

JPIC Corner

Volume 3 Issue 2

February 2010

An E-Publication of the United States Province of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart to promote Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation. **Sign up now.**

Coordinator's Note

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Missionaries of the Sacred Heart

A Lesson of Hope from Haiti

On January 12, the world was “shaken” by the devastating earthquake in Haiti. Haiti is a fourth-world nation and the poorest in the Western Hemisphere.¹ But rather than being thrust into despair, the virtue of hope came to the fore among the Haitian people. For us today the people of Haiti can be seen as a “guiding reference for the world. Their wisdom and solidarity are stronger than the misery and catastrophes gripping their people.”² The young boy who was seen rescued and raised high among the people with his arms stretched high in triumph exemplifies the Haitian spirit of hope and liberation at this time.

In Sunday's Gospel, (January 24) we saw Jesus in Nazareth and heard his famous reading from the prophet Isaiah:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord. (Luke 4:18-19)

After closing the scroll, Jesus said to those present, “Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.” (Luke 4:21)

We can see Jesus' words put into action in the International community rescuing, liberating, consoling and healing the people of Haiti. We are in solidarity with Haiti. Our solidarity, however, should extend beyond Haiti. We can use Haiti as a prime example of how to fulfill Jesus' words in our daily lives. We often are surrounded

Happy Valentine's Day from the MSC!

May the love of the Sacred Heart fill the hearts of you and yours.



Above: Photo by Petr Kratochvil

by people who are in need of healing and liberation. We need to be a people of hope for the unborn, the elderly, the poor, the unemployed, the lonely and the oppressed. When Christians are in solidarity with the unfortunate ones, we realize that we are the Body of Christ. We realize that we are all brothers and sisters. As the Body of Christ, we are sustained in the hope of God's promises. Our “hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”³ Our hope in God's promises prompts us to move forward in solidarity with Jesus' compassion and mercy for all of God's people. Let us learn this message from those who are reaching out to their wounded brothers and sisters in Haiti, and let us pray that Haiti will be able to rise again from death to life.

1. http://www.matthew25forty.org/about_haiti.htm
2. <http://www.atd-fourthworld.org/Haiti-message-from-the.html>
3. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2658.

Hope for Justice

Sometimes, as we reflect on all the various types of injustices in the world, it is easy to become discouraged, to wonder if there is really any point to our efforts to promote justice in the face of such daunting problems. That is why hope is so important; hope keeps us going. While we are called to work to bring about the Kingdom of God (which is based on justice, peace, love and reconciliation), we also recognize that the Kingdom will not be fulfilled until the end of time.

Keeping a balanced perspective helps us stay hopeful for the future. So, in a time when many injustices and needs are so visible, below are a few reminders of the good that has been done. On both the national and global levels, we have achieved remarkable progress in a lot of areas. Although there is much work to do, it's doable!

Poverty

Although the World Bank determined that there were 1.4 billion people living in extreme poverty in 2005, poverty rates have decreased significantly in the past 30 years, from 52% in 1981 to 26% in 2005.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence wasn't given much public attention as a "problem" in the US until 1973, when the first shelter for battered women was founded in Arizona and a movement started to combat domestic violence. While domestic violence

continues to be a serious problem today (1 in 3 women worldwide has been beaten or otherwise abused and 1 in 4 women and 1 in 9 men are victims of domestic violence in the USA), the issue is given much more attention and resources. In the USA, there are now shelters across the nation, a national hotline (1-800-799-SAFE) which is open 24/7 and responds to hundreds of calls a day, as well as a separate helpline for teen dating violence (1-866-331-9474).

Child Health and Education

Since 1960, the mortality rate of children younger than five has decreased by 60%.

Worldwide, the number of children of primary school age who were out of school fell by more than 30% between 1999 and 2006, from 103 million to 73 million.

Labor Policies & Workplace Safety

100 years ago, labor policies were much different than they are today. Workplaces were less safe and injured workers had little recourse.

Child labor used to be common in the United States. In 1900, there were no national laws against child labor and children between the ages of 10 and 15 made up 6% of the labor force. Today there are much stricter regulations regarding the employment of minors and child labor in the US is rare.

Defining Problems as Problems

As strange as it might sound, the fact that we recognize that various forms of injustice are problems is a huge step in the right direction, and a relevantly recent phenomenon. Before the Enlightenment, many people thought that "problems" such as poverty and unsafe working conditions were unavoidable, a fact of life rather than a problem that needed to be solved.



Above: Japanese Flowering Cherry by Petr Kratochvil

Even in the dead of winter, we can look forward with hope to the beauty of spring!

3 Ways to Show Solidarity in Everyday Life

Foster community

Solidarity comes from the recognition that we are all part of one, human family. One way to show solidarity with others is to strengthen our communities, including the sense of community within our own families and parishes as well as our local, national and international communities. Simple steps can go a long way towards fostering a sense of community. Some examples include eating meals together as a family, participating in parish events, inviting your new neighbors over for dinner and volunteering with a local organization.

Get involved in issues that don't personally affect you

We tend to be much more involved in issues that directly affect us. While it is good to use our interest and enthusiasm for a particular issue to effect change, solidarity calls us to also get involved in issues that don't necessarily affect us directly. For instance, perhaps a law is being proposed that we disagree with, but we don't take any further action because we don't think it will negatively affect us. We can show solidarity with those it would affect by taking further action, such as signing a petition or letting our representative know what we want changed.

Listen

Showing solidarity doesn't necessarily mean solving someone's problem. Sometimes what people need most is a loving listener. We are in solidarity with others when we take the time to listen to them and share in their experience, whether they are having a bad day, are facing extraordinarily difficult circumstances and just need to vent, or simply want to share their good news and joy.

Sharing Life: Giving Blood

Every two seconds, someone in the U.S. needs blood. Giving blood is one way we can show solidarity with others, by giving people we'll never meet another chance at life.

Although donated blood usually goes to people in the United States, sometimes blood centers send blood to hospitals in other countries in response to a natural disaster. For instance, blood centers in the US are sending blood to Haiti to help hospitals meet the need for blood. So giving blood helps save lives in our own country, and also helps us be prepared to help save the lives of people affected by a natural disaster.

For health and safety reasons, blood donors must meet several eligibility requirements. For more information, go to the Red Cross [website](#) or call your local blood center.

Solidarity Slideshow

Check out our latest Catholic Social Teaching slideshow: Solidarity.

Click the image to the right or the link below to view the show on www.slideshare.net.

Tell us what you think!

What are some ways you show solidarity with others?



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Catholic Social Teaching



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JPIC Corner, a monthly publication
Publisher: The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart
Provincial: V. Rev. Raymond Diesbourg, MSC
JPIC Coordinator: Bro. Warren Perrotto, MSC
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