FOCUS ON JUSTICE

FOCUSED ON CREATING A FORUM FOR DIALOGUE, A PLACE OF EDUCATION AND A RESOURCE FOR REFLECTIVE ACTION, IN ORDER TO PROMOTE UNITY AMONG ALL PERSONS AND WITH GOD.

IN THIS EDITION

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hidden heroes
by Doris Baizley

The event “was as beautiful as it was complex and so deeply moving for everyone who attended.”

CSJ Center’s Heroes have effect-ed social change through service and action on campus, in the local Los Angeles area, and/or abroad.

In October, we had the honor of celebrating six people (below) who reflect the CSJ Center’s core values of justice and reconciliation. This was the inaugural award called Hidden Heroes. Through narrative dramatization, each awardee’s story was beautifully expressed by the writers and actors.

To tell the stories of the Hidden Heroes awardees in a staged reading, Judith Royer, CSJ and I used the process we started in our first “Hidden Heroes – Service to the World” project with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange in 2011 and have been developing in the Voices of Justice class at LMU.

Once we know whose stories we’re going to tell, we match up writers (or writer/actors) with storytell-ers and have them conduct two or three one-on-one interviews. The writers then transcribe the inter-views and use them to find themes, an emotional through-line, and a dramatic technique to make them into short scenes or monologues.

No matter how “dramatized” the story becomes, it’s important for each writer to read the finished work back to the original story-teller for permission, corrections, and feedback before the staging begins.

For all of us, the most significant part of the process is the public reading with the storytellers in the audience. This completes a circle of communication that, we hope, brings their experiences to life in a larger context, with new mean-ing, value, and power for everyone hearing them.

Award Recipients
Elmo Johnson, Holli Levitsky, Mary McCullough, Seth Lennon Nguyen Weiner, Daniela (Dani) Corona, Scott Wood

part of the Bellarmine Forum 2013: Restoring Justice
Reconciliation burst forth into our relationships and into the world through divine initiative and then comes into the world through human action.

Reconciliation is not a strategy or step-by-step formula. God is the sole orchestrator and initiates the process. It is through a change of heart that the offended is able to be open to receiving the offender and it is through a change of heart that the offender is called to repentance.

An important question is to ask who is the offender and who is the offended? I posit that it can often be a blurry line because at any given time, we are both. When have you cast a stone in judgment, or walked by a “foreigner” in a ditch? When have you had a murderous heart? When have you thought: “thank God that’s not me.” I know that I have done all of these. Victim and perpetrator can be situational and are transient roles. We are both.

The Apostle Paul challenges us, in 1 Thessalonians, to move beyond our definitions of community and to love “the other”. Paul pushes us to something more expansive - to make sure that we do not repay “evil for evil, but seek to do good to one another and to all” (5:17). We are called to “do good”, we are called “to love” our community and those outside our community. Might this also apply to offender and offender?

Reconciliation is not a betrayal of the past nor does it negate what has happened. It provides a manner to reframe the impact of the offense. The transformational potential is captured in this re-framing and the encounter becomes prophetic. Healing takes place through the practice of truth-telling - our own and others - and the pursuit of justice.
UPCOMING EVENTS
Sponsored or co-sponsored by the CSJ Center

12/02/13 - 12/04/13
Stages of AIDS
A Dramatized Performance in conjunction with World AIDS Day.
8:00 pm (12/02, 12/03, 12/04)  10:00pm (12/04)
Del Rey Theatre
(co-sponsored with the College of Communication and Fine Arts, Theatre and Dance Department)

03/19/14
St. Joseph’s Day Liturgy and Luncheon
12:10pm       Sacred Heart Chapel
(sponsored by the Office of the President and Campus Ministry)

CSJ Center Open House and Reception
2:00pm                  U Hall 2000

03/29/14
Undergraduate Research Symposium:
Voices of Justice Panel Presentation
time and location tbd     (co-sponsored with Campus Ministry)

04/03/14 - 04/06/14
2014 CSJ Symposium
ARTS THAT DO JUSTICE
with Voices of Justice Performances

04/13/14
Alumni Lenten Retreat
time and location tbd     (co-sponsored with Alumni Relations)

04/23/14 - 04/27/14
Mystery Plays
evening    Sacred Heart Chapel
(hosted by Campus Ministry, co-sponsored by The College of Communication and Fine Arts, Theatre and Dance Department)

04/25/14
Windows in the Wall Documentary Film
produced by Jean & Tanner Kling with Discussion Led by Maria Garvey
6:00pm; Motherhouse of Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange
(co-sponsored by CSJ Justice Office)

04/26/14
Alumni Day of Service
time and location tbd     (sponsored by Alumni Relations)

The Voices of Justice course, co-sponsored by the CSJ Center, is now in its 3rd year of being offered and is now part of the Core Curriculum.

This class is an oral histories writing and performance course which includes meeting, interviewing and performing stories of members of LA advocacy agencies who work with social justice issues such as: human trafficking (CAST), immigration (CHIRLA), homelessness (OPCC), gangs/youth at risk (Homeboys Industries).

“This course gave me the opportunity to work with students from many disciplines, engage in creative, multilayered thought, and form an exciting work of art that brought a vision of mine to life.”

(Nathaniel Carter ’14)

“for me it was giving Sheeba back her humanity.”

(Brya Rogers ’14)

“I had heard about the power of sharing another person’s story but I really never believed how powerful it was until I participated in this class. It was truly an experience like no other and I would definitely do it again!”

(Erika Meza ’13)

“I really liked how we were able to hear an unfiltered account of someone’s life. It is rare to get something so real from the mouth of the source, and to have that experience really made me understand how important it is for someone to share their story . . .”

(Bladimir Gonzalez ’13)
Espérer, a service organization established in 2012, is focusing on human trafficking and environmental sustainability. Espérer means “to hope” in French, and the women of Espérer seek to bring hope to those who may not have it. Espérer works closely with the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange.

The infographic below is a quick reference to better understand how human trafficking happens and where this type of exploitation may happen. Be alert! Human trafficking is of epidemic proportion, and the CSJ Center for Reconciliation and Justice support Espérer in their advocacy efforts against human trafficking.

Join Sisters of St. Joseph Across the Country in Fighting Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery

People profit from the control of other human beings through forced labor or sexual exploitation. This modern day slavery exists in our neighborhoods. The way to fight it is to bring it out of the shadows.

Why not escape?
1. Threats to harm loved ones
2. Fear of punishment
3. No money or resources
4. Nowhere to go or lost
5. Language barriers
6. Ashamed, confused
7. Imprisoned

What to Look For
1. Behavior is anxious, depressed, fearful or paranoid
2. Physical abuse
3. Person is never alone
4. Something is out of place – like kids not in school

Can be any age, gender, nationality or race
Are often children, teens, women, poor, runaways or alone

Industries with Victims
Agriculture  Domestic Service  Factories & Sweatshops  Strip Clubs  Girls
Hotels & Hospitality  Massage & Nail Salon Fronts  Restaurants

If you suspect someone may be a victim, call the National Human Trafficking Hotline 1-888-3737-888

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Since the CSJ Center joined the LMU Community almost a year and a half ago, we have enjoyed many wonderful opportunities for shared reflection and collaborative action regarding issues of reconciliation and justice with members of the University Community. Those opportunities include participation in two events organized by Jonathan Rothchild, Scott Wood and their planning teams from the LMU Westchester Campus and Law School: the June 8 event entitled Another Way: Healing in the Wake of Sexual Violence and the Bellarmine Forum 2013: Restoring Justice. For the latter, we were privileged to participate in an interfaith panel on “Forgiveness and Reconciliation” and produce this year’s Artists Speak event, in which our students were able to share their insights, through literary, visual/media and performing arts, on the topic of “Confronting Brokenness, Repairing Relationships.” The Bellarmine Forum team also supported the Center as we hosted the first annual CSJ Center Hidden Heroes Awards Ceremony, which celebrated the life and work of six LMU Westchester and Law School faculty, staff, students who work among us, often unsung and “under the radar,” as community builders and healers. And these are just a few of the wonderful experiences of collaborative reflection and action we have been gifted with as we began our second year in the CSJ Center.

As the Spring semester arrives and we look forward to the 3rd Annual CSJ Symposium, April 3-6, 2014, we are again engaged in fruitful collaboration with faculty, staff and students from the LMU Community as well as artists/activists from the Southern California area in order to prepare a symposium entitled ARTS THAT DO JUSTICE. Current plans include topics such as “Visual Arts and At-Risk Youth,” “Poetry and At-Risk Youth,” “Public Art and Theology,” “Arts and Disability,” “Film and Theatre and the LGBT Community,” and “Music, Movement and the Prison Community.” The symposium will also include two performances which are the culmination of the “Voices of Justice” cross-listed, community-based, engaged learning course which will work with clients and staff from CHIRLA (immigration rights coalition) and OPCC (homelessness shelters and services).

Hopefully, some of these topics excite your interest as they do ours. We hope some faculty may wish to include the Symposium as syllabi options or credit for students. We look forward to working with staff and students from various organizations/departments interested in service and action through the arts.

The mission of the Center is about collaboration with the community, be that on campus or as it engages in learning, service and action in the greater Los Angeles area. We invite you to join us in one or more of our Spring Center projects/events and to let us know what you are doing that also encourages and supports reconciliation and justice in confronting brokenness and healing relationships.

MISSION STATEMENT

The CSJ Center for Reconciliation and Justice offers a forum for dialogue, a place of education and a resource for reflective action, to promote unity among all persons and with God. The Center gives tangible witness to the presence and tradition of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange at Loyola Marymount University and in a wounded world in need of compassion and healing.