

# *St. Joseph Spirituality Center*

A sponsored ministry of the Congregation of St. Joseph

*Awakening and deepening spirituality to impact our world*

Two **St. Joseph Spirituality Center** board members along with Executive Director Dianne Hanley participated in the Pontifical Council's United States Regional World Meeting of Popular Movements (WMPM). Seven of us from five Together Baton Rouge (TBR) member Catholic churches traveled to California in February to participate in the event.

Pope Francis is creating environments where the people of the Church who are poor and marginalized have an opportunity to communicate their concerns and initiatives directly into the conversation with the rest of the Church, including the hierarchy. The Pope sees that grassroots movements, like TBR, are the conduit for bringing those who are usually unheard to the conversation.

Below is an excerpt from a Vatican article about the meetings. I've put into bold print those parts that I found particularly significant.

The WMPM provided the poor with an opportunity to display their forms of initiative, participation and protagonist on a global stage. For they were invited to and made welcome in a place which quintessentially symbolizes global authority and leadership, and where customarily it is political and religious leaders who are received. At the same time, the WMPM has shown how the Church can facilitate such encounter by making the necessary resources and infrastructure available.

In this sense, **the WMPM has validated the grassroots movements as interlocutors of the Church at the institutional level**, with the hope that this dialogue will also begin with local ecclesial communities, helping them to set out towards the outskirts where they can encounter the value of solidarity, so fundamental for their life. Conversely, it has **validated the Church as an interlocutor of the popular movements**, which left with a renewed hope

of **finding in her an ally capable of listening to them and supporting them even at the institutional level**, rather than only in the inspiration and the accompaniment which many of them acknowledged receiving in the field from individual church figures. Finally, we can anticipate that the relationship established between these movements and the Church will also be noticed more broadly in the world, with positive repercussions on all sides.

...From many points of view, the most important process now is the one which takes place at the local and regional levels. At the same time, **two other objectives are extremely important**: to establish on-going coordination amongst the organizations of the excluded and marginalized; and to **set up a platform to make it feasible for popular organizations to contact** their local Church leadership, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, and **Pope Francis**.

The group that traveled to California is now working to make the experience local, creating a LA WMPM. To become involved, contact Dianne Hanley at the St. Joseph Spirituality Center.

Related Documents' Links:

See Pope Francis' address to those gathered in Modesto, California  
[Read more](#) or [Lee mas](#)

See the written response composed by the nearly 700 people from organizations like Together Baton Rouge  
[Read more](#) or [Lee mas](#)

Read an impassioned speech given at the event by Bishop Robert McElroy of San Diego calling for us to be "disruptors" and "rebuilders"  
[Read more](#)

To read the entire article referred to and to learn more, go to the Vatican Website of the Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace:

[The Strength of the Excluded: World Meeting of Popular Movements at the Vatican](#)