

You are invited to participate in an intensive education and formation program for people who are interested in social ministry and social justice

JustFaith

Why Participate?

- To gain a better understanding of the Church's social mission from the Scriptures, the Church's historical witness, and Catholic social teaching.
- To integrate personal spirituality and social ministry

Who's this For?

- People who want to learn more about the Church's social justice tradition.
- People who are looking for spiritual growth.
- People who have participated in the RCIA.

You!

When Is It?

Thursday evenings—as room spaces are available in the Church. Other times can be considered during the day or on different evenings if there is sufficient interest

How Do I Sign Up or Get More Information?

- Stop at the *JustFaith* table after Mass on May 17-18 or 24-25.
- Contact Joan Mahal (703 569-1746), Jeanie Wood (703 569-6676), or Joe Pettit (703) 455-4937

What Is Involved?

- Weekly 2-1/2 hour meetings
- Retreats in September & April
- Visits with people who have experienced injustice
- Weekly reading
- Cost for books purchased through the year (some second-hand copies are available from previous participants)

Think It's Too Much?

- It's like taking a college course or a year-long adult education class.
- It's similar to what we ask of our Confirmation candidates and RCIA participants.
- It asks a lot – but it's only 8 months.
- It will be one of the most rewarding things you'll ever do!

Ask Me About *JustFaith*: Stories from Nativity Parishioners

An insert in the May 11th Nativity Bulletin contained highlights of the *JustFaith* program which will run most weeks during the coming school year from late September to mid-May. The Nativity parishioners below have completed the program and would welcome phone calls or emails to discuss their experiences and answer questions you might have. Give one or more a call.

Georgia Shurts, 703-250-2784, cell 703-835-4166, or by email at gshurts@aol.com:

Working with the people involved in *JustFaith* made me realize how fortunate I am not only in my own life but also in the lives of others around me. I love our Sunday Supper folks in DC (<http://sundaysuppers.org>) because they are genuinely friendly and eager to just spend a few minutes talking and chatting and getting to know all of us. The Sunday Supper people are from all walks of life and all they ask is a few minutes to enjoy a kind word. They have so much to share. I see a sparkle in their eyes that shows me God's love for all mankind.

Jerry McEnerney, 703-440-0111, jxmcenerney@verizon.net

JustFaith presented a view of the Church I haven't normally experienced at Mass. Through study, prayer and action, my eyes have been re-opened to a truer meaning of Mercy and Justice. I learned about institutional and industrial processes that can both harm and help our community, that we have a responsibility to hold our institutions accountable. I learned that our poor are a lot more like us than we think, that we have an unconscious desire to keep the poor out of our lives, that there is a strong link between poverty and mental illness, that interacting and sharing with these people brought me closer to Jesus, fostered grace and joy, and ultimately transformed me.

Donna Lipresti, 703-644-2398, dlipresti@cox.net:

I was interested in learning more about Catholic teachings on social justice, how churches and organizations were involved and in finding ways I could become more active. I feel very blessed in my life and wanted to give something back. *JustFaith* provided me with ways to help others, meet wonderful people to help me on this journey and it gave me more of a global social awareness and sense of responsibility. I've grown and am still growing!

Katie Scully: 703-690-9379, SKScully@aol.com

Two years ago I turned 40 and had a little mid-life crisis--questioning many things and yearning for more--asking, there has to be more to life? The *JustFaith* flyer from church kept appearing around my house and I thought--why not, I could use some help in trying to live the Catholic way in our world today.

Little did I know it was going to change my life in many wonderful, fulfilling ways. *JustFaith* has brought me renewed purpose and has broadened my horizons to the hurting world around me. The readings, reflections and group time taught me to be more prayerful, and helped me to learn how to listen to God and the plans He has for my life. This has brought me some amazing experiences that have taught me what He meant by 'the abundant life'.

Bill Hall, 703-644-4689, hall_william@bah.com

I took the course on the personal recommendation of a friend and I am glad that I did. I wasn't sure what the course was or how I would respond. Studying issues from the viewpoint of the "oppressed" was really eye opening to me. I met some good people, expanded my view of social issues, and found all the sessions intellectually and spiritually engaging. I would be more than happy to talk to anyone who is interested about the program.

Jeanie Wood, 703-569-6676, jmwood777@cox.net

As a co-facilitator of a Nativity *JustFaith* group, I want to convey my excitement, enthusiasm and profound gratitude for this unique and remarkable experience. *JustFaith* is a beautiful gift containing just what each participant needs for a fuller, richer, faith life.

I found it to be a well-constructed, very creative course. Through its beautiful symbolic prayers, informative readings and videos, lively discussions as well as practical experiences in helping others, it has deepened my awareness of the needs of the poor and vulnerable here in Fairfax County and the rest of the world too.

One of the early readings is the book, *Amazing Grace*. It is a shocking revelation of the crushing cycle of poverty in the Bronx. It made me aware of my own easy life and angry that others are trapped and limited by circumstances beyond their control.

My group, which continues to meet, has become a team, a small community, bonded and ready to continue working together on social justice issues such as poverty, hunger, immigration reform, affordable housing and helping to promote justice through legislation.

If you really want to put your faith into action *JustFaith* is just what you need!

Nativity Parishioners' Experiences with JustFaith - continued

Joe Pettit, 703-455-4937, pettit@georgetown.edu

JustFaith readings, videos, small group discussions, and field trips gave me a greater appreciation of, and hunger to follow, Catholic social teaching. The activities introduced me to people who continue, even after the program ended, to share with me their stories of successes and failures, all of which motivate me to reach out and to share my time and talents with others in need, including advocating for more just laws and learning how to better care for the planet on which we spend our brief lives.

Nuala Cohen, 703 425 6851, nualad74@gmail.com

For me *JustFaith* was thought provoking, challenging & invigorating. I was so proud to learn about the seven principles of Catholic social teaching and the work the Church is doing locally and globally. Through *JustFaith*, I became aware of what my responsibilities are as a Catholic citizen. I have been introduced to a great group of people here at Nativity and in other groups I have become involved in as a result of *JustFaith*. *JustFaith* pushed me out of my comfort zone and made my life more meaningful. Just try it. You won't look back!

Linda Schaefer, 1-631-728-0701, LRSmomJEB@aol.com

JustFaith has been a truly life changing experience for me. It opened not only my mind but also my heart. It gave me an understanding of root causes of poverty and other issues resulting in injustice through the books and videos but also encouraged me to see all people with the love of Christ through the "border crossings" and guest speakers. I was part of a great group of people who came together each week and had lively discussions, shared prayer and we developed a friendship that continues as we encourage each other to work toward justice for all people. *JustFaith* has taught me to think and feel more profoundly and has been a wonderful gift to me.

Ron Schaefer, 703-249-0148, RonMcGraw@aol.com

I signed up for *JustFaith* with my wife in part to get some ideas on where we might want to commit our time as we look forward to retirement in a few years. Little did I know I would end up co-facilitating a group and, like all things in faith, getting back much more than I gave. We had a group of people with very diverse points of view who wrestled with many of the difficult issues that our world is facing in the 21st century. We also learned a lot about Catholic social teaching and the positive role the church is trying to play today in solving some of these problems, although this has not always been the case. One of the unexpected benefits I got out of the experience is my pride as a Catholic and as a member of Nativity increased considerably. Also, I now feel better equipped to respond to tough issues raised by our young adult kids and their friends about the world they will live in. I wish I knew during their more formative years what I know now, so I could have guided them more wisely. As for my original goal of getting ideas of what to do with my spare time, my cup runneth over!

Karen Even, 703-250-4581, kdeven@prodigy.net

JustFaith is like turning on a light in a room, illuminating dark corners that were always there, but not seen. It is learning that there are answers to "But what can I do?" right here in Virginia. It is believing that we are ONE human family, each individual a beloved child of God. We have so much in this country and others have so little. When we learned of the Fair Trade model in *JustFaith*, it was obviously something we could do right here in our parish to stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters around the world. The enthusiastic support of our fellow parishioners for Fair Trade (<http://www.crsfairtrade.org/>) is a continued blessing.

George Alexa, 703-425-2581, alexam@mrisc.com

I would recommend *JustFaith* to every member of the parish. But I would warn you that after you complete this marathon, you will see faith come alive in ways you never knew existed. You will walk around with a bounce. Your spouse will see love in you as it should be seen.

Yes, I am most grateful I signed-up for the *JustFaith* program when it was first offered at Nativity a few years ago. I was new to the parish and didn't want to be "lost" in the crowd of a big parish. My last parish was 300 families and I knew most of them. Nativity offered a bigger challenge as it had more families. But could I afford the time as I was quite busy? Lots of readings were required and the weekly meetings were certainly going to be a problem, or so I thought. Then there's Father Martin. His sermons were on social justice issues taken from the Gospels and through his voice I could hear the Lord calling me to step up to the plate.

For further information on the 2008-2009 school year JustFaith program at Nativity get a copy of the flyer in the JustFaith folder on the Bulletin Board in the main lobby of the Church or on the parish website: <http://www.nativityburke.org/parish/documents/May2008WebsiteforJustFaith.pdf>