



MOUNT ST. JOSEPH  
UNIVERSITY

**Religious and Pastoral Studies**  
**Syllabus and Pre-assignment**  
**Term S2-20**

**COURSE TITLE:** **RPS 590-E1 APPALACHIAN CULTURE & SPIRITUALITY: IMMERSION**  
COURSE IN THE APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS IN KENTUCKY  
(3 credit hours) (1 credit hour of Service Learning for Undergraduates possible)

**INSTRUCTOR:** John Trokan, D. Min., CL 21 Admin. Bldg. (office hours MWF 1-3pm or by appt.); office: 244-4272/fax: 244-4788, [john.trokan@msj.edu](mailto:john.trokan@msj.edu)  
Dave Scharfenberger MSW., [davescharfe5@gmail.com](mailto:davescharfe5@gmail.com).

**COURSE MEETS:** **Wednesdays (2/19, 2/26, 3/4, 3/18, 3/25, 2020) from 6:30-9:20 p.m.**  
**Immersion Trip dates: Sunday, 3/8 - Friday, 3/13, 2020.**

**REQUIRED TEXT:** Edwards, Asbury, Cox eds. **A Handbook to Appalachia**. University of Tennessee, 2006.  
Jones, Loyal. **Faith and Meaning in the Southern Uplands**. University of Illinois, 1999.  
Appalachia Pastorals: "This Land is Home to Me", "At Home in the Web of Life", "Peoples Pastoral on Appalachia", available on Blackboard.  
Trokan, John. **Appalachian Culture and Spirituality**. Instructor Packet, 2020.  
NOTE: Additional articles available on Course Electronic Reserve as necessary.

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

**I. COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will be a field experience in the Appalachian Mountains in Kentucky and will focus on understanding Appalachian Culture and Religion. We will examine how culture affects religion, how religion affects culture, and explore how the dynamic interplay of these two can affect personal religious development, lifestyle, behavior and family, social, ecological, economic and political systems. Special attention will be focused on social analysis of the poverty in Appalachia, issues of social and environmental justice, and exploration of strategies for future sustainability in the region. The course can be taken for graduate, undergraduate, Honors and Service Learning credit. Five classroom sessions will be conducted to develop the academic learning of the experience.

**Faculty:** John Trokan, D.Min. and Dave Scharfenberger MSW

**Class Dates:** Wednesdays from 6:30 to 9:20 p.m.  
(2/19, 2/26, 3/4, 3/18, 3/25, 2020)  
**Immersion Trip Dates:** Sunday, 3/8 - Friday, 3/13, 2020.

**Cost:** \$160 plus tuition  
**Location:** Eastern Kentucky: Jackson, Owsley, and Rockcastle Counties.

### **APPALACHIA**

The Appalachia six-day immersion trip affords students the opportunity to experience mountain culture and spirituality in the hills of Eastern Kentucky through interaction with an Appalachian family. Students will also experience the richness of mountain life through Appalachian educators, artisans and leaders.

**Host Site:** The Christian Appalachian Project's Spring Break Workfest organizes a week of home repair in Eastern Kentucky. This region of 'Appalachia' is comprised of some of the poorest counties in the U.S. The greatest identified need in these counties is improved and sustainable housing.

**Transportation:** Mount St. Joseph van (drivers have completed van safety training with MSJ campus police). The host site location is generally a three-hour drive time from the Mount. In addition, students will travel approximately 1½ to 2 hours (total) each day in transit to the work site on hilly mountain roads.

**Lodging:** Students will live in community, dormitory style, in a camp or community center near the county they are working in. Lodging will be shared with students from eight other colleges from around the country. Students will assist with food preparation on a rotating basis.

**Activities:** Students will interact with Appalachian Mountain families each day, and participate in cultural, musical, artistic, historical and spiritual presentations each evening. Daytime activity will be on-site home repair work with the Appalachian family. Prior home repair skills are not required.

**Health Care Facilities:** First aid treatment is available on site. Medical care and emergency treatment is available in the closest major city, generally a one-hour drive.

**Climate:** Weather conditions in early March in Kentucky are quite variable. Students should pack for winter and spring weather conditions and outdoor activity.

**Cost:** Tuition plus \$160.00 for room and board for the field experience.

**NOTE:** A completed Immersion Course Application form, Health Physical form, and health insurance are required to participate. Forms can be accessed at <http://inside.msj.edu/departments/academic/religion/culturalimmersion/> or calling: Religious & Pastoral Studies Dept. (513) 244-4496.

For more information, contact your Instructor: John Trokan, 513-244-4272; [john.trokan@msj.edu](mailto:john.trokan@msj.edu).

Students in this course or participating in this travel experience who will need, or who believe that they will need, any academic adjustments, auxiliary aids, or other accommodations because of a functional limitation due to a documented disability, should approach the instructor with this matter. They should also visit the Academic Performance Center and present documentation of their disability.

## **II. COURSE OBJECTIVES & LEARNING OUTCOMES**

<b>Learning Outcome</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Assessment Artifact</b>
Catholic Social Teaching (CST): Describe fundamental principles of CST	Students will identify and incorporate one or more of the fundamental principles of CST (life and human dignity, the importance of community, human rights and responsibilities, preferential option for the poor or vulnerable, dignity of work, human solidarity, care for creation) utilizing the social analysis praxis circle.	Social Analysis Paper
Integrative Learning	Students will demonstrate critical reflection upon Appalachian culture and their immersion experience and its impact upon their own culture and values.	Theological Reflection Journal
Social Change: Explain how social injustice is perpetuated and overcome	Students will describe Social injustice in terms of individuals or groups marginalized by social, historical, political, and economic forces in Appalachia. Students will identify actions and strategies to confront/overcome social injustice (eg. Coal Mining and Mountain Top Removal efforts)	Culture and Spirituality Essay  Social Analysis Paper
Civic Engagement: Describe how individual actions can be personally and collectively beneficial	Students will examine how effective individual action (e.g. volunteerism, voting, community building, political action), done over a period of time and motivated by civic and/or religious identity, contributes to the common good. Individual and community benefits of the action are explained appropriately.	Social Analysis Paper  Appalachian Justice Issue Essay
Global Interdependence: Examine your individual and communal responsibility for the global community	Students will examine at least one example of an action taken by an individual or community that has an impact on the global level (eg. Coal, Water, Timber). Students will describe individual/local interdependence and responsibility for global welfare.	Social Analysis Paper  Appalachian Justice Issue Essay
Cultural self-awareness: Articulate the norms and biases of one's own culture	Students will identify and articulate the unique characteristics of Appalachian cultural perspectives, behaviors, values, beliefs, language, and spirituality. Students will describe how these cultural norms agree or differ with their own values and biases.	Culture and Spirituality Essay  Theological Reflection Journal
Awareness of other cultures: Demonstrate understanding of the values, beliefs, biases, and practices important to members of another culture	Students will examine the diversity and complexity of elements important to Appalachian culture (e.g. history, values, politics, communication styles, economics, beliefs, practices). Students will demonstrate that the norms and biases of another culture are treated with respect. Students will analyze the opportunities and options for spiritual care in Appalachian culture.	Immersion Interaction with Families Oral History Interview Theological Reflection Journal Culture and Spirituality Essay

### **III. COURSE READINGS**

See Required Text above. NOTE: Additional articles available on Course Electronic Reserve as necessary. Recommended Reading:

Fritsch and Gallimore. Healing Appalachia: Sustainable Living through Appropriate Technology. University of Kentucky, 2007.  
Brunner & Fritsch, Down to Earth Spirituality, Sheed & Ward, 1992

### **IV. COURSE FORMAT**

Lecture, Discussion, Video, Storytelling/Story Listening, Ritualizing, Theological Reflection, Journaling, Prayer, Guided Meditation.

### **V. METHOD OF EVALUATION**

Students will be evaluated on their ability to understand and integrate class activities, individual research and written assignments. Success in meeting the objectives will include:

- demonstrated understanding basic concepts through synthesis and integration of assigned readings into papers;
  - ability to reflect upon and analyze in depth cultural, social, and religious issues;
  - demonstrated application of core concepts and life experience;
  - demonstrated facility in skills of cultural awareness, social analysis and theological reflection.
1. Five page essay on Appalachian Culture and Spirituality. Due 2/19 = 20%
  2. Oral History Interview. Due March 4<sup>th</sup> = 20%
  3. Theological Reflection Journal written during the field trip experience. Due 3/18 = 20%
  4. One five page research case study on contemporary Appalachian Justice Issue. Due April 1 = 20%. Presentation of Research to be displayed at the Celebration of Teaching and Learning Celebration.
  5. Five page Social Analysis Paper. Due April 15 = 20%

Grading scale will be:

A 93-100 Excellent  
B 85-92 Good  
C 77-84 Average  
D 70-76 Poor

### **VI. ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Students are expected to attend class and to participate actively in small and large group discussions. As this course meets only over four weekends, absence will not make the heart grow fonder. Unexcused absences will lead to the reduction of the final semester grade by one letter grade.

### **VII. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

When we use the information and language of others to enrich our reflection and research papers, we must tell the reader when we are quoting/paraphrasing and indicate the source (person, book, article, etc.) of the quotation/paraphrase.

Quoting or paraphrasing the information and/or language of a source without naming the source is plagiarism. Plagiarism is unacceptable in an academic institution and is subject to penalty. Please consult the Student Handbook for this and other College policies on Academic Integrity.

## VIII. Assignments

### **PRE-ASSIGNMENT – Due February 19 ESSAY ON CULTURE & SPIRITUALITY**

Read Edwards, Asbury, Cox eds. A Handbook to Appalachia. University of Tennessee, 2006, chapters 1-3; 8-9; 11-12. As you reflect upon these readings begin to think about how the history and culture of 'Appalachia' is similar and different than your own. How do you define culture? What ethnic and cultural background do you come from? How are your cultural practices and values similar and different from the people of Appalachia?

Format: Develop a five page paper (with footnotes and bibliography) that summarizes and discusses the key cultural and religious insights you have synthesized from your initial course reading.

Purpose:

1. To examine the meaning of the cultural distinctiveness of the people you are studying.
2. To explore the religious and spiritual beliefs and practices that contribute to cultural values.
3. To identify the particular social and historical forces which have most significantly impacted the development of this culture.

FOCUS in particular on the new cultural, religious, historical and social themes which have been significant to your learning.

### **ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW/ESSAY**

#### **Assignment #2 due March 4**

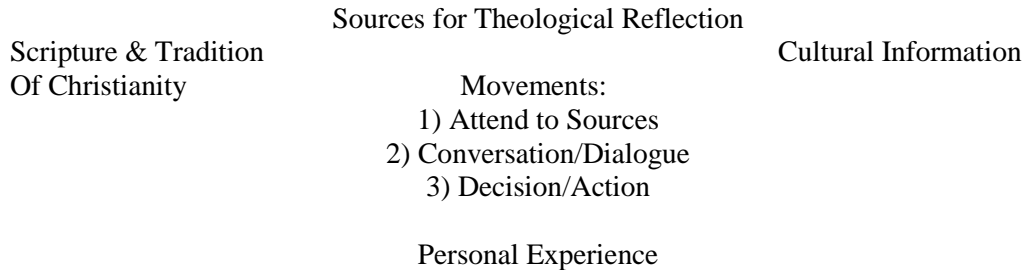
Process: Interview someone of Appalachian heritage and write up an oral history of their experiences. Some questions to attend to: Where did you grow up? What are your memories of home, and growing up? What issues did you deal with eg. Health, jobs, economy, coal? What connections do you have with your kin and the land? Where do you live now? What was the transition in moving to an urban area? What cultural traditions and values do you maintain from your roots?

Write up your interview summarizing the highlights and connections to the themes of our class readings and discussion in a three page paper. In particular discuss the opportunities and options you see for spiritual care for this individual and his/her family.

## **THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION JOURNAL INSTRUCTIONS**

### **Assignment #3 – Due March 18**

Format: Personal notebook or journal: 10 journal entries minimum (dated) for the semester;  
Length – determined by inspiration.



#### Purpose:

1. To immerse oneself in the meaning of the course content, culture & spirituality.
2. To facilitate the ability to integrate conceptual & experiential learning.
3. To develop the habit of theological reflection within students to deepen the wisdom of the learning experience.
4. To examine the existential level of meaning and enable students to place their personal experience and religious questions in dialogue with the assigned texts & immersion experiences.

Theology, as the study of God, is a disciplined reflection upon faith. These journal entries are an attempt to develop the habit of theological reflection within us, and to engage our personal experience and questions with the truth and wisdom of the Christian Scriptures & tradition and the cultural wisdom and spirituality you are studying.

Students will be exposed to new ideas and insights about the Culture & Spirituality from class, and from our personal readings of the assigned texts. What is the existential meaning of these texts? What are they saying to me today in my own life experience? What is the truth of these cultural stories? How does this truth impact my life? How does it expand my own self-understandings as well as my personal beliefs and values? What ethical issues? These questions will be the source of rich reflection for your journal.

#### Process:

Focus on a particular assigned reading, discussion topic, or personal experience with the culture. Attend to the particulars of the reading, experience, or theme: context, setting, characters, dialogue action. To whom are you attracted to? Why? How does this story make you feel? Pause and write down a word/phrase that is striking. Write your reflections, reactions, feelings, questions, etc. What does the lesson, learning, or truth of this reading or experience say to you today? How does it impact your world? Your lifestyle? Your worldview? Your faith? Your fears? Your expectations? Your self-understanding? Your spirituality? Your understanding of culture? Diversity: Your understanding of Christian Ethics & Social Justice?

Theology may be a word-from-God (revelations) through creation and history. Theology may be a word-about-God (faith) through creation and history. Theology may be a word-to-God (praxis) through prayer and worship, moral action, and practical activity. Your personal theological reflection upon the scriptures may express any one of these words, but will usually express them in combination with each other. Your reflection may discover theology in your experience, or bring theology to the experience. Regardless,

theological reflection respects the integrity of your experience and places it in dialogue with the truth of the Christian Scriptures & Tradition. Trust your experience, and befriend your imagination as it guides you to new insight and understanding.

### **Research Paper Assignment**

#### **Assignment #4 Due April 1**

Research a topic of your choice on Appalachia. Develop a poster/slide/video presentation to demonstrate your knowledge about the topic. These presentations will be on display during the poster session at the **Celebration of Teaching & Learning** at MSJ for the entire campus.

Please include the following in your final presentation. Adapt as necessary for a printed poster or Power Point presentation.

1. Title Page, including Your Name
2. Thesis statement / Theme statement
3. Quotes
  - a. From one book used in course and/or one reading/article.
  - b. From two or more Appalachian Guides, you met during immersion week
  - c. From your personal journal
4. Photos from the Appalachian immersion week and/or images to support your theme
5. New information you have found while exploring your theme
6. Connection to Human Dignity, Respect, and refer to Catholic Social Teaching
7. Final Reflections / Conclusion
8. Citation Page
  - a. All quotes taken from published materials
  - b. All images/photos taken from published websites/links

\*You will present your poster or Power Point during the final class time. After any final revisions, please email/deliver your final presentation to Professor John Trokan.

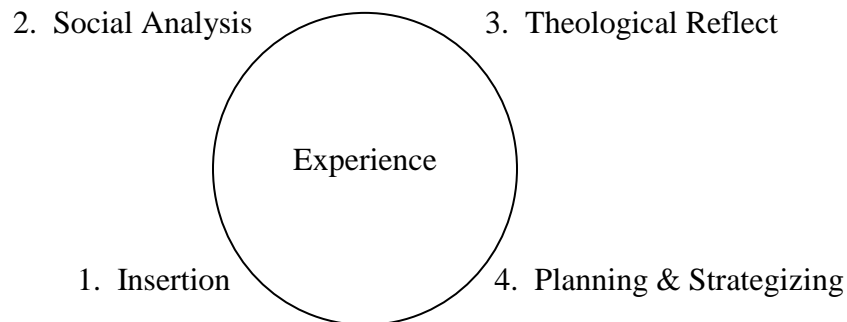
**SOCIAL ANALYSIS PAPER**  
**Assignment #5 – Due April 15**

**Format:** Develop a five page Social Analysis paper (with footnotes and bibliography) utilizing the four elements of the ‘Circle of Praxis’ in your analysis of one social issue.

**Purpose:**

1. To research an issue or social force which impacts the culture you are studying
2. To foster ethical & social justice perspectives upon the issue utilizing the wisdom of the Judeo-Christian tradition and incorporating the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.
3. To examine the complexity & interdependence of social problems and solutions

**Circle of Praxis**



**Process:**

1. Select and research a social issue important to the culture you are studying.
2. Read and review the appropriate documents (web-CT online resources, MSJ electronic reserve; etc...) on ‘Social Analysis’ and Catholic Social Teaching (Pastoral documents).
3. Analyze the issue utilizing the four elements of the ‘Circle of Praxis’ and integrating your research

**Potential Social Issues:**

Land; natural resources; sustainable economy; education; health care; unemployment; drug & alcohol abuse; family violence, poverty, etc



## IX. Course Content

2/19	2/26	3/4	3/18	3/25
INTRODUCTION Overview <b>1)</b> Expectations Syllabus <b>2)</b> Itinerary & Methodology <b>3)</b> Culture & Social Structures, Social Forces <b>4)</b> Appalachian Culture <b>5)</b> "Appalachian Voices: Past & Present" Video and Discussion	INTRODUCTION Overview <b>1)</b> Historical and Social Forces in Appalachia <b>a)</b> Social Systems <b>b)</b> Social Institutions <b>c)</b> Economy & Land <b>1.</b> Coal <b>2.</b> Timber <b>3.</b> Tobacco <b>2)</b> Vol2 "The Appalachians' video/discussion <b>3)</b> Analysis of county stats	INTRODUCTION Overview <b>1)</b> Appalachia Religion and spirituality. <b>a)</b> Historical Development <b>b)</b> Creed <b>c)</b> Values <b>2)</b> Story & Theology Story Storytelling 'Jack Tales' <b>3)</b> Ritual & Sacrament <b>a)</b> Worship <b>b)</b> Baptism <b>c)</b> Communion <b>d)</b> Foot washing <b>4)</b> 'In the Good Old Fashioned Way' video/discussion <b>5)</b> Theology, Spirituality & Religion	INTRODUCTION Overview <b>1)</b> Theological Reflection on Personal Experience <b>2)</b> Theology and Social Analysis: "At Home in the Web of Life", Bishops Pastoral <b>3)</b> Analysis of relations among natural history, history, culture, religion and social forces/institutions in the immersion county.	INTRODUCTION Overview <b>1)</b> Rural and Urban Appalachia (Urban Appalachia Council) <b>2)</b> Social Analysis of 'Issue' continued <b>3)</b> Implications: rural, urban, personal - Space - Time - Sustainability <b>4)</b> Continuing observations and integration of student learning
<b>Readings:</b> Edwards, Chps. 1-3; 8-9; 11-12.	<b>Readings:</b> Edwards, Chps. 4-7.	<b>Readings:</b> Jones, Chps. 1-7 Edwards, Ch 10	<b>Readings:</b> Appalachian Pastoral Letters Blackboard	<b>Readings:</b> Edwards chp 13 Fritsch & Gallimore 'Conclusion: An Appalachian Appropriate Technology (e-reserve)

## Appalachian Culture and Spirituality Bibliography Resources

Beiting, Ralph. **God Can Move Mountains**. Bantam Books, 1989.  
Billings and Blee. **The Road to Poverty**. Cambridge University Press, 2000.  
Billings, Dwight. **Journal of Appalachian Studies**. Appalachian Studies Association.  
Catholic Committee on Appalachia. A "**At Home in the Web of Life**", Pastoral Message on Sustainable Communities in Appalachia, 1999.  
Caudill, Harry. **Night Comes to the Cumberlands**. Jesse Stuart Foundation, 2001.  
Cheek, Angie ed. **Foxfire 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Book**. Anchor Books, 2006  
Dorgan, Howard. **Giving Glory to God in Appalachia**. University of Tennessee, 1990  
Drake, Richard. **A History of Appalachia**. University of Kentucky Press, 2001.  
Edwards, Asbury, Cox eds. **A Handbook to Appalachia**. University of Tennessee, 2006.  
Eller, Ronald. **Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers**. University of Tennessee Press, 1995.  
Fritsch, Al. **Down to Earth Spirituality**. Sheed and Ward, 1992.  
Fritsch and Gallimore. **Healing Appalachia**. University of Kentucky Press, 2007.  
Halperin, Rhonda. **The Livelihood of Kin**. University of Texas Press, 1990.  
Higgs, Manning, Miller. **Appalachia Inside and Out: (vol 1, Conflict and Change; vol 2, Culture and Custom)**. University of Tennessee Press, 1995.  
Jones, Loyal. **Appalachian Values**. Jesse Steward Foundation. Ashland KY, 1994  
Jones, Loyal. **Faith and Meaning in the Southern Uplands**. University of Illinois Press, 1999  
McCauley, Deborah. **Appalachian Mountain Religion**. University of Illinois Press, 1995.  
McGrain, Preston. **The Geology of Kentucky**. University of Kentucky Press, 1983.  
Obermiller & Maloney. **Appalachia: Social Context Past & Present**. Kendall Hunt, 2007.  
Weller, Jack. **Yesterday's People**. University of Kentucky Press, 1995.

## Appalachian Online Resources

Appalachian Heritage Culture: <http://www.appalachianpower.com>  
Appalachian Pastoral 'At home in the web of life': [At home in the web of life](#)  
Appalachian Studies Association: <http://appalachianstudies.org>  
Appalachianbooks.com: <http://www.appalachianbooks.com>  
Appalshop: <http://www.appalshop.org>  
Catholic Committee of Appalachia: [www.cathcomappalachia.org](http://www.cathcomappalachia.org)  
Center for Appalachia Studies & Services: <http://cass.etsu.edu>  
Center for Concern Education for Justice: <http://www.coc.org/ej>  
Christian Appalachian Project: [www.chrisapp.org](http://www.chrisapp.org)  
Commission on Religion in Appalachia: [http://www.geocities.com/appalcora/Page\\_1x.html](http://www.geocities.com/appalcora/Page_1x.html)  
John B Stephenson Center for Appalachian & Comparative Highland Studies:  
<http://www.lmc.edu/appstudies/default.htm>  
MACED Sustainable Communities: Economy, Ecology, Equity:  
<http://www.maced.org/community.html>  
National Catholic Rural Life Conference: <http://www.ncrlc.com>  
State of Kentucky: [www.thinkkentucky.com](http://www.thinkkentucky.com)  
This Land Is Home to Me: <http://www.osjspm.org/cst/thisland.htm>  
University of Kentucky Appalachian Center: <http://www.uky.edu/RGS/AppalCenter/nav/left-nav.htm>

Urban Appalachian Community Coalition. <https://www.facebook.com/UACCCincinnati/>.  
Jackson County KY. [http://www.city-data.com/county/Jackson\\_County-KY.html](http://www.city-data.com/county/Jackson_County-KY.html).  
Rockcastle County, KY.  
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/rockcastlecountykentucky/PST045216>.

## **Catholic Social Teaching Resources & Websites**

Dorr, Donald. 1991. The Social Justice Agenda: Justice, Ecology, Power and the Church. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis.  
Dwyer, Judith A., ed. 1994. The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press.  
Holland & Hennoit. 1984. Social Analysis: Linking Faith & Justice. Washington, DC.: Orbis.  
Kammer, S.J., Fred. 1991. Doing Faithjustice: An Introduction to Catholic Social Thought. Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press.  
Land, S.J., Philip S. 1994. Catholic Social Teaching: As I Have Lived, Loathed, and Loved It. Chicago, IL: Loyola University Press.  
Massaro, S.J., Thomas. 2000. Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action. Franklin, WS: Sheed and Ward. (Come and See Series)  
Mich, Marvin L. Krier. 1998. Catholic Social Teaching and Movements. Mystic, CT.: Twenty-Third Publications.

Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities <http://www.accu.org>  
Catholic Charities <http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/programs/advocacy>  
Catholic Health Care <http://www.chausa.org/>  
Catholic Relief Services <http://www.catholicrelief.org/what/advocacy>  
Center of Concern <http://www.coc.org>  
National Catholic Education Association <http://www.ncea.org>  
Network: National Catholic Social Justice Lobby <http://www.networklobby.org>  
Office of Social Justice Archdiocese St. Paul/Minneapolis <http://www.osjspm.org>  
Sojourners: Christians for Justice and Peace <http://www.sojo.net/>.  
St. Thomas University Catholic Studies <http://www.stthomas.edu/cathstudies/cst/educ>  
This Land Is Home to Me <http://www.osjspm.org/cst/thisland.htm>  
US Catholic Bishops <http://www.nccbuscc.org/sdwp>  
US Catholic Conference <http://www.nccbuscc.org/cchd/>