

JustFaith *Exploring the call to Justice*

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can join JustFaith?

JustFaith is open to any adult who is willing to commit to doing the work: weekly reading (about 60 pages), and attend the meetings, retreats and immersion experiences.

When does JustFaith meet?

The 2005 program will begin September 16, 2004 and participants meet weekly on Thursday nights 7:00 pm—9:30 pm through May 26, 2005.

How can a person join JustFaith?

There is a promotion several months before the program begins. One may sign up at that time or may request to be put on a list to be notified of the next program by leaving your name at the parish office (714 962-3333).

How much does it cost to join JustFaith?

One can expect to pay: a registration fee of \$35 (covers cost of materials, etc.), the purchase of the books (usually an average of \$15 a month) and the costs for the retreats which varies depending on where the retreat is held. Scholarships are available.

What is involved in JustFaith?

The program includes: prayer experiences, reading, discussion, faith sharing, journaling, videos, speakers, a supportive community, and immersion experiences.

What is meant by “immersion experience?”

The “immersion experience” offers participants face-to-face encounters with the homeless, the imprisoned, or refugees. Usually, there are four such experiences during the nine month program.

What kind of books do you read?

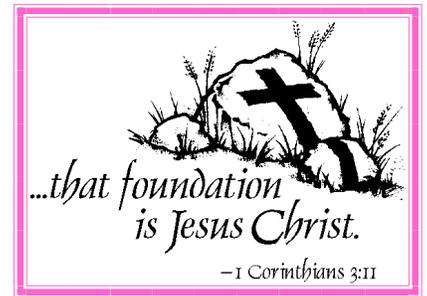
The materials chosen cover a wide range of topics, including Catholic Social Teaching, the biblical roots of the call to justice and peacemaking, the preferential option for the poor and many issues in today’s world which call us to make a faith-based response.

Why JustFaith?

For many Catholics, education in the social justice teaching of the Church was not part of their faith formation. Indeed, many documents studied in JustFaith have been written since Vatican II.

In *Communities of Salt and Light* 1994, the National Catholic Conference of Bishops writes:

“In these challenging days we believe that the Catholic community needs to be more than ever a source of clear moral vision and effective action. We are called to be the ‘salt of the earth’ and ‘light of the world.’ This task belongs to every believer and every parish It cannot be assigned to a few or simply delegated to diocesan or national structures. The pursuit of justice and peace is an essential part of what makes a parish Catholic.”



JustFaith is an initial response to this challenge to the pursuit of justice and peace.

JustFaith Exploring the call to Justice

Facts & Local History

JustFaith began as a six week Lenten program during Lent of 1996. After being awakened to God's "preferential option for the poor" and the Gospel call to justice, several of the participants agreed to prepare a plan and begin the full nine month program.

The first full nine month program began in January of 1997 with twelve participants. Most of that original group continues to meet today as Micah 6:8.

Sts. Simon & Jude is beginning its eighth year of *JustFaith*. Sixty seven people have completed the program at the parish.

A sampling of action as a result of the *JustFaith* experience:

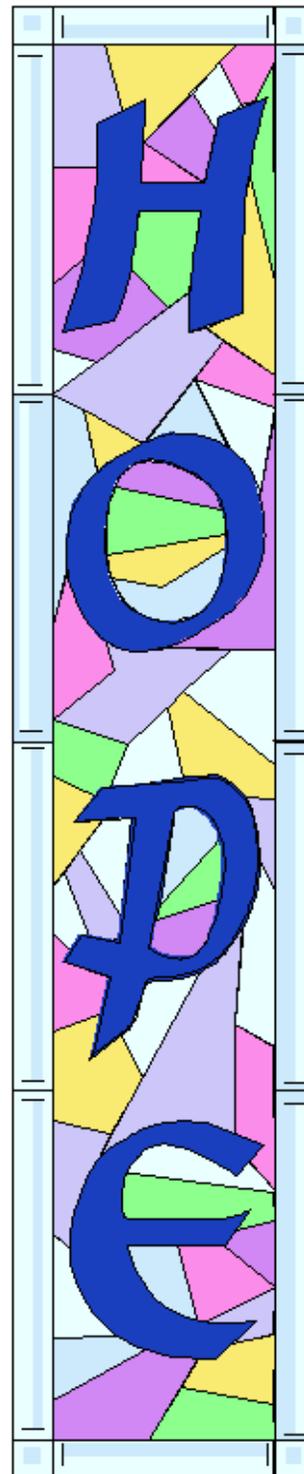
- Gathering of signatures and speaking at the Huntington Beach City council meeting to support proposed Low Income Housing;
- Letter writing campaign & demonstrations to Close the School of the Americas;
- Sponsoring of "Initiative Nights" before the elections;
- Publication of *The Burning Bush* — a Peace & Justice Newsletter;
- A Lenten Series on Justice Issues;
- A Lenten Film Festival;
- An Advent series related to 9/11;
- Campaign for a Moratorium on the Death Penalty;
- "Write In" Sunday—parishioners were offered an opportunity after Mass to learn about upcoming legislation (national, state and local) and to write their preferences to legislators and decision makers;
- Weekly Peace & Justice Bulletin Quotes; and
- Continued offering each year of the *JustFaith* program to parishioners.

Sts. Simon and Jude was the first parish in our diocese to offer *JustFaith*. At that time, all the organizers had was a brief outline (syllabus), and a listing of books and videos. There was no formal *JustFaith* program. In 2000, two other parishes (St. Columban, & St. Cecilia) offered the program and relied on Sts. Simon and Jude facilitators for information, instruction and support.

In the summer of 2001, Catholic Charities hired Jack Jezreel the creator of *JustFaith* to prepare a *JustFaith* program for parish use, and to support parishes subscribing to the program through Catholic Charities. The Catholic Bishops' Campaign for Human Development has given grants to Catholic Charities to promote *JustFaith* nationwide.

Subsequently, three other parishes (as well as Sts. Simon & Jude) have offered the *JustFaith* program in the Diocese of Orange: San Antonio de Padua, St. Norbert, & St. Thomas More. Peace & Justice Deanery 1, the Diaconate and Peace & Justice Deanery 5 have also offered the program.

With the support of the National *JustFaith* office and the added experience of the facilitators, *JustFaith* 2006 at Sts. Simon & Jude promises to be a great nine months!



JustFaith *Exploring the call to Justice*

What “graduates” have said about the program

The books: “I enjoyed every one of them and was pleased by the choices.”

The videos: “The videos were very helpful—illustrated the readings.”

The Program: “It has softened my heart, ‘opened’ my eyes to so much.”

“The JustFaith program has caused me to come *vis-à-vis* with the horror and scope of exploitation, oppression and other forms of injustice.”

“The books, retreats, videos, guest speakers and field trips made the program intense and powerful. It is a comprehensive curriculum.”

“I believe the program changed lives.” “I am so much more aware of issues I didn’t know existed.”

“JustFaith is such an extraordinarily, enriching experience. It facilitates & provides the environment for a truly transformational experience. I have never had such a powerful inducement in the context of an educational experience to pursue social justice.”

Opening Retreat: “I loved it.” “A must for new candidates.” “Outstanding! This is critical in helping establish trust and a safe place among group members.”

The Meetings: “I looked forward to our meetings with ‘apprehensive gladness’”.

“They were wonderful & I will greatly miss them! The structure and pace of the program was about as good as it can get.” “My favorite parts were: discussion/sharing based on the readings and our prayer/rituals—lovely and enriching.”

Most rewarding: “Connection with others in group. The books.” “The variety of books and authors.” “The sharing of insights.” “Meeting and praying with such beautiful people.” “Connecting me to fellow travelers.”

Suggestions to improve the program: “Advertise more! If people knew how wonderful an experience it is—I’m sure more would join.”



After Completing the JustFaith Program

Upon completion of *JustFaith*, most Graduates become more involved in their parish or diocesan activities, have a greater sense of being part of the community, and support charity & justice projects. Some groups have continued to meet as a Small Church Community to support each other in the work of justice and because they have become good friends (a community).

A *JustFaith* support group called Justice Partners has been formed to invite all those who have completed *JustFaith* in the diocese (123 *JustFaith* Graduates in May 2004) to gather for networking, . The intention of Justice Partners is to connect those who have the same justice passion, to keep the flame of justice work burning, for further justice education, and to offer support.

Some of the past events offered by Justice Partners: Speaker on Palestine, Presentation by founder of *JustFaith* Jack Jezreel (co-sponsored with the Diaconate), *Day of Discovery* Retreat, *Principled not Partisan*: a major event on Faithful Citizenship (co-sponsored with the Diaconate & the Peace & Justice Deanery Network), *Journey to Justice*: an immersion experienced sponsored by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, a Summer Social and a weekend training in non-violence called *From Violence to Wholeness*.

