

JPIC Corner

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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

Brother Warren Perrotto, MSC

JPIC Coordinator

Missionaries of the Sacred Heart

In October, we once again had the opportunity to see world nations come together in solidarity in the rescue of the 33 Chilean miners. The world watched, united in hope and happiness as each miner was liberated from 60+ days of being trapped over 2000 feet below.

This example of unity and solidarity with one another reflects one of the important meanings of Christmas. Christmas reminds us of Jesus' mission to "proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind and to let the oppressed go free and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord." (Luke 4:18-19) For the released miners, this has truly been a year acceptable to the Lord.

Perhaps this Christmas, we can focus on Jesus' message of hope and liberation. Our baptismal call summons us to justice and peace efforts. As disciples of Jesus, we are called to announce the Good News, especially to those who are oppressed and marginalized. Christmas is an opportune moment to seek concrete ways to live out our Christian vocation in the ways of peace and justice.

You once again will be remembered in my thoughts and prayers during this holy season of Advent and Christmas. May the peace of Jesus reign in your hearts at this time and throughout the New Year.



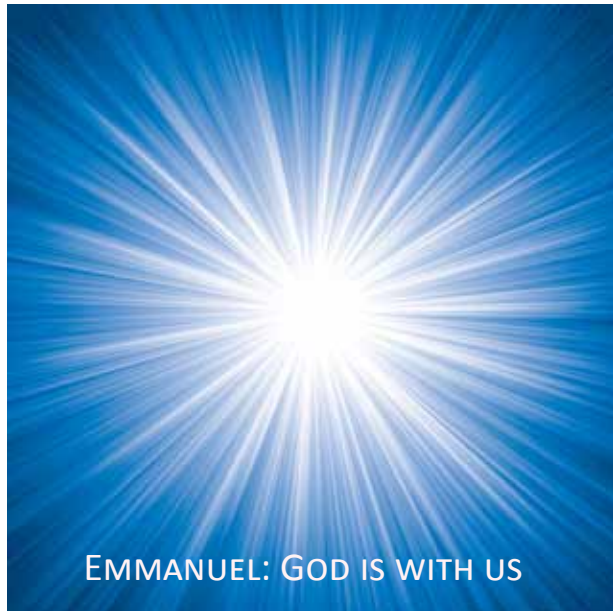
Merry Christmas from the MSC!

Like the Star of Bethlehem that led the shepherds and wise-men to Jesus, may our lives be guided by the light of love, justice and peace so that through our words and actions, Christ may be born in our hearts and in the world.

Did You Know?

- **Every day, 6,300 people die as a result of occupational accidents or work-related diseases. That's 2.3 million people a year.**
- **Preliminary data for 2009 indicates that there were 4,340 fatal work injuries in the U.S. that year.**
- **According to the Xihua News Agency, in 2003, China produced 35% of the world's coal but reported 80% of the total deaths in coal mine accidents.**
- **Around 215 million children in the world work (many full-time) instead of going to school and playing.**
- **More than 12 million people in the world are trapped in forced labor.**
- **The richest 2% of adults in the world own more than half of global household wealth.**

Counting Our Blessings: Putting Our Difficulties into a Global Perspective



For many of us, this year has been full of economic challenges. Although the U.S. economy has shown signs of improvement, the unemployment rate has remained high, causing many families to struggle to keep a roof over their heads and food on the table.

Perhaps this year we are struggling to feel the joy and peace of the season because we are worried about what will happen in the future: Will we be able to pay our bills this month? Will we have a place to live next month? Or perhaps we are fortunate enough not to have to worry about meeting our basic needs, but are still struggling with the reality that this year there will be fewer or no gifts.

In times when so many things seem to be going wrong, we can be tempted to fall into a negative mindset, even bitterness.

Sometimes putting our difficulties into a global perspective can renew in us an appreciation for all the blessings in our lives right now and to focus on what we do have. Here are a couple of points for reflection based on findings from a study released in 2006 by the World Institute for Development Economics Research of the United Nations University:

- The richest 2% of adults in the world own more than half of global household wealth.
- Over a third (37%) of people in the US are among the richest 1% of people in the world.
- North America has only 6% of the world's population but 34% of its household wealth
- If our household has \$2,200 in assets, we are richer than half of the people in the world.
- If our household has \$61,000 in assets, we are wealthier than 90% of the people in the world.

If we live in the US, we have more resources than most people in the world. While this fact won't help solve the difficulties we are facing, it may help us keep a healthier and more positive perspective as we face them. As 2010 draws to a close, let us take a moment to count our blessings, give thanks to God for the good in our lives, and to pray for all the members of our large, human family who are struggling this season. ***Emmanuel - God is with us.***



Catholic Social Teaching: Focus on Solidarity

Understanding Solidarity

- [Catholic Social Teaching: Solidarity \(slideshow\)](#)
- [Catholic Social Teaching: Principle of Solidarity](#)

Living in Solidarity with Others

- [Sharing Life: Giving Blood](#)
- [Ways We Can Show Solidarity Across the Miles](#)
- [3 Ways to Show Solidarity in Everyday Life](#)

Solidarity comes from the recognition that we are all part of one, human family.

Vocations and Social Justice

What does our vocation have to do with Catholic Social Teaching?

A vocation is a calling. So when we speak about “our vocation,” we are talking about what God is calling us to do. Regardless of whether or not God is calling us to a religious vocation (to join a religious community as a priest, brother or sister), our faith should be part of our discernment process. Why? No matter what our particular vocation is, we are called to live it out within the context of our faith, which includes Catholic social teachings. For instance, whether we dedicate our time caring for our families or to work outside the home, we are still called to respect human dignity, protect the rights of others, strive for peace and care for creation. These principles affect how we live out our particular calling, what kind of example we give for others. Each of us, no matter what kind of work we are engaged in, or whether we are single or married, or whether we are called to serve the Church as a lay person, as a priest or as a Religious, can spread God’s love and create a more just and peaceful world by incorporating Catholic social teachings into our daily lives.

In the process of discerning your vocation?

Check out our online vocation resources. For example:

- [Read Br. Joe’s December Vocation Letter](#)
- [Watch Fr. Andrew’s Vocation Videos](#)

Starting the New Year Off Right

Advent is the beginning of the Church year, and a new year is a good time to reflect on what we have learned from the past and where we would like to go in the future. As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ in our hearts and in our world, perhaps we can also make it a New Year’s resolution to ask ourselves more often “What loving decision is God calling me to make today?”

A few starting points for reflection:

- How do Catholic social teachings relate to my current job and/or lifestyle?
- Do I respect the dignity of others? Am I polite when I speak to others in person or on the phone? Do I engage in or avoid office or neighborhood gossip? How do I react when someone makes a mistake?
- Do I manage or supervise others? If so, do I create and enforce policies that respect the dignity of those who work under my supervision?
- Do I teach others? If so, am I also teaching them that every person has dignity? Even if we don’t teach by profession, we all teach by example. Do I set a good example for others?
- How do I build up the Kingdom of God in my little corner of the world? How does the work I do (whether paid or volunteer, inside or outside the home) help make the world a more just and peaceful place?

Living Faith: What is God calling me to do in my life?

“Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” Every time we pray the Our Father, we ask God to bring to fulfillment his will in us and in our world. In saying this we want to do our part and form our lives according to the Father’s will. But how do we know what may be God’s will?

As we know, discovering the will of God is not so easy. How do we distinguish between what God wants and the ideas that come from our own desires and needs?

Continue reading Fr. Dave Foxen’s thoughts on discernment and share your thoughts at Living Faith (www.faith.misacor-usa.org).



2010: Year in Review

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation - Reader Favorites

A few of the most popular articles this year

- November: [Global Development](#)
- October: [Substance Abuse](#)
- September: [Teenage Pregnancy and the Cycle of Poverty](#)
- August: [Become a Better Steward](#)
- July: [Hate Groups](#)
- June: [Living Within Our Means](#)
- May: [The Dignity of Human Work](#)
- April: [Responding to Suffering](#)
- March: [What Happens After Prison?](#)
- February: [A Lesson of Hope from Haiti](#)
- January: [Pregnant? Need Help?](#)

What was your favorite article? Let us know at jpic@misacor-usa.org.

Most Read Article of 2010 (January 2010 Issue)



Fostering A Culture of Life

by Br. Warren Perrotto, MSC

What is a culture of Life?

Hopefully, as Catholics, we are familiar with the term. Yet if someone asked us the above question, how would we answer? A culture of life is an approach to human existence that is based on the dignity of each and every human being. It calls us to identify areas in our lives and in our society where more respect for the human person is needed and to act in a way that upholds the dignity of everyone. A culture of life is fundamentally founded on Jesus Christ.

[*Miss this article? Read it online.*](#)

Most Read Spirituality Article Featured in JPIC Corner (May 2010 Issue)

The Unemployed - Underemployed - Unhappily Employed (Trapped)

by Father Peter Campbell, MSC

The truth of the matter is, people won't even look at their beliefs and values as long as their lives seem to be going smoothly. It is at times of crisis, like unemployment, that people are forced to question themselves and the culture they live in. If the crisis of unemployment happens during the middle age transition, people may be inclined to question all their beliefs and all the values society forces on us. As they begin to question these beliefs and values, they will recognize what they need to let go of, what needs replacing in their lives. This may require a major shift in their lives.

Here are three examples of people who needed this major shift. On the first retreat, a man we will call George had been making quite a large salary before his unemployment, \$300,000 a year. George expected that he would eventually get another job with an equal or higher salary. He was well educated and very talented in his field of engineering. However, not only was his job phased out, but his area of expertise was no longer needed in his profession. He had to face the reality that he would not find another job with a salary anywhere near to what he had before.

[*Miss this article? Read it online*](#)

2010: Year in Review

A look back on some of the most popular articles this year

Most Popular Article About Care for Creation (August 2010)

What Does it Mean to be a Good Steward of God's Creation?

Part of Catholic teaching is that human beings have a responsibility to care for the earth, to be good stewards of God's creation. There are many aspects of caring for creation, including recycling, reducing waste and pollution, conserving energy, preserving natural habitats, repairing damaged ecosystems, distributing resources such as water in a way that benefits the common good, just to name a few. Yet, with so many important aspects to consider when caring for the earth, how do we know where to start? How do we know if we're being good stewards?

Caring for creation is a huge responsibility, and involves much more than simply turning off extra lights or buying energy efficient appliances. The good news is that there are many ways we can become better stewards of creation. By being mindful of our attitudes and making several small changes, we can form better habits. Over time, these new habits will form the basis of a more ecologically-friendly lifestyle. In short, where we start is not the issue; what is essential is that we do start. Recognizing that we need to be a better steward is an important first step. While many of the decisions we make along the way will be small, they all reflect our attitudes, and, over time, shape our lives.



Most Popular Issue Overall: Injustices in the Justice System (March 2010)



A Probation and Parole Officer with the Missouri Department of Corrections interviews a probationer.

Most Popular Article: [What Happens After Prison?](#)

With all the focus on catching people who break the law, it's easy to overlook what happens after people have served their time. Yet with over 700,000 prisoners released from prison each year, what happens after prison has profound implications for justice in our society. [Read more](#)

Other Popular Content in this Issue:

- [Poverty, Wrongful Convictions, the Death Penalty & Legal Representation](#)
- [CNN Video \(about a man who spent 14 years on death row before he was acquitted\)](#)

One of Our Favorites - Linking Relationships to Social Justice (September 2010)

A Healthy Parent-Child Relationship Reduces the Risk of Teenage Pregnancy

According to Parent Power: What Parents Need to Do and Know to Help Prevent Teen Pregnancy:

Overall closeness between parents and their children, shared activities, parental presence in the home, and parental caring and concern are all associated with a reduced risk of early sex and teen pregnancy. Teens who are close to their parents and feel supported by them are more likely to abstain from sex, wait until they are older to begin having sex, have fewer sexual partners....

According to the National Campaign to Prevent Teenage and Unplanned Pregnancy, more than half of teens say that parents or their own morals, values and religious beliefs influence their decisions about sex the most. In addition to helping your child reach their goals and make plans for the future, you can help your teenager avoid becoming pregnant or causing pregnancy by supervising their behavior (however, please note that "very strict" monitoring by parents is actually associated with a greater risk of teenage pregnancy), developing a healthy relationship with your child, communicating your values, including why abstinence is important, talking with your child about sex, dating, love and relationships, discouraging early dating and dating someone who is older, and letting your child know that you value education by setting high expectations about academic performance and limiting activities (such as hours worked at a part-time job) that interfere with school. ([Source, pages 9; 19-22](#))

Let your children know your views about sex, contraception, abortion and teenage pregnancy and



Image is for illustration only

Fathers play an important role in helping their daughters delay sexual activity. Teen girls without fathers are twice as likely to be sexually active at an early age and are seven times more likely to get pregnant than girls whose fathers are present.

([Source](#))

parenthood. According to a recent survey, fewer than five out of ten teens "strongly agreed that they are getting a clear message that teen pregnancy is wrong." ([Source, p. 9](#)) Parents are also more likely to talk about sex with their daughters than with their sons, so remember to talk with all your children.

Tell us what you think!

How can we help show solidarity with others?



Email Br. Warren at jpica@misacor-usa.org.

Please Join Us in Prayer

May our lives be filled with the gifts of faith, hope, and love, both in this Christmas season and in the New Year!



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