



# All Things Ignatian

# Ignatian Advocacy



*How the Creighton Center for Service and Justice Strives to Live out the Call to Ignatian Advocacy*

## Background

Beginning with Superior General Fr. Pedro Arrupe, SJ, and embraced in the 1975 General Congregation 32, the Jesuit mission has emphasized “the service of faith and the promotion of justice”(GC 32 : Decree 4). One important way of living this out is through advocacy. The 35<sup>th</sup> General Congregation in 2008 explicitly talked about the importance of advocacy work in the mission of the Society of Jesus. Many conferences, publications, and events led up to the Social Justice Secretariat of the Society of Jesus releasing the publication *Introducing the Ignatian Advocacy Network* (<http://www.ignatianadvocacy.org/>) in January of 2010. This document defines advocacy, explains why and how we do advocacy, and focuses our advocacy themes.

Emerging Ignatian Advocacy Network areas of interest include migration, peace and human rights, education, governance of natural resources, ecology, alternative models of sustainable development, religious fundamentalism, and overseas development aid.

*What is ‘advocacy’?*

One way the Jesuit Social Justice Secretariat defines advocacy is “actions that aim to change a present situation of injustice and inequality that has a negative effect on the weak and marginalized” (*Introducing the LAN*, Jan. 2010, p. 72).

*What makes ‘Ignatian’ Advocacy unique?*

- Ignatian Advocacy has the “power to transform our advocacy into one that is inspired by both Christ and our friendship and closeness with the marginalized” (*Introducing the LAN*, Jan. 2010, p. 72).
- Intentionally seeks God in all things and practices Ignatian discernment
- Engages the world through a careful analysis of the context, in dialogue with experience, evaluated through reflection, seeking right decision for the sake of action with openness to evaluation.

Ignatian Advocacy aims to be done in solidarity with the poorest and most marginalized, be reflective and done in proper discernment, and is practiced in community with others.



*Creighton students march at the Rally/Vigil to close the SOA/WHINSEC at Ft. Benning, GA which trained 19 of 21 Salvadoran soldiers who killed six Jesuits, their housekeeper and her daughter at the University of Central America on November 16, 1989.*



*Fall 2010, Approximately 60 students travelled to Washington D.C. to participate in the Ignatian Family Teach-In for Justice and meet with their representatives on Capitol Hill.*

## CCSJ Advocacy

In response to the larger movements in the Society of Jesus and the world, the Creighton Center for Service and Justice formed an Advocacy Team in August of 2009. It quickly became a vehicle for students to live out the mission of being for and with the poor and marginalized whom they often encountered through their service experiences. Advocacy is a key aspect of how we live “a faith that does justice,” an essential part of Ignatian Spirituality. We hope to inspire students to analyze, engage, and challenge the structural systems that often perpetuate injustice in our local, national, and international communities.

The CCSJ Advocacy Team emphasizes four current justice issues chosen based on national and international Jesuit Priorities, our experiences, relationships, reading the ‘signs of the times’ and discernment. Our priority issues are immigrants and refugees, peace/non-violence, poverty/economic justice and sustainability/environmental justice.

In discerning justice and advocacy opportunities relevant to our work and/or priorities, the CCSJ relies on the research, expertise, and experience of trusted partners including: US Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic Relief Services, Jesuit Refugee Services, Wisconsin Province, Network, Center for Concern, et al.

As the former Superior General of the Society of Jesus Rev. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J. said, we need to “educate the whole person of solidarity for the real world.” Students should “learn to perceive, think, judge, choose and act for the rights of others, especially the disadvantaged and the oppressed.”

The CCSJ Advocacy Team, in conjunction with other CCSJ programs, has engaged in Ignatian Advocacy in a variety of ways, including:

- On-campus student leader Advocacy Trainings with Catholic Relief Services;
- Advocacy presentations and formation for groups on campus;
- Sending out a weekly CCSJ Advocacy Alert email;
- Participation in the USCCB Social Ministry Gathering, Ecumenical Advocacy Days conferences and advocacy days in Washington, D.C.;
- Legislative visits with local and national elected officials and petition signing for health care reform, immigration reform, environmental issues and the closing of SOA/WHINSEC;
- Ignatian Family Teach-in for Justice Advocacy Day (11 Creighton visits on Capitol Hill), Unity Rally in Lincoln, NE supporting Nebraskan communities and opposing an Arizona-style law in Nebraska;
- Integrating Ignatian Advocacy into all CCSJ programs when possible, including Fall and Spring Break Service Trips;