

John Hook Award

The John Hook Award is presented to a parishioner who lives the Gospel call to service and justice. It honors one who has shown commitment to social ministry through direct service, advocacy, community organizing, and solidarity with the broader community over an extended period of time. This parishioner has also drawn others into the ministry of charity and justice. The award recipient embodies the belief that Christ is both met and served in the suffering and vulnerable.

John Hook was the longest serving member in the history of the St. Vincent DePaul Society with 75 years of service. John joined a St. Vincent DePaul group at SS. Philip and James when he was just 14 years old and remained an active and faithful member of the Society at St. Dominic Parish until shortly before his death in 2000. John was the quintessential parish volunteer. Once a call came in from a family in crisis, John went into action and never quit until he had fully assisted them. When a given family had multiple needs, John went to other groups and agencies to get help and never took “no” for an answer. For over 75 years he served thousands of families with respectful care and concern.

2022 Recipient: Flo Sunshine Valentine

Flo Valentine has served as a person for others all her life. As a retired Baltimore City Teacher, she has touched the lives of many children throughout her career. Guided by her strong faith, Flo is always quick to step forward in any arena that reflects disordered thinking when it involves social justice. Flo is a member of The Immaculate Conception Church and is presently very involved in the Synod process. She is also an active member of the St. Vincent De Paul Society.

Flo Valentine is President of the Board of the Friends of the Enoch Pratt Free Library. She is also President of the Board of Social Change and serves on the Board of the League of Women Voters for Baltimore City. Flo is also a member of the Racial Justice Circle and the Black Lives Matter Interfaith Coalition.

Flo is known as a “People Magnet.” She draws people in and facilitates their active involvement in social change. She is a community organizer and she is quick to identify a need and create an active response. She is an amazing God bearer and, guided by her faith, she does whatever she can whenever she can.

Doris Johnson Award

The Doris Johnson Award is presented to a person who has worked for justice within the community, local or broader, in harmony with the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. The award recipient has made a positive difference to those around them, as well as those indirectly impacted by the issues addressed.

Doris Johnson was a neighborhood activist for many years. Doris raised her six children right across from Clifton Park and helped them to become leaders in the community. Doris began and ran the neighborhood assistance center that, since her death, has been run by her daughter. Doris became a neighborhood leader under then-Mayor Donald Schaefer, and remained a neighborhood force for over 30 years.

2022 Recipient: Mary Catherine Bunting

Mary Catherine Bunting was born in 1937 and has lived in Baltimore Maryland her entire life. She was blessed to be educated in Catholic schools. She went to Mt. St. Agnes & Notre Dame of Maryland for her elemental years and Maryvale Preparatory for high school. She graduated from Mercy Hospital diploma RN program in 1958 and worked in the Labor and Delivery Department until she entered the Sisters of Mercy in 1959. She graduated from Mt St. Agnes College in 1964 with a BA in Sociology and from the University of Maryland School of Nursing in 1972 with a Masters in Maternal and Newborn Education. In 1972, she also left the Sisters of Mercy.

After becoming a Certified Adult Nurse Practitioner, she worked at Mercy Southern Health Center until her retirement. Mary Catherine has received Honorary Doctorate degrees from Notre Dame of Maryland University and University of Maryland School of Nursing. She was founding Vice President and Board Member of Friendship and Safe House, halfway houses for men and women in recovery for alcohol and drug addiction. She was a Board member for Women's Education Alliance and the Catholic Charities Board for eight years.

Mary Catherine is an active member of St. Vincent de Paul Church as a lector and liturgy planner and is a member of their choir, Green Team, Peace & Justice group, and Chairs their Women in Ministry Group and Pastoral Care Committee. She volunteers to serve Friday evening dinners to the homeless.

Mary Catherine volunteers at Gilchrist Services as a Eucharist Minister and visits and supports their hospice patients. She participates in promoting the church's social justice issues in the Beyond the Boundaries Group, the Racial Justice Circle, and the Black Lives Matter rallies, among other activities. She contacts her legislators to enact laws concerning these justice issues.

Mary Catherine also financially supports many Catholic schools and hospitals, the Baltimore Archdiocese, Catholic Charities, Catholic Relief Services, as well as many local, national, and international organizations.

International Peace and Justice Award

The International Peace and Justice Award is presented to a local activist who has been involved in reaching out to an international constituency through actions taken in the Baltimore area, consistent with Catholic Social Teaching. This may involve working or volunteering with an international group or organization, being a founding member of an international organization dedicated to addressing systemic needs, or being active for many years in a certain international action being conducted by a parish. The award recipient is usually a Baltimore native with ties to a local parish.

2022 Recipient: Tiffany Nelms

Tiffany Nelms has worked with immigrants since 2003, with a specialization in women and children in forced migration. She started her career at Adelante Familia in Baltimore as an advocate for survivors of intimate partner violence, later becoming a group therapy facilitator and a facilitator for Si Puedo abuser's intervention program. Following her time at Adelante Familia, she lived in Venezuela for one year, coordinating a mobile school for children not receiving formal education. Upon her return to the US, she joined Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) and worked in a variety of capacities serving unaccompanied children. From 2011-2016, she coordinated the national unaccompanied children's program for the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, elevating the voices of children arriving alone in the US. In 2016, she had the privilege of joining Asylee Women and recently wrapped up 5 years of service. Over the last five years they expanded housing to women and children seeking asylum and faced many challenges related to unfair immigration policies and a global pandemic. In 2022, she stepped away from this position to focus more on her family and return to work with unaccompanied children with Church World Service, working remotely from her home in West Virginia. She is a graduate of the University of Maryland Baltimore with a Master's of Social Work. Her career path was heavily influenced by a study abroad semester in Ecuador as an undergraduate student at Salisbury University. She enjoys spending time with her partner and three children (1, 4 and 15), cooking, enjoying nature, and traveling. She is honored to be nominated for this award and feels she must share it with the women and children, staff, and volunteers of Asylee Women that she has had the privilege to journey alongside over the last 5 years.