

# CLEAN CLOTHES CAMPAIGN



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*Applying our faith to daily life in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee*

To the Catholic Community in Southeastern Wisconsin:

A fundamental Catholic belief is that of valuing and respecting the sacredness of human life. As Catholics, we believe that each person has a God-given right to respect and dignity. The Office of Schools, Child and Youth Ministries and the Office for World Mission, with support from Archbishop Timothy Dolan and Superintendent of Catholic Education, David Prothero, along with the undersigned team of representatives from schools and parishes of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee, have developed steps toward addressing an important social justice issue. Our Catholic Social Teaching has inspired a "Clean Clothes Campaign" as a means of becoming a Clean Clothes Community.

The focus of this Campaign is to gain a greater understanding of the issue of sweatshops and what we can do about them in a positive way. It will bring home the important questions: "Where do my clothes come from?" and "Who makes my clothes and under what conditions?" This understanding of sweatshops will bring a personal awareness and provide encouragement to parents, teachers and students to purchase school uniforms, as well as spirit and sports wear, that are made under just working conditions. This is not about boycotting, nor about marching in the streets. It is about making moral decisions. It is about respecting life!

Furthermore, this campaign responds to the elements of our Catholic identity that our school principals articulated in recent district discussions. One of those statements fits well:

"Fundamental beliefs must be shared among members of the Catholic education community if authenticity is to be the hallmark of Catholic education in the future. We believe that Catholic identity must be reflected through children, youth and adults by their commitment to justice service. Jesus came for every person, rich and poor alike, so Catholic education has to reflect the call to social justice which is required as part of our faith tradition."

This campaign will strengthen us locally as we live our faith in a global reality. Rather than begin with setting a policy for our Archdiocesan Catholic Schools and Community, we hope that through a broad based educational effort, our parents, students and educators will want to become involved in "sweat free" purchasing, not only for school apparel, but also for other areas of life. It is simply the right thing to do. Catholic social teaching instructs and encourages us to address the unjust aspects of the globalized economy, which are so prevalent in the apparel industry today.

While at this time, we are introducing the Clean Clothes Campaign to the archdiocese through our schools, our intention is that the campaign extend to all of southeastern Wisconsin. Several other dioceses have already taken leadership in similar efforts. With them we believe that since Jesus came that all may have life and have it in abundance (John 10, 10), this program offers us a special opportunity to creatively stand in solidarity with those who do not currently have access to abundant life.

With Christ as our model, you are invited to become a part of a "Clean Clothes Community," one that shows concern for the people who make our clothing. During each week of this seven-week introductory program, you will have information and suggestions with simple activities for families and the classroom. These will help parents and teachers develop an understanding of this issue and reinforce their teaching of social justice concepts to their children. Soon a Teacher Tool Kit will also be available for educators.

In appreciation for your taking leadership to engage in this process, we assure you of our availability to support you in your work. Please do not hesitate to contact any one of us. May the Spirit of God be upon you as you delve into this vital justice issue of "sweat free" purchasing in your schools and homes.

Sincerely,



Rosemary Huddleston, OP  
World Mission Ministries Office  
for

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