987-1371