

Parish Action Plan for Darfur

Cincinnati Catholic Collaborative to End Genocide in Darfur

Purpose of Parish Action Plan

This document gives parish leaders suggestions on specific actions that they can choose to make a parish plan and garner official parish support to most effectively contribute to the goal of the Catholic Collaborative on Darfur.

Goal of the Catholic Collaborative on Darfur

The primary goal of the year long program is to effectively influence our area's representatives to the federal government in order to have our nation provide strong leadership to stop the violence, provide the aid, and resolve the conflict in Darfur, Sudan. It is abundantly clear that only through prayer and international intervention will the genocide in Darfur end.

Collaborative Process

In January of 2006, representatives of 26 Catholic parishes selected this issue to work on during the next year. The Catholic Collaborative Coordinating Team is in turn working with a local Interfaith Coalition on Darfur to create awareness locally and to develop relationships with legislators and their aids. We receive guidance from Catholic Relief Service and the national Save Darfur coalition (on whose executive committee the U.S. Bishops are represented). By coordinating efforts with local parishes who engage their parishioners and leadership in legislative and awareness raising programs we can gain more influence with legislators to persuade them to make Darfur a greater priority.

How to Engage in this Plan

Interested parishioners can develop a plan that they can submit to their Social Action Committee, pastor, and/or parish council for approval. Each parish is different and will pick the actions that are most suitable for your parish. Members of the Collaborative Coordinating Team are available to answer your questions. This team will also provide resources to facilitate work within the parishes. Once your plan is approved keep in touch with the Coordinating Team so as to coordinate your events for maximum impact. It is hoped that all Collaborative parishes will at least engage in prayer and letter writing campaigns.

Suggested Actions

- **Prayer**

_____ Petitions for Darfur at weekend Masses (every other week) for a year

_____ Conduct (or join) a parish prayer service coordinated with that of the interfaith coalition.

_____ Conduct campaign to have 10% of parish households post a prayer card on their refrigerator and commit to daily prayer for Darfur for the year.

_____ Include intentions for Darfur at adoration or rosary services.

_____ Individual (or a group) commitment to a period of prayer and fasting.

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Suggested Actions (continued)

- **Political advocacy:**

_____ 2 letter writing campaigns to take place during Masses on 2 weekends throughout the year. *

_____ Letters from the official parish to federal officials (i.e.: signed by pastor and Parish Council president).*

_____ Monthly updates and requests for action in bulletin or parish publications *

_____ Recruit 10 parishioners to be the parishes “rapid response team” who would sign up for SaveDarfur.org updates and act on emergency call in requests. Such requests for action are rare but very important and effective on days when specific legislative issues are debated.

- **Awareness raising:**

_____ Conduct education campaigns in conjunction with letter writing campaigns.

_____ Conduct an hour long presentation for the parish to 5% of parishioners.

_____ Conduct presentations for the parish junior high classes.

_____ Conduct campaign to sell wristbands with goal of having 10% of parishioners buy and wear them.

_____ Conduct campaign to have 5% of parishioners join SaveDarfur.org and receive updates.

_____ Display poster board in parish vestibule or hall on Darfur (see resources on Archdiocese website: <http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/admin/SAWP/>)

Resources Provided by the Coordinating Team:

- Speakers
- Power Point Presentations from CRS on Darfur
- Resources on prayer and fasting**
- Form letters to Congressmen (on webpage)
- Suggestions on how to run a letter writing campaigns**
- Informational Bulletin Inserts**
- Quotes from Catholic leaders about global solidarity and Darfur
- Suggested Intercessory Prayers and Bulletin Announcements**
- Updates on the status of legislation
- Specific materials and instructions to make display boards on Darfur (on webpage)
- Connections to websites to find more information**

* Please be sure to coordinate letter writing initiatives with the coordinating team as legislative and administrative priorities can change rapidly.

** The Darfur section of the Archdiocese Social Action webpage will have these items as pages within a single document - continuously updated as they become available. It is a good source of information and support: <http://www.catholicsocialaction.org> .