

CSWNA December 2015 Newsletter



CATHOLIC SOCIAL WORKERS NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

December 2015



Prayer of Thanksgiving

O God, of Whose mercies there is no number, and of Whose goodness the treasure is infinite; we render thanks to Your most gracious majesty for the gifts You have bestowed upon us, evermore beseeching Your clemency, that as You grant the petitions of them that ask You, You will never forsake them, but will prepare for the reward to come. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Announcements

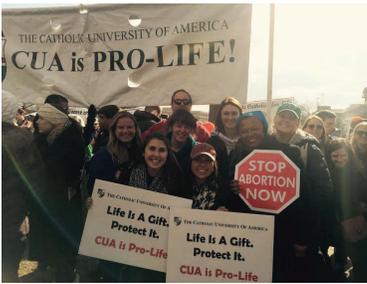
- Our website is being updated and will be going “live” soon
- 43rd March for Life held on January 22, 2016 in Washington D.C.
- Appointment of new board member
- Get connected with us on LinkedIn and Twitter! @CSWNA_Official
- We welcomed 25 new members from The Catholic University of America, National Catholic School of Social Service! They have started a CSWNA chapter on campus

Special points of interest:

- MARCH FOR LIFE
- SYNOD OF BISHOPS
- NEW WEBSITE
- NEWEST BOARD MEMBER
- STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Inside this issue:

MARCH FOR LIFE	2
SYNOD OF BISHOPS	2
STUDENT SPOTLIGHT	3
CSWNA STUDENT SPOTLIGHT	3
LETTER FROM NEWEST BOARD MEMBER	4



Will Rainford, Board Chair, and members of Catholic University at March for Life in 2015

March for Life 2016

The 43rd annual March for Life will take place on January 22, 2016 on the National Mall. Hundreds of thousands of high school students, college students, and adults will march for the protection of innocent lives. Prior the march, the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception will hold a prayer vigil the night before. This year's theme is "Pro-Life and Pro-Woman go hand in hand. This year Catholic University of America will be leading the

march and our own CSWNA-CUA chapter will be right in front with them. If you would like to march with them please contact Liz Barry at 65barrye@cardinalmail.cua.edu



Synod on the family

The Ordinary Synod on the Family was held in Rome from Oct. 4-25. It followed the 2014 Extraordinary Synod on the Family, and the theme of both was "The vocation and mission of the family in the Church and the modern world."

The XIV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops will continue the work of the III Extraordinary General Assembly by "reflect[ing] further on the points discussed so as to formulate appropriate pastoral guidelines" for the pastoral care of the person and the family (*Instrumentum Laboris*, III Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops).

Pope Francis opened the assembly with "a stirring defense of traditional marriage," while at the same time saying that the Church must be merciful and compassionate to all, including those who have fallen short of the Church's teachings. He also decried the decline of marriage, saying that it "is increasingly viewed as a quaint relic of the past." He paid particular attention to the developed world, saying those countries had the lowest birth rates and the highest percentages of abortion, divorce, and suicide, as well as social and environmental pollution.

Cardinal DiNardo saw the synod as an ellipse with the two focal points of marriage and family. "The two occasionally came into concord, sometimes into some discord," he said.

The testimonies from India and Africa showed that their "family structure is much more cohesive" than in the West, Bishop Murry noted. He added that the bishops from those areas expressed concern – and sometimes anger – about the harmful effects of consumerism and technocracy on the family that are exported by the developed world.

There was also a "wonderful experience of fraternity" among the U.S. bishops who attended, said Archbishop Chaput, highlighted by their celebration of daily Mass together.



The new CSWNA website

The new CSWNA website will be going live in December. It will be more accessible than the previous website and will allow for a community to form among our members. We are going to have a blog pertaining to issues related to Catholic Social Work. If you are interested in blogging please email systems@cswna.org

CSWNA Student Spotlight: Gabby Fuentes

When I was a kid, my dreams were of growing up to be someone major, someone big. I once read this quote by Benjamin Franklin where he says, “Either write something worth reading, or do something worth writing.” I took his challenge to heart and all through high school I found myself searching for something that would help me be someone worth writing about—an influence. After successfully competing in debate, I was convinced I would reach my dreams by becoming a lawyer. So, I applied to all the universities in major cities, including Washington, D.C. I figured I would major in politics and follow a pre-law track. However, my thoughts began to change when I realized a major in politics was not everything I imagined, and I remember panicking my senior year to find a major I wanted to pursue. It was not until after volunteer work with Love is Respect—a non-profit organization that works with teens in violent and abusive relationships—that I began to see myself in a career that I had never considered. Although I learned a lot about social work through my volunteer service, the immense love that is shared through social work was what caught my attention and interest. Suddenly, my dreams to become someone big were transformed into something

more meaningful and true to my values and beliefs. If I truly wished to share and receive God’s love, I realized I would need to become someone small so that God could be big. For me, this would only be accomplished through a career in Social Work. Throughout my two years at Catholic University, I have become aware of the large influence social workers have in society. Despite the concerns that are associated with a social work career, I find comfort in my faith in God’s power and strength. I have learned that it is by His mercy and His grace that God’s work is demonstrated in social work, and there is nothing bigger in this world than God’s work. In essence, my dreams are coming true. Currently, I am involved and hold leadership positions in several social justice and service groups on campus: Alpha Phi Omega, DREAM Team, and a BSW Student Group. This fall semester, I was accepted and inducted into the Phi Alpha Social Work Honor Society. I am also a research assistant for the National Catholic School of Social Service, where I work for the Promotion of Health and Mental Health Well-Being. Although my plans to attain a Masters

in social work and public policy remain underway, I hope to work with immigrant communities back home in Texas with my social work degree. Social Work is a challenge; however, I feel like it is a challenge that makes a huge difference. By including God in my journey as both a social work student and social worker, I am following plans that have already been written for me, and that is definitely something worth doing.



Gabby Fuentes, CUA
National Catholic School of Social Service



Catholic Social Worker's National Association (CSWNA)

P.O. Box 498531
Cincinnati, OH 45249

(317)-416-8285

System@cswna.org

Catholic Social Workers National Association is a Professional Membership Association that was formed on the belief that professional associations should support not only your profession, but also your beliefs, values, and your faith. CSWNA has been established for social workers who are faithful to the teachings of the church and are looking for support and direction within their profession based upon church teachings. Catholic Social Workers National Association affirms and supports the teachings and beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church.

Catholic Social Workers are called to care for the poor and the poor of spirit. They work with those who abuse, and are abused as well as who have been neglected in body, mind, or spirit. They advocate for the youngest of the young, in their mothers wombs, the elderly, the sick and the dying until Jesus calls them home. Catholic Social Workers humbly walk with their clients through life's joys and challenges, living out Jesus' command to love, by following his example in washing the feet of our fellow man.

Letter from our newest board member

Please welcome our newest Board Member, Director of Policy/Legal for CSWNA.

Frances Robinson is a Catholic social worker with a dual degree Master of Social Service and Master of Law and Social Policy, from Bryn Mawr College. She is currently working for Catholic Charities in Harrisburg, PA., as a Case Manager with homeless families, assisting them to be self-sufficient as they move forward on their own into permanent housing, and jobs. While working at the shelter, she completed independent research on poverty for the surrounding central Pennsylvania region and submitted policy recommendations to the state House Majority Policy Committee. She served as Chair of the Service Delivery Committee and Board Member for the Capital Area Coalition on Homelessness in Harrisburg, Pa.

Ms. Robinson's true passion and background is in social policy and law. She is looking forward to directing public policy and legislative activities for CSWNA and grateful for this wonderful opportunity!

*Her efforts will include educating and informing you on legislative and public policy activities that will be directly impacting the populations you serve. In addition, she will be informing us on issues that will be directly impacting us as faithful Catholics. Through this effort we will be looking to support the Church, lend our voices in the public square, and look to protect our rights to practice without intrusion on our Catholic beliefs. She believes very strongly in religious freedom for all Catholic social workers in all areas of practice. We should never be put in a position to choose between the faith and career. (*All information will be easily found on our new website under the Policy and Legislation tab).*

*In July, 2015, she wrote an article for First Things, **Catholic Social Work and the Right to Religious Freedom** (posted on CSWNA Facebook and our new website under the Articles section). Ms. Robinson is committed to serving CSWNA in the years ahead, and is excited to be part of an association that is faithful in following the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, and sharing Jesus Christ's message.*

Thank you!

Frances Robinson, MSS, MLSP