

## SJ Ministry Listing and Analysis

The parish Ministry Handbook and website reflect some 60 ministries in various stages of activity. This survey addresses only those more directly addressing social justice.

**Matt 25 Bazaar** is one of our oldest ministries, having grown out of the exchange of First Communion dresses in the 50s or 60s. In 1972, a very basic building was erected in the rear of the parking lot to house “Matthew 25 Bazaar,” which recycled used clothing and basic household articles. It has enjoyed strong leadership over the years, including Sylvester Puryear, who took public transportation from Landmark to get to OLQP and Barbara Gallagher, who retired the end of June 2008 after 15 years of leadership. Thanks to our “blue box” in back of Fr. Ray Hall that makes donations possible 24/7, clothing and other items are plentiful, but if it weren’t for developmentally challenged students from the Walter Reed Vocation Center and ServiceSource, a sheltered workshop, they would not find their way to the racks and shelves of our attractive store-like facility in the Ministry Center. We share our bounty with the Haiti Committee and Glen Evans, a Methodist who ships clothing to Central America. We have also provided warm winter clothing to day laborers at the Shirlington Employment and Education Center. Additional volunteers are needed to help sort donations and operate the facility, which is open Sundays and Wednesdays from 9 am to 12 Noon. We are especially in need of bi-lingual (English/Spanish) volunteers—and we need to replace Barbara Gallagher.

The **Early Learning Center** has been a major ministry filling the Family Activities Center now known now as Fr. Ray Hall, since 1965. Alberta Thurmond served for 25 years as its third director, and Floretta Ramseur, our current director, has directed the center since 1997. The expansion of free public pre-school to younger students has cut into the number of parents who need our services. Eight years ago, we had over 100 students; now we have around 50, and up to 10 are infants, starting at 2 months. The clientele has become more middle class, although we remain one of the few sliding-scale day care centers in Arlington. If we are to continue this ministry, we need committed board members and volunteers to continue our tradition of service to the community.

**Food Pantry** In 1988 the tradition of “Brown Bag Sunday” was born -- on the first Sunday of each month non-perishable food was brought to Mass for distribution to those in need. Gradually, parishioners began to bring food to Mass every Sunday. Nowadays, it is bagged into an established assortment and picked up by up to 50 neighbors each month. In 2007, Jack McHale revived “Brown Bag Sunday” on a bi-monthly basis. On the first Sunday the program was reborn, the parish van was filled to overloading, with the remainder placed in Social Justice Minister Gene Betit’s truck for delivery to the Arlington Food Assistance Center. In the year we have collected for AFAC, we have never failed to collect a ton or more of non-perishable food for AFAC. Parishioners have also made very generous monetary donations to AFAC as well.

One tradition that began in the early 90’s is the provision of **Thanksgiving** ‘baskets,’ a turkey and all the trimmings, to up to 130 families the week before this traditional American feast. Many parishioners assist in preparing this massive collection, which is distributed the Monday and Tuesday before the big holiday by Dorothy Williams, Jackie Smith, Adele Crump, and Bill Holland. Our **Christmas program** is quite small in comparison, with qualifying Early Learning Center families matched with OLQP

ministries or families. Barbara Gallagher coordinated this effort for the past five years, but we'll need a replacement this year.

In 1964, OLQP's federally chartered **Credit Union** was formed, now grown to assets exceeding \$1.5 million. A seven-person Board of Directors governs this not for profit, cooperative financial institution serving parish members, employees, family and household members. Loans are reviewed by board-appointed loan officers. All officials and staff are volunteers, receiving no salary or other compensation. The credit union has its own website, [www.qpafcu.com](http://www.qpafcu.com) and like all ministries, they are always searching for new volunteers.

A Black Dimensions Committee, later named **UJAMAA**, meaning "family," was established in 1987 to reflect the special commitment of the parish to celebrate and reverence the faith and gifts of our founders. The Committee accentuates the cultural richness, gifts and skills of African American Catholics and responds to their needs. Since 1992, OLQP has awarded well over a hundred scholarships to support school tuition, mainly funded by grants from the Black and Indian Missions which promotes evangelization. Its annual scholarship breakfast in June is the high point of each year's activities.

In 1985, the **Social Action Committee** was established from the Hunger Study Group. Bob Collins and Stacy Corolla, Hill staffer and social worker respectively, were the first co-chairs. Matthew McKearn ably chaired the committee for many years, while Fr. Ed Kelly was an active participant. Over the years, affordable housing and homelessness, work on the Living Wage in Alexandria, Arlington and nationally, as has action to stop genocide in Darfur and the pandemic of AIDS in Africa have had high priorities. We work closely with SALT, Social Action Linked Together, and the Virginia Interfaith Council for Public Policy, NETWORK and other groups. For the past four years we have been part of the core of congregations forming a community organizing effort that has been named VOICE. In December 2007, Fr. Joe Nangle was elected SJC chair. Though the Committee has long recognized its purpose is to engage ALL parishioners in the work of social justice, we have not been successful in forming and coordinating issue groups, tending to work only as a 'committee of the whole.'

A **Social Services Office** was opened in 1985, staffed part-time, merging with a Refugee Office in 1986 to "...serve especially (though not exclusively) those in our Salvadoran and Latin American community in facing the most immediate and basic social problems which confront them here in Northern Virginia." In October, 2000 our first full-time Social Justice Outreach Minister, Gene Betit was hired. He retired in June 2008, succeeded by Fred Cain, who had been first outreach worker then director of advocacy for the Arlington Street People's Network (A-Span). The Social Justice Outreach Minister dispenses around \$10,000 annually to those requesting assistance and the pastor dispenses additional discretionary funding. In addition, Queen of Peace provides approximately \$24,000 in grants to a range of external agencies, including the Martin Luther King Jr. Center in Nauck and our VOICE dues (which will be \$8,000 per calendar year).

One of OLQP's most vibrant ministries is the twinning relationship with St. Joseph parish in Medor, Haiti, a remote village in the mountains about 50 miles north of Port au Prince. Concern for the Haitian people began under the leadership of Fr. Healy, who was one of the founders of the Washington Office on Haiti; Fr. Jeff Duaine gave this concern

practical application by beginning the **Haiti Committee** at OLQP in 1997. One of the largest and best organized of our ministries, the Haiti Committee has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to build a large church, granary, primary and secondary schools, fund school and clinic staff, and provide clean water. Queen of Peace's support for this ministry stems primarily from major fundraisers during Lent and Advent.

Since 1989, the parish has participated in "**Christmas in April**" (recently renamed **Rebuilding Together**), helping lower income and elderly people clean and refurbish their homes. This has proven to be a great team-building experience for participants, and Ann Felker and the First Communion team enhance this experience by providing lunch in Fr. Ray Hall. Jim Powell was our House Captain for many years, replaced by the very capable Rusty Davis several years back.

**Carpenter's Shelter** Since the 1980's OLQP has provided a nutritious dinner at Alexandria's Carpenter's Shelter on the third Thursday each month. In a system uniquely Queen of Peace, parishioners sign up on a poster at the back of the church, and tear off a paper reminding them of contribution for delivery at the parish. One team organizes the food in the kitchen of Fr. Ray Hall, while another serves it at the shelter.

**Just\$** An initiative of the Social Justice Committee, the program was formed in 2004 to raise funds for SJ activities through money generated from the sale of Giant gift cards and Shoppers Food Warehouse certificates. Currently our Early Learning Center and a community-based project in Mweiga, Kenya benefiting Orphans of AIDS divide funds raised from weekly sales. OLQP receives 5 per cent for each dollar sold—at no expense to the purchaser. Additionally, registering Safeway cards allows funds to be raised for the ELC through the eScrip program.

**VOICE (Virginians Organizing for Interfaith Community Engagement)** Conducting community organizing throughout Northern Virginia (Prince William, Fairfax and Arlington Counties and Alexandria), VOICE is an affiliate of the Industrial Areas Foundation, drawing on more than 7 decades of IAF experience. VOICE will "go public" on October 5th, and seeks leaders at multiple levels, including individuals committed to social change who will attend 'public actions' to influence legislative process to support progress in three areas: affordable housing, immigration, and health care. OLQP's target for at this fall's action is ambitious: 50-100 participants. Fred Cain is coordinating this effort, which offers the possibility of positively effecting public policy to benefit the poor and vulnerable without time-intensive involvement.

In 1999 a **Seasoned Christians** group was formed, led by our surviving parish founder, Thaddenia West. The seniors are an active fellowship program that have conducted numerous community service projects such as collecting blankets for the homeless and school supplies for children. They also prepared a thank you luncheon for fire fighters who assisted during the September 11, 2001 tragedy. They have also taken several trips and are known for their pot-luck gatherings.

**Gay, Lesbian, Friends and Family** A new ministry created during Fr. Jeff's pastorate, GLFF works to build an affirming community where all, regardless of sexual orientation, experience God's promise and love. Educational and awareness raising activities are promoted and GLFF provides support to gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and their friends and family. Other important activities are dialogue and advocacy on social justice issues as

they affect gays and lesbians. GLFF has sponsored one of the most popular “Stone Soup” presentations for the past several years.

A number of parishioners had been members of **Pax Christi** for decades, and the Social Justice Office sponsored courses taught by Pace e Bene trainer Judith Kelly including ‘Engage,’ ‘From Violence to Wholeness,’ and others. However, when Jack McHale formed **Pax Christi Pentagon Area** in early 2006, the organization took off, with regular meetings and networking. Featured speakers have included Liz McAlister, Sr. Diana Ortiz, and others and members have travelled to Ft. Benning for School of the Americas Watch and attended the national convention.

The reborn **Life Ministry** aims to raise awareness of all aspects of the sacredness of life, starting from birth. As more parishioners become involved, they hope to explore other aspects pertaining to respect for life, such as euthanasia, capital punishment and embryonic stem cell research.

**Environmental Ministry** Perhaps OLQP’s newest ministry, this well-organized group led by Mike Wilson aims to protect the ecology, with man’s assaults on nature most affecting the poor, first victims of environmental degradation. This ministry also coordinated an energy audit of the OLQP plant, and is working to see that its recommendations are implemented throughout the parish.

**Voice of the Faithful of Northern Virginia** Comprised of faithful Catholics working to support victims of the clergy abuse scandal and advocating for changes in the Church’s governance to insure protection of children and avoid repetition of pedophilia in the future. VOTF, with membership from churches throughout the Arlington diocese, meets the third Tuesday of each month at 7 PM in the Ministry Center Founders Room.

**Stone Soup** Stone Soup Suppers are a Queen of Peace Lenten tradition going back nearly two decades. The name “Stone Soup” is taken from a Napoleonic era legend/story made famous by the Grimm Brothers. Some years back children in religious education classes were asked to bring in a vegetable for Thanksgiving liturgy. When the class brought their contributions forward, the offerings made a tasty meal. Shortly thereafter, it was suggested that light Lenten Friday night meals be organized to help parishioners prepare for Easter. Then speakers were added for after supper discussion of social justice issues. At first, most speakers were parishioners. We have expanded to include local and national speakers addressing social justice problems.

Fr. Tuozzolo inaugurated the **Fr. Ed Series** the series of lectures in 2003 in memory of his friend, Fr. Ed Kelly, who served at Queen of Peace eleven years. Initially, we had four speakers in the fall and an equal number in the spring, but the number has decreased. The aim is both to inform parishioners and to motivate more to action.