

**Human Concerns Committee Report to PSC
January-May, 2009**

The HCC continued its work of parish education in Catholic social doctrine in order to solicit more advocacy and participation in a variety of social justice issues.

1. Death Penalty Abolition

- On April 1, about 40 people attended a movie "The Empty Chair" about the varied feelings of family members of murder victims and the contrast between retributive and restorative justice. A speaker, Mary Kay Rafferty, a parishioner of Holy Spirit Parish, San Jose, told of the murder of her son. The event was co-sponsored by our parish's Human Concerns Committee, Death Penalty Focus and California People of Faith Working Against the Death Penalty.

- A petition is being circulated county-wide that asks legislators and supervisors of Santa Clara County to urge the District Attorney to not seek the death penalty. Parishioner Terry McCaffrey met with Bishop McGrath and they will meet with the District Attorney of Santa Clara County to discuss the petition.

2. Undie Sunday was held on February 16 and 17. We delivered 570 packages to the Opportunity Center, plus \$1281.

3. The St. Vincent de Paul Society is seeking additional volunteers. It reports increased calls for assistance during the recession. East Palo Alto is particularly hard hit. HCC members and other parishioners are helping out. A committee was formed to investigate how George Chippendale's computerized program for organizing the list of food deliveries can be updated and made more user-friendly. There were two objectives:

a) George wanted to create a program that can be used by volunteers; until recently, George is the only one who could use the program. He set up the system himself, and it was not user-friendly. He wanted a revised system, so that more people can learn and use it. Simon Chiu has succeeded in modifying the program to be user-friendly. We look forward to training more people to use it.

b) A second need is to revise the method of keeping track of families that use St. Vincent de Paul. There is a standard form that a volunteer must fill out for a family, and the data is entered into the program using this form. Parishioner Frank Flynn has investigated a method to place this function on the internet so that multiple volunteers can maintain the database.

4. We welcomed three new members following the Time and Talent drive. Also, prompted by the PSC retreat in May, we are planning to contact our less visible members and strengthen our volunteer efforts.