

## **Ecumenical Advocacy Days 2009**

This is my third trip to Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD) in Washington, D.C., on behalf of the Passionists' JPIC office. It's an experience I value for so many reasons.

First, it is truly inspiring to see so many faith communities, and for me, Catholic groups in particular, participating in this event. I am reminded each year of the incredible "boots on the ground" service that so many of our lay and religious women and men, Passionists among them, offer to people in places where there is devastating hardship. These servants of God really are committed to compassion and justice and I am humbled by their efforts and dedication.

As an American, there is nothing like actually going to Washington and making the trip to Capitol Hill, the culmination of Ecumenical Advocacy Days, to speak with one's senators and representatives (although typically it's a member of the official's team). Advocating for ethical and just causes is empowering, sometimes overwhelming, but always invigorating, especially in a city where big dreams come to live and sometimes die, but where change for the good really can take shape.

This year's EAD conference focused on the theme of climate change and its potential impact on national and international communities already stretched to their economic and social limits. The Passionists are serving in 59 countries around the world, including the U.S., so this reality is particularly compelling for our Community.

Traditionally, Passionists choose not to tie themselves to political causes. But where possible, we do seek to address and remedy the causes of suffering and seek out justice, particularly for those who cannot advocate on their own behalf. In this way, the Passionist presence at EAD reflects the Passionist charism—to keep alive the memory of the Passion by reaching out to those who suffer—in a very clear and meaningful way, and on a personal and spiritual level, I am truly proud to participate in it.

~Nancy Nickel, Communications Director