The Meaning of Social Justice
JSRI's JustSouth Index
by Jeanie Donovan, MPA, MPH

JSRI Upcoming Events
May 21
Fr. Kammer will celebrate the closing Eucharist for graduates of the Loyola Institute for Ministry.

May 31
JSRI will hold a Catholic Teach-In on migration at Blessed Trinity Church in New Orleans at 6:30.

June 6
Fr. Kammer will conduct a day on Catholic social thought for education and pastoral leaders.

June 20
Bill McCormick, SJ, Ph.D. will start a summer internship at JSRI.

JSRI Recent Activities
May 12
Ms. Baudouin and Dr. Weishar attended the annual meeting of Corrections Corporation of America, where Ms. Baudouin provided a statement in support of the implementation of human rights policies at CCA facilities.

April 26
Dr. Weishar, Fr. Kammer, and JSRI Mississippi Associate Cirilo Villa led a Catholic Teach-In on Migration at Our Lady of Fatima Church in Biloxi, Mississippi.

April 26
Dr. Weishar was a guest on Garand Robinette’s Think Radio, about the need to oppose anti-immigration legislation being considered in the Louisiana House of Representatives.

April 24-26
JSRI staff assisted by board member Sal Longoria gave a workshop on Jesuit Justice for Jesuit Novices.

April 22
Fr. Kammer spoke on Laudato SI’ at Fordham University.

April 21
Dr. Weishar testified before the Louisiana House Judiciary Committee opposing two bills outlawing so-called “sanctuary cities.”

In the JustSouth Index, we attempted to measure social justice quantitatively by selecting indicators that represent the sort of resources that are essential to human wellbeing. Specifically, we selected nine indicators related to health, education, and standard of living that could be used to assess whether individuals in each state have the resources they need to fully contribute to the common good of all of us. While the selection of indicators is not a perfect science, it is one way for us as social scientists to concretely compare how residents of the Gulf South are faring with regard to the fundamental rights and needs of the human person.

We found that many residents of the Gulf South, especially those who belong to racial and ethnic minority groups, do not have the resources they need to prosper. For example, immigrants in the Gulf South are significantly less likely to have health insurance coverage than native-born residents. In Louisiana and Mississippi, minority workers earn just four-fifths of what their white counterparts of similar age, education, and occupation earn. Public schools have much higher rates of racial segregation in Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana than in other parts of the country. What’s more, 90 percent of those in the lowest income quartile in the Gulf South states struggle to afford safe, secure housing.

To gain a better understanding of both the meaning of social justice and the measures that we used to quantify it, I encourage you to read through the full JustSouth Index report and explore the corresponding maps and data on our website for all 50 states and the District of Columbia. If you would like a hard copy of the report, have questions, or would like to request a presentation on the data, please email me at jdonovan@loyola.edu. Further, if you are interested in joining JSRI’s advocacy network to improve equity and justice in the Gulf South, please sign up at www.votervoice.net/loyola/register.
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