

CONTINUED...

Justice

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paying for the transportation of produce from Mexico and other countries, or consuming what is seasonal for our region? Are we purchasing items made by manufacturers who discriminate against workers? Or from companies that rely on cheap labor in Third World countries? In other words, do our purchases enhance relationships between people?

3. *To reach out as an individual and as a family into my neighborhood, across borders and continents, to my brothers and sisters in Christ.*

Do we know the stars of television shows better than we know our own neighbors? Why not make a Jubilee-year resolution to meet and befriend our neighbors? And make that Neighbors, with a large "N," to extend the meaning to all people who touch our lives. How can we possibly be a community of Christ's children when we are strangers?

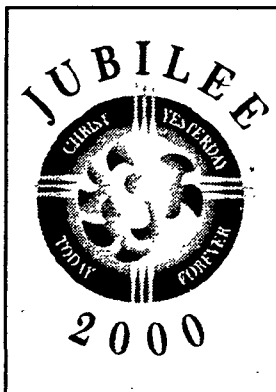
If there are people among our Neighbors who seem strange because of differences in language, race, religion or class, it is even more important to reach out to them. The borders we create can be easily broken down. We can surround ourselves with artwork, literature, music and photos

by and about people who are different from us, so that we can break down barriers in our own minds. We could begin with a neighborhood — or Neighborhood — Jubilee party and a 2000 calendar that celebrates diversity.

4. *To live with respect for the fragile environment, and consume only what I need and can afford.*

For many years it has been popular to express care for the environment, to recycle our waste and our goods, to eat less meat, to use fewer chemicals on our lawns. Perhaps it is time to instill these efforts with a renewed energy and think about other ways to improve our relationship with creation. If we think about the land as a gift from God who has granted us the privilege of use, we might have a renewed fervor about protecting it.

Consuming only what we need and can afford is a tall order; how many of us actually follow that rule? Perhaps choosing one aspect of our lives in which consumption is out of balance would help focus on this part of the pledge and help us move incrementally. For example, I buy too many clothes, so it is appropriate for me to consider three options: purchasing only cloth-



ing that others have already worn and cast off, purchasing only clothing made by workers who are treated with dignity or who have a fair share in the profits, or purchasing nothing until what I own falls apart. Another question to consider in purchasing might be this: How is this purchase going to improve the life or conditions of someone else?

5. *To serve others, especially those who cannot repay me.*

Holiday season brings shopping, celebration and also service in extra measure. Wouldn't it be lovely to extend to our own family and friends the kind of service Christmas baskets convey to strangers? What about those "random acts of kindness" for family members and friends? If those are anonymous, like our Christmas baskets, they are more Christlike. Then they cannot be repaid because their donors are unknown. We do not expect repayment. Our motivation for the service is to "right" our relationships with each other, to make them the way God envisioned. Those of us who see an imbalance or a need should serve with no thought of thanks or payment. What better way could we practice Jubilee Justice?

6. *To give generously of my time, talent, and treasure to those in need at home and abroad.*

How superb we have become at donating for Christmas Giving Trees and Baskets. The pledge promises to do more. Justice pushes us beyond charity, beyond the hand down to the hand up. If we are pledged to right relationships, we will go beyond giving away dollars. We will begin to forgive what others — family, friends and strangers — owe us. Forgiving debts is one way that frees us and them from the obligation we have imposed through the loan.

Early in 2000, the Diocesan Jubilee Committee will invite faith communities throughout the diocese to support legislation that would forgive the poorest countries of the world the debts they owe American lenders. Pope John Paul II has been a major force in this effort. As we become Jubilee Justice people, we will recognize more fully that giving is only part of "righting" relationships that have become unbalanced. Forgiving is the other component of that generosity.

7. *To advocate, speaking with my voice and vote, for policies that save lives without taking lives.*

Imagine if all our solutions followed this guideline. When we scrutinize our policies, we find that many of them help one group by sacrificing another. The death penalty enables us to take revenge for the loss of a murder victim, but it is a solution that takes another life. Abortion might temporarily ease the trauma of a family, but it is a solution that takes another life. Imposing sanctions on Iraq might make us feel we're punishing Saddam Hussein, but this takes the lives of thousands of children. Bombing Kosovo made us feel like heroes for saving some lives, but it led to enormous loss of other lives. If we can grapple with the hard answers — the answers that leave all lives with dignity — then we are becoming a Jubilee people.

8. *To encourage my family, friends, and other people and institutions to reconcile their relationships with God, with each other, and with creation.*

The solutions we discover in fulfilling parts 1-7 of the pledge cannot just stop with ourselves, or Jubilee Justice will not be achieved. Think of how smiles multiply — by passing from one person to another. Our sense of right relationships also needs to be passed on, to be shared, to become an invitation to others. We're all at slightly different steps on our road to Jubilee Justice. We need to generously challenge each other as well as institutions to which we belong. Their leadership will spread the spirit and turn our church and community to the justice that should symbolize Jesus' Jubilee.

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Schnittman is life issues coordinator for the Diocese of Rochester.

New Way

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istry, and I would hope they'd be allowed to continue doing that."

Sister Reger signed the letter at a recent Call to Action conference in Milwaukee.

"Although we have a fine reputation and practice in our diocese, there's still a lot that can be done (with gay and lesbian ministry)," she said. "That's why I support Jeannine Gramick and her effort."

Bishop Joseph A. Fiorenza of Galveston-Houston, president of the bishops' conference, defended the Vatican action in a statement issued at the bishops' meeting Nov. 15. He said that evaluations of Sister Gramick and Father Nugent's work showed that neither "fully reflect the constant teaching of the church that homosexual activity is intrinsically disordered."

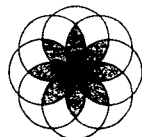
Sister Gramick had said she would abide by the Vatican order. But at a recent Call to Action national conference in Milwaukee, Sister Gramick said she was beginning efforts to have the Vatican ban overturned.

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