



On Sunday October 3rd, the “Conversations At The Center” resumed in Brighton, MA. The purpose of this series is to provide a place for the local house community and guests to participate, learn and discuss what it means to be Church.

At this first gathering of the year, which began with Mass, Joshua Johnson, a first year theology student at Boston College and who recently joined the community at the Center, spoke of his experience working at Casa Juan Diego House of Hospitality in Houston, Texas. This facility of the Catholic Worker heroically and selflessly gives life to the dream of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin who worked tirelessly to be a social dynamic force in ministering to the poorest of the poor.

After a brief history of the initial founding of the Catholic Worker in NYC, Josh shared some background information on the establishment of Casa Juan Diego in Houston. The founders, Mark and Louise Zwick, had traveled to El Salvador and Guatemala and experienced the horrors of war in Central America. Returning home, they began to establish Houses of Hospitality to receive refugees and later immigrants from many countries, the vast majority of whom were undocumented. Thus, Casa Diego in Houston came into being to bear witness and service to the Gospel imperative to give preferential option for the poor.

In homes for both men and women, Casa Diego provides treatment to the sick by way of medical and dental clinics. Shelter is available in personal care homes. Assistance is made available to those who are undocumented, many of whom are transient labor workers. Weekly food distribution reaches men, women and children who are most in need. Vans deliver sandwiches to day laborers. The homes themselves are run by volunteers who share responsibilities in caring for one another. Yet in the midst of sickness, poverty, many form of deprivation, separation from family and sometimes danger, the guests of Casa Diego show

great resilience and give witness to a profound faith, especially to Mary, as Our Lady of Guadalupe.

In response to a question regarding the financial support of such great work, Josh stressed the importance of donations, especially small offerings, that makes the continuance of Catholic Worker facilities possible. It also became clear how important it is for us as Church to speak out more courageously on the social gospel, supporting our theology with action. Following this rich power point presentation, Josh fielded several other questions which gave rise to continued discussion during brunch. Without a doubt, this 'conversation' is not over...

[PHOTO GALLERY »](#)