

GET READY, GET SET, GO!

St. Charles parishioners along with parishioners from several other Catholic parishes and other churches and faith communities will be gathering on Sunday, February 12th at 3:00pm for the founding convention of **VOICE, Voices Organized In Civic Engagement**, formerly known as the Oklahoma Sponsoring Committee. On February 12th we will move from just being a Sponsoring Committee to becoming a full-fledged institution. The Oklahoma Sponsoring Committee is a faith based group of people united to work on common issues facing the families of our churches and the Oklahoma City metro area at large. It is congregation-based organizing.

What is congregation-based organizing you ask? Congregation-based organizing is gathering people together from the community to organize around issues that affect our families. We listen to people in our parishes and churches as they talk about their lives. We investigate possible solutions to those things that put stress on their lives; visit with elected officials and to make relationships that may lead to change that will benefit our families. Pope Benedict spoke about such gatherings of people in his encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*, calling for Catholics to collaborate with other people of faith and even people of no faith in order to work for justice and peace in our communities. (See paragraph #57) St. Charles parishioners have taken a very active role in gathering with others from around our city in a way that is unique so that we not just do charity together, but look for the systemic causes and possible solutions that pose stress on our families. We have worked on issues regarding public education, elderly housing problems, public transportation, immigration related problems and economic issues in difficult times. We do not just wring our hands, but gather together in dialogue, reflection, and study so that we might work to seek solutions. We do not endorse candidates or political parties but we do meet with elected officials, school board members, city council members, state legislators and congressmen to ask them to work with us on those issues central to our families' lives. In the process we forge relationships with others in the business community, the local schools, and other churches.

If you enjoy meeting and working with people from around the city area on real issues facing our families and are looking for a way to put your Catholic faith and Catholic teachings into practice you might find this very rewarding. Give us a call at the parish office and talk to Linda Clark, Margaret Phipps or Fr. Tim and we will be happy to sit and visit with you about this. And if you are interested in joining us and over a thousand others on Sunday, February 12th at 3:00pm at the First Christian Church in Oklahoma City give us a call and we will save room for you!

-Fr. Tim