

**CATHOLIC DIOCESE of BELLEVILLE**  
Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs  
303 South Poplar Street, Carbondale, IL

January 27, 2010

Dear Colleagues in Ministry,

Please find attached to this mailing information regarding an ecumenical and social outreach event to be held this coming March 11 (Friday) and 12 (Saturday) at the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville. The event is this year's Bi-Annual Statewide Gathering of the Illinois Conference of Churches. As you can see from the attached materials, a variety of other organizations from across our state have joined in the sponsorship as well.

The event focuses on helping to minister to those who live in the grips of poverty. Various groups and agencies from around the state of Illinois, including several from our own diocese and area, will be in attendance to present and discuss programs that they offer, and ideas for helping people in our respective parishes and institutions. A major presentation will also be given by the President of the National Council of Churches. Other events include a banquet in which an ecumenical award given in honor of one of the past presidents of the Illinois Conference of Churches, followed by an evening of musical entertainment. Displays, panels, scripture studying on poverty, prayer services and an experience of walking through and eating at the Soup Kitchen on Wheels operated by the Catholic Urban Program of our Diocese, are all just part of the many dimensions and aspects of the program.

Please come and join us and find out how your outreach to those in need in your communities can be helped and fine tuned. Be sure to pass this along to your local social outreach persons in your parish, so they will be able to attend.

If you have any other questions regarding the event or the program, please do not hesitate to contact me at [rbflan@globaleyes.net](mailto:rbflan@globaleyes.net), or 618-457-4556. I encourage you to read the other attached materials which give the full picture and description of the function. This is the first time the Bi-Annual Statewide Gathering of the Illinois has been this far south in our state, as well as in our Diocese. For this reason, I hope our Diocese will be well represented at the event.

God's peace,

*Fr. Bob Flannery*

Director, Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs

