JUSTICE
&
PEACE
TRANSLATIONS
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There is a time for action in the field where imagination, efficiency, tenacity, a sense of struggle, alliances with men and women of good will are in the forefront. But there is also a time to live the same reality in a different manner and this is what we call “translations”. In this case we use the word “translation” because we are called to step back from the situation (not necessarily after the fact, for it could be while the action is being implemented), and translate (through words, relationships, celebrations) the lived experienced so that it becomes accessible to all persons, whether they be believers or not, whether they be members of the Order or just “ordinary” Christians.

We have identified three types of translations. There might be moments when all three are at work at the same time, and in other instances there could be only one that is operational. These translations are:

- creation of a milieu
- theological reflection
- practical applications

It is most often at the translation phase that our Dominican identity is the most called upon and strengthened. This is the stage where we step back and look at the situation from the communal, faith, theological, spiritual and liturgical dimensions of our life, in order to evaluate the experience of solidarity that was lived or is in the process of being lived. It is a very important part of the action because it removes us from the danger of activism and allows the true depth of the Justice and Peace experience to shine through.
1. A MILIEU: alliances and conflicts

The actual fact of living a project, or more simply, of living a religious life that is focused on the needs of the poor, the excluded and the victims can be quite demanding, in the sense that it is filled with emotion, fatigue and sharing. In practical terms, action for Justice and Peace means the living out of the project of compassion and mercy that is at the core of the Dominican experience.

Action for the advancement of Justice and Peace, or a religious life focused on the needs of the poor can be verified by comparing it with other lifestyles and other ways of doing things. We do not live in a vacuum, we are not starting with a blank page, we are part of a very complex and often conflictual social reality, where the option for the poor and the marginalized is neither popular nor sought after by the majority. This social reality is both the context in which we find ourselves and the object of our desired transformation or at least evolution.

Differences

The work of Justice and Peace (project and/or religious life) is based on the concept of differentiation, where we simultaneously oppose the status quo and propose alternatives.

Difference with regards to the common social practices:

This consists in going against practices that are not respectful of human rights but have been accepted as the norm, against indifference, lack of analysis and reflection... It is our duty to speak out in protest but also to propose alternatives and new values via a project or a particular lifestyle. We will have to both challenge and propose alternatives. Naturally, it is often easier to denounce than announce. Our actions will always be somewhat modest, fragile and incomplete and will always need to be recognized and respected, even if no one can say that what he/she is doing is the true fulfillment of the gospel. Proposing alternatives means proposing counter-values that are in keeping with the gospel, values that are an integral part of the life of the community.

Difference with regards to the powers in place:

Society needs institutional powers in place in order to function well. It needs rules in order to manage our living together in social sub-groups (sometimes ethnic). The codes of law are the expressions of power as well as the elements that provide objectivity to our life together as a society. These legal prescriptions as much expressions of power as they
are a guarantee against arbitrariness or violence. The law is a fundamental component to include in our reflection on Justice and Peace.

There exists an international law for human rights that covers many issues; why not use these elements to formulate alternative proposals when we see the rules not being respected (see the appendices for more details about this law). We should follow the unfolding of those cases where we know the law is being violated in a specific country and become advocates for the defense of human rights, ensuring that the law is either respected or changed.

For example, the brothers working in Brazil are working with the peasants helping them with their land claims. One of the brothers is a lawyer who actively defends the cause of the peasants. The “Fray Francisco de Vitoria Center“ in Mexico does the same type of work (the methodology they use is outlined in the Appendix). Many of our brothers and sisters in Africa are actively involved in the defense of the rights of prisoners...

Differentiation also occurs in those areas where we fight to defend the rights of the people to participate in the fashioning of their future, by demanding greater participation in the politics of their country, particularly at the local level, by forming unions and demanding democratic governance.

😊 The Casa Campesino in Cuzco is one example where Dominican brothers and sisters provide hospitality for the Peruvian campesinos who come to the city. This house not only provides them with a place to stay at a good price, but also gives them access to tools they can use for their own formation (audiovisual) and lawyers who can answer their questions about their rights (mostly questions pertaining to land rights) and defend them in court. There is even a data base of the official government legislation at the Center.

✍️ Differentiation with regards to certain church behavior:

The implementation of the recommendation made by John Paul II, to give priority to the service of the poor is not always well received by certain members of the Church or even of our communities. If we take these pontifical teachings and gospel invitations seriously, we may be entering into contradiction with certain members of the hierarchy which may result in serious conflicts, difficult to manage.

A life founded on the promotion of Justice and Peace might also require having to speak out against certain practices of the Church where the rights of individuals and groups are not always respected,
even within its own confines. The human side of the Church sometimes leads it astray and it may have to be challenged if God’s plan of making the Church the “beautiful bride” of Christ is to be achieved.

One of the areas which causes pain for several brothers and sisters is the issue of the status of women in the Church. There is also the lack of transparency in the decision-making process in matters affecting the life of the communities and at times an exclusive collaboration with members of the dominating classes... The members may also react when they see that the Church is running the risk of losing credibility in the eyes of the world or deviating from its fundamental mission of proclaiming the good news of salvation.

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### Similarities

The action for Justice and Peace (whether it be in the form of a project or a coherent lifestyle) is articulated and perceived by the similarities it has with other actions, other networks. It is not a phenomenon to be lived in isolation but rather as an encounter of commonalities that are called to become part of the covenancing process.

**Similarities with groups with the same sensitivities:**

The Dominicans are not the only ones to have chosen Justice and Peace as the focal point of their apostolic witness. **Other religious families** have decided to take up the challenge and are demonstrating a great deal of enthusiasm and creativity in their response. Do you know of any such initiatives? Have we invited the leaders to our meetings? Could we work together on specific projects and therefore have an even greater impact on society? Do we keep them informed about what we are doing?

In many countries and dioceses there exist Justice and Peace Commissions, Solidarity Committees... Are we aware of them? Do we work with them? What kind of information do they have? What type of complementarity can we offer one another? Do we participate in National Commissions? Do we communicate the information we receive from these commissions to the other members of the Order? What is our specific contribution to this area of Church life?

There are more and more Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), humanitarian groups and local development groups coming onto the scene. Do we know who they are? What type of actions could we undertake together? Some of the NGOs have a Christian identity; have we approached them? What can we do together? What type of theological or spiritual reflection could we propose? Are there brothers and sisters who could accompany these groups?
Three Adrian Dominican sisters participated in the Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995. It was their way to confront their practices of solidarity with that of other organizations and associations at the international level. Through the various situations and commitments they realized how strong the movement for the advancement of women had become, and was now better understood and respected. They perceived their participation as a way of living in conformity with the charism of the Order made of compassion, study and analysis. It gave them the opportunity to create new relationships and allowed, though modestly, the face of the Church to be present at this international gathering where delegates were not always in agreement with the positions of the Church.

Similarities with socio-political partners:

In all of the countries there exist political groups (more or less organized) that have as their goal a more just social order, associations (more or less formal) that defend human rights and democracy, unions (more or less authorized) that are seeking to promote better economic and social conditions... Do we know any such groups? Who are their leaders? Are there activities that we might be able to carry out together?

Working with these groups can be rather complex at times, because it means associating our religious family with a partisan position. Such associations are very welcome by the members at times but there are other times when the brothers and sisters might have very different opinions and do not wish to collaborate with such groups. A great deal of discussion is required to overcome such situations... but sometimes it is necessary if we want to be true to our faith in a Gospel that implies community.

Dominican brothers and sisters have been working for many years in the Chiapas region of Mexico where Bartolomeo de Las Casas was the first bishop, a very poor region where there is great inequality. In the beginning of 1994, an insurrection broke out that lead to an armed conflict between the Zapatista National Liberation Movement (composed of indigenous people) and the Mexican army. The insurgents demanded justice, a democratic regime and an agrarian reform. The brothers and sisters were accused of consorting with the leaders of the Zapatista army and received death threats from local government officials and the wealthy people of the region, because of the work they did with the native people.
and because they defended them in their claim for justice and for the respect of their local culture and values. The brothers and sisters head up the Center for Human Rights of the diocese and know well the problems of the region.

Dom Ruiz, the bishop of Chiapas, was appointed by the Zapatistas to be the mediator between themselves and the government. He was chosen because of this commitment to the poor and because of his integrity. Dom Ruiz carried out his task in the midst of severe difficulties (violence, threats ...) and was able to successfully set up a peace process.

During this time, the people guarded his house at night, held special prayer vigils, organized processions... The brothers and sisters participated in all of these actions with the other pastoral agents of the diocese and many assisted the bishop in the theological and pastoral reflection process.

Collaboration with the State and administrators raises the same problems as identified in the preceding section. It is not always desirable, but can be very helpful in some instances and allow greater effectiveness. To be placed under the tutelage of the State could become dangerous in the long run. Collaboration with the State to obtain grants, the permission to intervene, protection, or certain advantages must be thought out thoroughly through analysis and debate before making any commitments.

Similarities at the international level:

We have already talked about the networks within the Order for brothers and sisters working in areas and dealing with issues where justice and peace is not respected (Workbook 1) can share information. There exist many international networks throughout the world, of either Christian or secular origin. Participation in such networks is a good thing and should be encouraged.

Participation in such networks gives us access to information about problems that the network must deal with and provides elements of solutions. These networks allow for the expression of different viewpoints and open the participants to the broader picture. They help local initiatives with by bringing to them synergistic energy and the credibility of a more widespread. They also offer an opportunity to present the creativity of our religious family and the power that comes from Scripture.

Sisters and brothers are involved in many such networks; The International Forum of Religious for Global Solidarity, Chrétiens-Sida (AIDS), SOS-Torture... The following are two examples among others:
- The Coalición contra el tráfico de Mujeres network brings together (under different names) all of those groups working against prostitution, sex tourism, the traffic of persons for prostitution, pornography and sexual exploitation. This network has been most effective in defending the victims of this type of violence and for advancing legislation against this form of slavery. (Suite 406, Victoria Plaza, 4a Annapolis, Greenhills, Metro Manila, Philippines; or Urb. Montalban Res. Ustar E-2, Apto 12, Final calle 12 C/2d Avenida, Caracas, Venezuela).

- The Réseau Eglise et Paix is a European network. It is ecumenical and is composed of Churches, communities and associations...that believe that the testimony of peace is one of the essential elements of the Church of Jesus Christ. It exchanges information and promotes actions in favor of the civil service (non-military), and helps in the training of mediators for conflict resolution and the pedagogy of peace...(16 rue Simonis, 67100 Strasbourg).

If you belong to or know of any international networks that you believe would help to mobilize the brothers and sisters of the Order, please send us the information so we can pass it on.
Our concerns for Justice and Peace are rooted in our Dominican tradition (see Workbook 1), but they extend further than that, they reach out to all men and women of good will, to thinkers as well as to practitioners. We acknowledge our work together over time; we recognize our affiliations with them. Our commitment to Justice and Peace can be approached from both the diachronic and the traditional perspectives.

We have already identified our spiritual affiliations within the tradition of our Order (Workbook 1) whereby we are invited to do the work of Justice and Peace as one of the fundamental axes of our religious life. We have numerous affiliations within the Church (Workbook 2): the Fathers from the fourth to the sixth century, the Church’s Social Doctrine... This reference to the past helps us to situate our action for Justice and Peace within the Dominican tradition: preaching a Good News that liberates.

Our spiritual affiliations do not have to be limited to the Order, they can open us up to new and expanded horizons such as love for all of creation, belief in life... Within this perspective rests a whole ecumenical debate that must be promoted not only with the Christian churches but with the different spiritualities such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam... and some of the newer ones that are part of the New Age Movement.

The ecumenical debate on the theme of “Justice, Peace and Creation” is particularly important and some headway has already been made in this area, especially at the Seoul Conference in 1990, and within the regional conferences. We must confront our commitment to Justice and Peace with what is happening in the other churches.

The Chapter of Caleruega says: “We ask those Dominicans working with other religions to work together with them to develop common projects in the area of human rights and the fight against poverty.” (recommendations 14, II).

We also have intellectual affiliations that invite us to enter into the broader social movement. Every country has its tradition of people militating in favor of Justice and Peace who are prepared to do all in their power to protect creation and uphold equality of the sexes. It is important as Dominicans that our actions dovetail with that of these men and women of conviction. What are the common concerns we share with them in Justice and Peace? What are the differences? What
kind of collaboration can we have together? How can the ideas of these men and women enrich our theological concepts?

Looking at some well known figures might help us; St. Martin, M. K. Ghandi, M. Luther King, Rigoberta Menchu, Henri Dunant, Dag Hammerskjold, Oscar Romeo... We all know many more, especially those from our own country and culture (see Appendices). It is important that we be open to non-Dominican experiences, so that we can re-situate our contribution among those made by the many men and women of good will in this world. It would be beneficial to present these models during the process of initial and ongoing formation, as a means to focus on the areas of convergence and differences between our commitment and theirs.

Example of an action: The Latin American Agenda
This agenda has been published in several languages (French, English, Spanish, Portuguese) since 1992, and everyday presents us with the special anniversaries that celebrate human rights, special people who fought to defend human rights in Latin America, and give spiritual and political texts. The agenda also presents different movements, new pedagogical tools. We might want to purchase it (Comité Chrétien pour les droits humains en Amérique Latine, Montreal H2P 1S6, Quebec) or make an adapted version for you own milieu.

Taking A Stand

When a person truly decides to live a process of Justice and Peace it is certain that a time will come when he/she will have to take sides against some and in favor of others. This often places the person in the media spotlight particularly with the press where the reporters are always looking for new conflicts and inter-church rivalries. These tensions (at times despite ourselves) can sometimes lead us to become part of the trends happening in civil society that place us in a difficult position vis-à-vis the political authorities.

Our stands not only affect those brothers and sisters committed to the cause, but has a bearing on the life of the entire congregation. A good example of this is the famous preaching of Montesinos in 1511, on the soul of the Indians, which the whole community made its own as did the brothers who were involved in a more academic manner in Salamanca.

This requires that there be excellent communication within the Order, beginning with our congregations and provinces, for we are all interdependent. The regional promoters (cf. list in appendices to Workbook 1) have an important role to play in coordinating this effort.
The problem of taking a corporate stand, signing petitions, making public statements on issues of Justice and Peace is always a very delicate matter, for it involves the whole Order and not just the signatories. This interdependence can irritate some of the members who do not necessarily share the same opinion. This problem is dealt with in LCO 139 of the Constitutions of the brothers and in the Ratio Generalis (appendix III). Taking a corporate stance requires serious debate at the congregational and provincial levels.

An important personality: Dominique Pire.

Dominique Pire was born in Belgium in 1910 and became a Dominican in 1939. After having done some of the more classic ministries and having been a professor, he discovered the plight of the displaced people and refugees of Eastern Europe, as a result of the Second World War. These are the words he used to describe his discovery. "It was not the refugees who came to me, nor did I seek them out. It was a Dominican with no spokesperson for my theology circle. That is how it all began. I was looking for a spokesperson. A point man came forward. Who sent him? Then he went away. He had not asked us to resolve the problem, but we all felt it would be impossible for us to remain indifferent.

He began by founding a movement that spread across Europe, in aid of the people in the refugee camps and those displaced as a result of the war. The movement poured out sending packages, delivering letters.
and making visits. D. Pire did not want to limit his actions to Christians or to a specific sector of the population; his desire was to help all of those who were considered lost, useless, good for nothing. He abundantly used the media to keep the Europeans aware of a situation they would have preferred to forget. He was very successful and moved the people to want to give generously and to help.

D. Pire opened several centers to provide a place to stay for those who had nowhere to turn to, those who were sick or too elderly to go to another country. Later on, he would create what is called, “The European Villages” where refugees and their families were treated with dignity and where the surroundings were conducive to integrating them into society. This action led to the reconciliation of enemies as more and more people accepted to help. D. Pire had a dream, he wanted to create a “Europe with a Heart.”

In 1959 he received the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition for all of his efforts. These are the words he used to explain his commitment to the refugees: “Every human is of infinite value and deserves to be treated with respect and love, first of all because he/she is human, secondly because he/she has been labeled as useless and finally because he/she is unhappy.”

In 1960, D. Pire founded the “University of Peace” in Belgium. The goal of this school was to train young people from all over the world in the techniques of dialogue and conflict resolution. By dealing with the cause of the refugee problem, the University complemented the work of solidarity with the displaced persons and the victims of conflict. D. Pire was convinced of the power of dialogue and the mutual transformation that was the result of true, meaningful encounters with one another. This, he believed, was one of the fundamental dimensions in order to build peace.

In 1962, D. Pire continued his work in a more extensive manner when he founded in Pakistan the first “Island of Peace”, with a second one soon to follow in India in 1967. In these so called “Islands”, the inhabitants received help for a period (5 or 6 years); they learned how to take care of their own needs and how to take initiatives. The idea was to work with the people, not to do things for them or to talk down at them.

D. Pire worked out of the strong conviction that, “the best way to live peace, to respect one another, to love one another was to remember our common denominator which carries a magnificent name: our ‘humaneness’. We must learn to give all humans their true value, their infinite value.” In the name of these convictions D. Pire took a public stand on the war in Vietnam, Beirut, the Middle East. He organized a solidarity movement with those who fled Czechoslovakia after the invasion of Prague.

D. Pire died on January 30, 1969. He had fixed his greatest ambition to be “the voice of the voiceless.”
Living the dynamic of Justice and Peace, whether it is by way of a specific project or through a religious life structured around an option of solidarity with the voiceless or those in need, brings a renewed and more in-depth understanding of the people around us, their language, questions, hopes and concerns. This understanding becomes ‘the theological foundation’ for the work of inculturation of the Word of God and of the living Church. The action itself puts us in contact with the new questions that arise, which in turn serve to nurture our theological reflection and faith practices.

It is important that we set in place an intellectual process based on the lived reality of the people with whom we are doing the project. This enables us to pick up on the theological questions and those elements that challenge our faith and our Christian practices. Although theological reflection done from a Justice and Peace perspective can include many different aspects, it must always give first priority to an inductive process and ensure the active participation of those directly concerned.

“A call to mission makes us aware of the need for competence and truth in this dialogue. We should enter into dialogue with the many forces that threaten the future of our planet: systems of oppression, degrading attitudes, lack of concern for the environment... This calls for an attitude of contemplation, intellectual work, social adaptation, personal flexibility, prophetic courage and the will to collaborate with others.”

(Common Novitiate of the Dominican sisters of the USA.)

A theological process that is inscribed in the concern for Justice and Peace is not merely a theology dealing with social and political issues, but rather a new way of doing theology and studies in general.

“Yet, it is not enough just to see these places of human suffering, and to be the tourists of the world’s crucifixion. These are places in which Theology is to be done. It is in these places of Calvary that God may be met and a new word of hope discovered... So then, we must dare to see what is being lived before our eyes; we must believe that it is where God seems most distant and where human beings are tempted to despair that theology may be done,”

It is urgent that we, the members of the Dominican family, develop a theological reflection based on actions and options of solidarity with the poor, the excluded, those men and women suffering humiliation. This reflection should enable us to preach in a manner that touches those who are suffering so that we can bring an element of hope to their life, by revealing to them God’s love and the caring attitude of the Church.

This reflection has already begun on the different continents where the Order is present, it flows from the economic, social, cultural and religious realities experienced by the brothers and sisters living there. The bibliography that figures in the appendix of Workbook #5 could be of assistance to those looking for help in this area, although the work that is in process is vaster and extends far beyond the suggestions listed there.

The theological dimension of the work of Justice and Peace, without which there could be no true Dominican process, requires that we give serious consideration to the following questions:

- who is at the origin of my theological questioning?
- for whom am I doing this theological work?
- with whom can I work and validate my affirmations or the relevance of my questions?
- how am I going to make my work readable and understandable for those who are at the origin of my questioning?

How do I go about getting the questions to emerge? What methodology should I use? This might be a good opportunity to begin a discussion with the Justice and Peace promoters, the directors of studies, and the directors of formation of different provinces and congregations. Frequent meetings between those responsible for studies and those responsible for Justice and Peace promotion can be an excellent means to make known (inserted into the spiritual and intellectual life of the brothers and sisters), the problems that face the poor and the victims.
Obviously, there are always initial questions and a certain amount of theorization that takes place at the beginning of any Justice and Peace project or of a specific orientation of religious life; however as time goes by and the project evolves new questions emerge to replace the former. The intellectual process is a permanent one; theology is always in motion and is one of the main “catalysts” of this movement.

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<th>What is the impact of Justice and Peace on our theological work? In what way does it renew it?</th>
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<td>- in the sense of new themes that flow from the daily activities and concerns of the people</td>
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<td>- in the degree of importance given to mercy and fraternity, to a God who loves men and women and who seeks to enter into close relationship with them.</td>
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<td>- in the practical awareness of a universe filled with conflict and tension, inhabited by people who are strong and others who are weak, where it is difficult to build consensus</td>
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<td>- in the decision to take sides with the oppressed and the voice-less</td>
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<td>- in keeping hope and affirming that there still is a place for actions that enhance the human dimension of our being.</td>
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In Mexico City, at their chapter on Preaching n° 66, the brothers wrote: "Theological reflection will be nurtured by mercy and will avoid making the conventual life a refuge from the challenges and demands of reality."

By accepting to confront the experiences of the poor and the victims of violence, theology opens itself to a whole series of new possibilities, new issues, new challenges. Those brothers and sisters who have already committed themselves to this way of life have made proposals that must be made known to the entire Dominican family.

One of the first aspects of this theological research is the emphasis placed on the inductive and contextual approach, on the need for inculturation. We must begin with the questions that the people are asking themselves, the situations they are living and their way of articulating these realities. There are several publications that are put out by the brothers and sisters that fit well into this process and can be of help to us in our reflection: for example, Alternatives (Nicaragua), Justitia (Philippines)… This new type of work must promote dialogue and the debate ("disputatio") as a theological tool that can serve to elaborate as well as resituate the results.

The communal aspect of this theological reflection is an important factor although it can sometimes be difficult to do, particularly for those who are not in the habit of working with others. There are methods that exist to help people learn how to work together and to be
intellectually “productive” (brainstorming, commissions, methods of “forecasting”, panels). If you know of other methods that you think might be useful, please send them to us and we will make sure they get circulated as broadly as possible!

Here is one example among many to prove that this is possible: In March 1996, in Santiago, Chile, approximately 40 brothers and sisters from Latin America and Europe met to study the question: “Is there any hope for the oppressed cultures?” They organized their meeting to function like a task force. The goal of their meeting together was to do some analysis and to make proposals. Over the past ten years they have continued to meet on a regular basis to pursue their collective research.

Humans sciences play an important role in the reflection process around issues of Justice and Peace: economics, sociology, law and political science (this is provided for in the Ratio Studiorum Generalis of the brothers in n° 14). These different approaches allow us to get a better understanding of the situations and the forces at work, but they can also be useful to help us ground our theological and spiritual discourse in those issues that touch the lives of the people. This would be good for the brothers and sisters in initial or ongoing formation and might be a good objective to be pursued by the Justice and Peace promoters. For support in this area we can turn to the writings of L.J. Lebret (see Workbook 1), on the expertise accumulated by the Las Casas Center in Cuzco or by the Songhai Center in Benin (see Workbook 1)...

Humans sciences can also help us out of our erroneous beliefs that Western culture is universal. Anthropological and cultural research are elements that can help rethink the relationship between humans and nature, gender relationships, the sense of freedom ... The work of inculturation done by our brothers and sisters in Africa is invaluable to us. Are you aware of this research? Are the newer members informed during the period of initial formation about the existence of this theological trend?

"Pentecote d'Afrique" is a review put out by the brothers of Cotonou in Benin. The goal of this monthly publication is to describe experiences of consecrated life encountered within the African context. Every issue has a theme and is an occasion to do theological research based on very practical aspects of religious life as it is lived in Africa and on the problems the brothers and sisters must face.
Again similar reviews exist elsewhere; *Alternativas* (Nicaragua), *Justitia* (Philippines), Coban publishers, CBC in Cuzco... These publications do the same type of work of inculturation rooted within the cultural context. Do we subscribe to these publications? Do we have them in our libraries? Do we use them?

There is a long list of questions related to Justice and Peace that must be taken up when doing the work of theology. The following are just a few of these issues:
- the meaning of evil and of suffering at the social and individual level,
- the notion of the structure of sin or the collective dimension of sin.
- the relationship between living beings and creation, the cosmos, nature.
- the importance given to gender (men and women) in theology, in our understanding of Scripture.
- the promotion of human dignity as related to the biological problems, nuclear violence and the globalization of the economy.
- the contemporary meaning of liberation: what are the new idols?
- the place of indignation, revolt, choosing sides (being partisan), taking risks... in the gospel message.
- the importance of reconciliation and conflict for true peace-making.
- the role of prayer, of spirituality and of wonderment in a materialistic society.

The Justice and Peace process also has repercussions on our ecclesiological reflection. What is the place of the poor: are they merely subjects of conversation or are they considered to be people who have a right to be heard? How can we bring the poor into the Church and let go of our assistential approach? How can we have them participate in our liturgies and in our catechetics? Can the poor understand our vocabulary?

*The CEPE (Tito de Alencar Lima Ecumenical Center for Publications and Studies) in Praça da Se (Brazil) is responsible for a house for the street kids and does socio-political formation with the militants... they have also worked on updating a catechetics program to the needs of the people which focuses on taking responsibility for promoting social change.*

This process also calls for a reconsideration of the vows, which take on their full meaning when they help us come closer to the men and women who are broken by life and history and when we accept to live the struggle of compassion and solidarity with them.

This approach will certainly have consequences for our centers of initial formation and specialized training. What have we done, in...
all honesty, with the recommendations contained in the *Ratio Studiorum Generalis* on Justice and Peace (14, IV)? Once again we see the necessity of having the formation directors and the Justice and Peace promoters meet together to discuss these issues so that the advances we have made can be integrated and become a "natural" component of our lives.

Theological reflection on Justice and Peace issues has a place in the more specialized types of workshops, in sessions of continuing formation, in the seminars organized by and for the brothers and sisters doing hands-on work, colloquia ... Why not tell us about some of the more important realizations that have happened in this area in your province or congregation. We would really be appreciative if you did!

**A Model: Albert Nolan and the Institute of Contextual Theology in South Africa.**

A. Nolan entered the Order in 1954 in South Africa. At that time he had a passion for studies and a "preaching" enlightened by study. He did his classical Thomistic studies and received a Doctorate degree from the Angelicum in Rome. Over the next twenty years he exercised a variety of ministries: director of youth movements in Catholic Action, professor of theology, father-master, prior, provincial...

Things started to change in the 1980's when all of the people of Christian faith in South Africa found themselves confronted with the terrible questions related to apartheid, poverty of the masses, injustice and institutionalized violence. Friar Albert became involved because of his involvement with youth.

What does one do when faced with such widespread injustice? What does one say to those Christians who are troubled in the face of the pressure exerted on them by the leaders, who would have them obey the policies of this racist state? What does one say to the faithful who suffer the repercussions of such cruel oppression? What does one think about reacting with violence to a situation where the exercise of power is itself imposed through violence?

Little by little as the demands made upon him became greater, Fr. Albert and a few others came to the realization that theology would have to be rewritten based on the questions of the people. "Very often," says Fr. Albert, "we wear ourselves out giving answers to questions the people are not asking. In such situations we take more time explaining the question than giving the answer. By so doing, we take no interest in the real questions being asked by Christians today, questions that touch upon issues of poverty, racism, the legitimacy of armed struggle..."
The specific role of the theology is to provide tools for the analysis and a better understanding of the situation, so that together they can find answers to the questions believers are asking. The name given to this methodology is "contextual theology."

In 1981, the Institute of Contextual Theology (ICT) was created. The goal of the Institute is to use the above mentioned method to answer from an ecumenical and multi-racial perspective, the questions of Christians about apartheid. Fr. Albert joined the team in 1984, but had to go into hiding for several months because the authorities consider this work to be highly subversive.

The method quickly spread and was taken up by the Christians involved in the fight against apartheid. In 1985, a group of Christians from the Institute published a document called the Kairus Document, which in time became the manifesto of the ICT, and is used as a reference document for many Christians throughout the world in their search to bring together Christian faith and social justice.

Next to the ICT was formed the ISH, specializing in training people to the reading of Scripture from a contextual perspective.

Fr. Nolan has published many books on this method and has given numerous workshops in his own country and abroad.

Today, Fr. Albert works in the area of social communications. He is in charge of the publication of a very well known review that comes out of the ICT, dealing with the major issues facing the people. Albert feels that this review is a most effective way to reach the people in their struggles and their difficulties.


ICT News, POB 32047, Broomfontein 2017, Johannesburg, South Africa; fax (27) 11 559 37 64.
3. PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Taking sides with the poor, the excluded, the victims of violence, not only leads to the renewal of our theological practices, but also affects our other practices, such as: esthetics, ethics, liturgy... Justice and Peace must have an effect on these different areas of our life in order to come to fruition, it cannot be limited to practices of social action or to remaining simply an "ideological" discourse.

Ethical Practices

Ethics consist in a group of values that are present in one's conscience and are capable of being directly applied and formulated around an understanding of the human being which takes into account the uniqueness of the person.

In order to do the work of ethics;
- we must be conscious of these values and make a deliberate choice about them,
- be attentive to the concept of the human person expressed by them,
- make certain that these values guide us in our decisions and actions.

When we look at Justice and Peace and its relationship with the ethical dimension of our religious life, we see that it is an invitation to question our lifestyle so that we can rediscover the real meaning of religious life, which is the art of Christian living.

Our level of life consists of the quantity of goods and services that we can purchase in exchange for our revenue. Our type of life or lifestyle consists of the manner in which these goods and services are chosen, whether they are used or not. Lifestyle is the result of an ethical decision, of a choice of consumer goods that symbolically and culturally associate us to one or the other social groups, and this whether we want it or not.

Our community option for Justice and Peace is most often manifested by a lifestyle that is both frugal and simple. When we say frugal, we mean a life where we minimize waste and give priority to recycling... Such a choice rests on ecological options and on the decision to live the situation of the poor who have no other alternative than to practice this type of lifestyle because of their lack of revenue.

The majority of the Constitutions of the Congregations of men and women religious recommend that we live a simple and modest lifestyle (LCO 33,34,37). At their chapter in Mexico the brothers said:
“Our goods should not create a barrier between us and those most in need. Our compassion compels us to share their struggles and their means of livelihood.” (Mexico 66, B 26).

In their constitutions the Dominican sisters insist on the coherence that must exist between the way we manage our goods and our option for Justice and Peace. The following are two examples among others.

*The financial administration of material goods should be a practical exercise of Justice and poverty... The alms that we receive from the hands of the poor should lead us to live a lifestyle that is coherent with the Gospel, living like the poor...*” (Dominican Sisters of St. Thomas in Mexico, Constitution n° 298)

“Communities should compare their resources with those of the poor. Our solidarity with the poor should be a reality that we live through a certain renunciation which is one form of compassion. We should also be fair with our employees (just salaries, food, dignified life, lawful working hours...)” (Missionary Sisters of St. Dominic)

The choice of a simple lifestyle in view of greater proximity with the poor leads to a number of choices in the investments made by the community, in its buildings, modes of transportation... However this does not exclude good taste and the desire to be as efficient as possible. It also leads to choices in the area of apostolic ministry, the way we use our time, our network of relationships... There are many important issues here that could be decided at the various chapters. Justice and Peace promoters have an important role to play in these decisions; their role is that of initiator, catalyst.

“The economic reality of the congregation, made known through the various documents from the provinces, makes it possible for the General Chapter to give financial reality its place within the lived experience of the members, to take decisions and reflect on our responsibility today. When faced with issues such as unemployment, insecurity and poverty, the general chapter must ask how we can reconcile responsible stewardship and gospel risk. Our relationship with money should be translated by:
- a simple lifestyle lived within the context of our consumer society,
- solidarity with others lived within the context of an individualistic society,
- the sense of gratuitousness within a context of greed,
- demands of justice when confronted with situations of poverty.
The General Chapter asks that the local communities and the provinces reflect on the place they give to these values when they establish their budgets. The General Chapter proposes the following questions be reflected upon by the provinces:
- in what way can we exercise solidarity in a world where there are not enough jobs for everyone?
- how do we deal with the many requests for volunteer work and pastoral ministry for which we receive little remuneration and still have the necessary means to live?
- in what way are our goods at the service of life and of the mission?
- does the world situation lead to a new way for us to see the vow of poverty? (Roman Congregation of St. Dominic, general chapter 1993).

A very original approach has been adopted by some communities (particularly women's communities in the USA), which consists in having a special committee to monitor the ethical nature of the investments of the congregation.

In 1974, the Adrian Dominicans created the PAB (Portfolio Advisory Board), whose responsibility was to evaluate the investments of the congregation based on gospel criteria. In 1978, a complementary fund was set up to provide the possibility of making loans at a very low interest rate to NGOs working with the poor, especially those working with women, minorities or in very precarious situations. Since then, 131 projects have received funding. The PAB is composed of a committee of sisters who are responsible for ensuring that the money loaned from the fund is given for projects that respect the main objectives of the congregation. The sisters also participate in the ICCR (Interfaith Center for Corporate Responsibility), an organization at the service of more than 200 ecumenical religious associations in the USA. The ICCR helps the congregations communicate their point of view and makes sure that it is heard at the shareholders' meetings of the large corporations in which they invest their money. Their goal is to make sure that the employees have good working conditions, that the company respects environmental laws and that there are just social practices in place... The sisters have participated in boycotts of those companies that go against the principles of justice and peace.
In 1982, the Dominican sisters of San Rafael created a "committee for just social investments" whose responsibility was to evaluate the investment policy of the congregation. They too have set up a fund for alternative investments (for socially-oriented NGOs) and a fund to assist the sisters working in the area of Justice and Peace, they provide scholarships for students who do not have the means to pay for their studies. They give financial assistance to programs that promote actions in favor of Justice and Peace and help through international and local projects.

The ethical practices involved in our Justice and Peace options can also be used in the context of our apostolates or of our presence within society. We are today in dire need of ethical reflection and deeply require a few points of reference. This "search" for meaning is an opportunity for Christians to play an active role, by putting forth within the context of this social debate some of their fundamental values. This is a place where we, the brothers and sisters, can become involved.

The following is a model of a process for ethical reflection.
1. Consider the fact that there are many possibilities inherent in every situation or issue. That there exist spaces of freedom and constraints that are more or less meaningful and inevitable.
2. Be as thorough as possible in your research about every possible consequence imaginable.
3. Identify the values that support each one of the possible choices as well as the conflict of values inherent to the solutions.
4. Take a decision that is consistent with the hierarchy of values identified in the previous steps.
Among the different areas of ethical reflection we find Social Ethics. Social Ethics is an area that should be of special interest, particularly for those developing a commitment for Justice and Peace. It seeks to define the criteria for judgment and for decision-making on issues touching upon the future of a nation or of a specific social group. It invites us to reflect on military expenditures, national security (and nationalism), on the rights of workers, (strikes, negotiations), unemployment, economic policies, public solidarity, social protection... All of these areas of reflection should be a mobilizing force that brings us together for both the reflection and the implementation process.

Reflecting on issues of Social Ethics, particularly in developing countries, is a good way to promote an ethic of responsibility. The example of Songhai given in workbook #1 is very significant for it tells us that we must preach by example and shows that alternatives are possible. This example is particularly meaningful today, when all Christians find themselves confronted with the urgency to take up the fight against unemployment as well as economic and social exclusion. There is a felt need to counteract by offering innovative structures promoting employment and remunerated activities.

In those countries that have recently experienced civil war or strong revolutionary situations, the brothers and sisters present are called to be agents of reconciliation, forgiveness...and of truth. There are times when they are called upon to act as mediators as was the case in Chiapas... Although these situations are particularly difficult to live, they help us rediscover the strength of mercy, the place where justice and peace embrace. Social Ethics should inform us in our search for answers. Training courses in mediation do exist... are we aware of them?

Liturgical Practices

The liturgy also plays a role in the "translation" of Justice and Peace, for it is the act of offering to God the work and struggles of those men and women who have committed themselves to building a more just and loving world. It is also the place where the Church enters into direct contact with the difficulties of the people, with the real concerns of the men and women to whom it has been sent to bring the Good News.

There are numerous examples of brothers and sisters throughout the world who have taken up the struggle to condemn outrightly injustice and violence. By so doing they have been able to present their hopes and achievements to the Lord and to the Christian community. Workbook 5 will deal with this form of liturgical practice, of its
Chuck works in a parish in Chicago where there are many gangs and a great deal of violence. These gangs are always looking for new members who are not afraid to kill, who take drugs and are willing to deal drugs on the street. The level of violence and the number of murder are extremely high. Chuck and his parishioners decided to take action. With the consent of the local authorities, they called upon the people of the neighborhood to bring in all of the guns, assuring them that those who accepted to collaborate would be given impunity. They asked the local police to step up protection, particularly the protection of youth. They went as far as to organize a campaign against the drug dealers. They set up a center to help the young people who wanted to change their ways to learn to control themselves and thus free themselves from the infernal spiral of violence. They also provide legal counsel for the accused and the victims.

Chuck and his friends go out into the streets to celebrate the Eucharist. They go for the funeral mass to the places where people were killed. Celebrating the Eucharist in these places of violence makes it clear that they must stop killing and hurting each other and learn to be more understanding and tolerant. The liturgy is a privileged time to ask forgiveness and to begin to walk the path of conversion. It is a time to reflect on our actions and to put an end to violence and death. These celebrations bring together the people of the neighborhood and give them the opportunity to reflect on the chaos that surrounds them ... The violence of our youth is like a plague, it is almost impossible to be freed from its clutches. The only way out is through the profound transformation of the life of the entire community.

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**Esthetical practices**

The fight for beauty, already existent in liturgical practices, is an inherent part of the work of Justice and Peace. In Workbook #1, we had the example of Friar J.P. in Mexico and the way he went about his ministry with the street kids. Similar examples have been initiated by the Adrian Sisters of the USA. When we analyze the works of Fra Angelico we see his concerns are very much like the ones put forth in these workbooks: for example, the place of women.
It would be important to communicate these types of experiences to the members of the Order. Art is a very important source of support, for it allows us to communicate to men and women the existence of a place of gratuitousness, a sacred place. In a world that has lost faith, art becomes a school of spirituality that provides us with the means to enter into the experience of creation and be touched by beauty.

The Ak'kutan Center of Coban in Guatemala

The Ak'kutan Center was created in Verapaz Guatemala and was the result of the experience of the Dominican brothers and sisters of the region, who for twenty years had evangelized and lived a life of solidarity with the poor. The event that was the catalyst for the center was a colloquium held in 1988 to reflect on the genocide in which the indigenous peoples were the victims.

The Center officially opening its doors at the end of 1991. Their first task was to write a book recounting the experience of solidarity with the Indigenous people as lived by the Dominicans of the region. Since then, they have set in place a publishing house where they produce numerous books through which they introduce, to a varied audience of readers, the culture of the indigenous peoples (quiche, pokomchi, achi, maya...), along with research and a methodology for presenting faith within the context of local reality. The center also has a large library that is open to all types of pastoral ministries.

The Ak'kutan Center specializes in the inculturation of faith and the defense of indigenous cultures. The center is open to all those who want to do this type of research, so that faith will be integrated into the culture of the poor. The center is particularly concerned with helping the pastoral agents of the dioceses. They also do research on the theology of the different Churches and on the "seeds of the Word" existent in the various cultures.

They bring together the brothers and sisters of the region and are doing their best to involve the laity. They make every effort to live in accordance with the local culture.

Ak'kutan, through its work on inculturation, was lead to adapt the liturgy to the local practices of the Indigenous people and to make proposals for various Christian celebrations (see the study done on "Evangelio y culturas en Verapaz," 1994).

Ak'kutan studied all the facets of the culture of the Maya people (art, stories, celebrations ...), with the goal of making this culture known to others and to defend it in the face of the phenomenon of the globalization of the economy and of culture that we are experiencing in our modern times. These cultures are a heritage left to all people and are a great contribution to our universal culture as well as to the process of humanization.
Preliminary Conclusions

The specific goal of workbook 4 was to look at the different ways that some of us live our option for Justice and Peace. Participation within a specific social context, the work of theology, the various ethical and liturgical practices are all different aspects of the Justice and Peace process.

The act of taking sides with the victims, the poor and the voiceless almost always leads to the transformation of the religious life of the sister or brother. In many cases it also gives the person the opportunity to rediscover the reason why he/she accepted to allow him/herself to be seduced by the Gospel and why they chose to follow in the footsteps of St. Dominic. The action of Justice and Peace is not reserved to a small portion of our life. On the contrary, it is life lived to the fullest by our openness to those who are poor and humiliated by life, there where the Lord is truly present. In this way, Justice and Peace is a true school of spirituality.

In the next workbook we will focus on the ongoing process of evaluation that is so necessary for us to do so, as not to lose sight of our objectives, and even more important, not to lose sight of the spiritual dimension which is itself the very core of our action.
A milieu: alliances and conflicts ........................................ p.5
Re-reading theology .............................................................. p.15
Practical applications ............................................................ p.22
Conclusions .............................................................. p. 29
SOME OUTSTANDING PERSONALITIES

Saint MARTIN

St. Martin was born in Hungary in the year 336. Like his father, Martin joined the military. He became a catechumen during his stay in France. One day in Amiens he came across a poor man who was freezing in the cold damp weather; he took his cloak and gave it to him. This act of kindness was told to the people and Martin became known as a model of charity. In his biography we read of a vision he had where Jesus had spoken to him and said: "Martin who is but a catechumen covered me with his cloak and followed my words, 'each time you do this to the least of your brothers/sisters, you have done it unto me'."

He was baptized in Amiens (France) after which he traveled throughout all of Europe. He returned to Gaul (France) and founded the first monastery of Gaul in the year 360 in Ligugé, upon the advice of Hilary of Poitiers. He lived a very frugal life but had a great impact on the people. Thanks to Martin, this first monastery grew in numbers as it became well known for its holiness. Martin was a great contemplative who knew how to share his passion for prayer with others.

Many miracles have been attributed to him as concrete manifestations of both his love for the little ones, the victims and his deep spiritual life. The people were convinced he was a saint and "kidnapped" him from his monastery to make him the bishop of Tours in the year 371. The other bishops were against this, for they considered him to be a strange, uneducated monk. He founded the new monastery of Marmoutier near Tours which flourished rapidly and founded an order for the evangelization of the region. Martin was a very persuasive speaker. He knew exactly what to say to the working classes to release them from the clutches of paganism; he also knew what to say to the noblemen and prelates of his time and was not afraid to call them to practice the Gospel.

He died in the year 397, a model of the contemplative life, of charity and of evangelization. People came to know him through his biographer, Sulpicius Severus.

GANDHI

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born 2 October 1869, on the west coast of India. He belonged to a caste of merchants although some members of his family were involved in regional politics. He was brought up in the Hindu tradition. He married when he was twelve and five years later left to study law in England. In 1891, he set up his law practice in Bombay, and in 1893 emigrated to South Africa where he lived until 1914. In 1894, he founded the Indian Congress of Natal to defend the humiliated and ostracized Indian people living in South Africa.
It was during this time that he studied the Bhagavad and the Gospel, (particularly the Sermon on the Mount) and became an adept of non-violence, as a religious and political process. He used non-violent techniques to defend his claims as early as 1906.

Gandhi's spiritual search led him to lead a life of non-violence and of service to the humble members of society. He made no distinction between the spiritual and social dimensions of our life, and by so doing made a deep commitment to the advancement of Justice and Peace.

The non-violence practiced by Gandhi, known as the satyagraha technique, does not consist of pacifism or a state of passive resignation in the face of the enemy. The technique consists in adopting an active attitude of love, of resistance to situations of injustice, of opposition to evil, of disobedience to unjust and unfair laws in a non-violent manner. The satyagraha calls for great strength of soul, for one must be careful not to fall into the trap of vengeance and the cycle of violence.

In 1914, he returned to India after having fought for his principles in South Africa. He was convinced that he had a mission: to spread truth and non-violence throughout all the world as a way to counteract violence and lies.

Upon his return he made the commitment to fight against British imperialism and thus bring about the political and spiritual independence of his country. In 1915, he founded his first ashram and began to travel throughout the country to sensitize the people, particularly the poor, for he realized what a source of strength they were for the country. Gandhi began by organizing campaigns of civil disobedience to the unjust laws passed by the British, followed by campaigns of non-cooperation... all of these non-violent actions served to de-stabilize the economy and the colonial administration. His most famous campaigns were the ‘salt campaign’ against the English monopoly and the ‘textile campaign’ against importing foreign textiles. In the latter campaign Gandhi became the apostle of the “khadi,” the mills where the locally grown cotton was spun into thread.

Gandhi was an active participant in the negotiations that would give India a more favorable constitution and that eventually would lead to the independence of the country in 1947. He never hesitated to risk his life, fasting almost to the point of death. In his struggle for independence he had numerous misunderstandings with the political leaders who were unable to dismiss him; they needed him because of his enormous popularity with the poor, even though they had to resort to violence.

Gandhi was very concerned with the peaceful coexistence of the Hindu and the Muslim communities. Although he did not succeed (partition between India and Pakistan) he never gave up and constantly searched for new ways of reconciling the two communities, and of putting a stop to the violence and the massacres. Gandhi also worked to put an end to the segregation of those people commonly called the ‘untouchables’ (whom he referred to as the harijans, the children of God), he also worked to obtain political rights and better social conditions of acceptance for them.

Gandhi was assassinated on January 30, 1948.
The message Gandhi left us is the message of the powerful force of political and spiritual non-violence. He also left us a series of different means that can be used to fight against injustice such as fasting, non-cooperation, silent marches, strikes...

"I could not live a religious life if I did not identify with the majority of humankind, and the only way to do that was to become politically involved. If I am concerned with politics it is because politics is everywhere around us, it is like a snake wrapped around our body and no matter how hard we try, we cannot free ourselves from its clutches."

**O. ROMERO**

Oscar Romero was born in El Salvador in 1917 and ordained to the priesthood in 1942. He was consecrated bishop in 1970 and became the Archbishop of San Salvador in 1977. There was a time when Bishop Romero was a strong conservative, a serious introvert not open to the aspirations of his people. This situation would radically change with the course of events. His life was turned inside out with the assassination of his friend, Father Rutilio Grande, one among a series of priests who was killed. This event made him realize the seriousness of the situation of injustice and violence, and was the catalyst that changed his life.

From that moment on, Bishop Romero organized the life in his diocese around the teachings of John-Paul II, who spoke of the preferential option for the poor, one of the priorities for evangelization put forth at the various Conferences, (Puebla, Medellin... ). He became very attentive to the type of faith experience deeply desired by the poor and the little ones of his diocese. He also became a staunch supporter of the base communities, the only bishop in the country to believe in them.

His keen sense of evangelization led him to want to find the means to inculturate Christianity into the social reality of his country, a country subjected to a state of poverty, to dictatorship and violence caused by the wealthy. His homilies were transmitted by radio throughout the country. He also had another program where he used to give an update of the situation as it was experienced by the people and the local Church. Whenever he got up to preach, he spoke out strongly against the violence and the injustices imposed upon his people. His radical stance was firmly rooted in the Gospel and in the dignity of the person.

"The Church maintains and defends the eternal truth revealed by God, that men and woman are the image of God and that because of the redeeming work of Jesus Christ they have been freed from the slavery of sin and have been given the dignity of the Son of God, free to choose their destiny and participate eternally in the glory of God. This is the truth of those who defend the Church no matter what the systems or political realities my be." (1.1.1980)

Bishop Romero always tried to situate Christianity with regards to politics so as to speak out against corruption, the lack of democracy, human rights violations, to warn Christians of the danger of being too quick to bring together the Gospel and politics, particularly in groups using violence. The gospel does have a political connotation, but it also commands certain specific behaviors.
"...That is the why we must ensure the process of the liberation of our country. The Church will not abandon us, it will continue to journey with us but with the voice of the Gospel, that of the transcendence of Christ. It will continue to demand that every one of those involved in the struggle for liberation, if they are to be strong and effective, place their trust in Jesus Christ, the 'greatest liberator' of all and never turn their sights from Him." (1980).

Bishop Romero was adamant in his pursuit against the violence imposed by those in power, (politicians, wealthy land owners, military, national police) as well of that exercised by the militant revolutionaries who said that they were acting out of a sense of justice. Romero knew very well that he was walking a thin line, but he continued ahead with the conviction that the Gospel was not only the source of social justice but also the source of peace.

"No to violence was his (that of the Church) only cry, every time a hand was raised against another human being no matter who he/she was. Violence is an act of sin that soils the world. This cry of denunciation and of resistance never ignited the passion of vengeance and hatred within the Church... Rather the voice of the Church always encouraged here fellowship founded in faith and in the truth revealed by God, as a source of inspiration for social doctrine." (1978)

He received numerous death threats and was assassinated on March 24, 1980, while presiding the Eucharist.

**H. DUNANT**

Henri Dunant was born in Geneva in 1828. His family was Protestant. As a youth he began to take interest in social action particularly with those who were unhappy. He was very concerned with ecumenism, and in 1855 founded the "Universal Alliance of Young Christians." After having gone through some financial difficulties, that would be a source of suffering for him throughout the whole of his life, he was present at the Battle of Solferino in 1859, a battle which was a bloody massacre and which left him traumatized till his dying day. After the battle was over he launched an appeal to men of good will to join him in creating a society that would come to the aid of those in battle, and care for the wounded.

With the help of G. Moynier he organized a congress that was held in Geneva in 1863. The 16 countries represented at the conference recommended the creation of "the National Society for Aid" and asked governments to support and protect them. In 1864, the "Geneva Convention" was signed with the goal of providing assistance to the wounded soldiers in the armies of the outlying areas. The convention stipulates that the soldiers must be cared for no matter what their nationality. This is the foundation for the Red Cross, whose goal would expand as time went by to include caring for military and civilian casualties in times of war and in times of peace. The categories cared for are the homeless, prisoners, refugees, victims of disasters... The Red Cross began to open branches everywhere in the world.

Today there are 125 groups we call the Red Crescents or the Lion or Red Suns to respect different religious beliefs. The Red Cross has no religious preference or religious affiliation (the word Cross in the title refers to the cross that is the national emblem of Switzerland and not to the Christian sign).
H. Dunant devoted himself completely to the Red Cross to the detriment of his own business affairs, forcing him to live a life of poverty. In 1901 he received the Nobel Prize for Peace. He died in 1910.

To this day, the Red Cross continues helping men and women wherever there is suffering because of war or disasters, with the consent of the signatories of the Geneva Convention. The Red Cross must receive governmental approval before being able to intervene; this is a deficiency and creates problems when one must act quickly. A good number of humanitarian organizations have since been created that can intervene immediately without having to wait for authorization from the state.
1. A FEW MAJOR INTERNATIONAL TEXTS

A. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948)

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in cooperation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, therefore, the General Assembly proclaims

Article 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6. Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.
Article 7. All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8. Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10. Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11.1. Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.

Article 11.2. No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13.1. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State.

Article 13.2. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14.1. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

Article 14.2. This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15.1. Everyone has the right to a nationality.

Article 15.2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 22. Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23.1. Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

Article 23.2. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

Article 24. Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25.1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
**Article 25.2.** Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

**Article 26.** Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

**Article 27.1.** Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

**Article 27.2.** Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

**Article 28.** Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this declaration can be fully realized.

**Article 29.1.** Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

**Article 29.2.** In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, every one shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

**Article 29.3.** These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

**Article 30.** Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

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**B. The Universal Declaration of the Rights of Peoples (Algiers, 1976)**

**Article 1:** Each people has the right to exist

**Article 2:** Each people is entitled to have its national and cultural identity respected

**Article 3:** Each people has the right to conserve peacefully its territory or to return to it if they have been expelled from it

**Article 4:** No one may be subject for reasons of national or cultural identity to massacres, torture, persecution, deportation, expulsion or living conditions that would threaten the identity or integrity of the people to whom this person belongs

**Article 5:** Each people has the imprescribable and unalienable right to self-determination. It has the right to define freely its political status without foreign interference

**Article 6:** Each people has the right to sever freely any colonial link or any direct or indirect foreign domination and to liberate itself from any racist regime

**Article 7:** Each people has the right to give itself a democratic government representing all citizens without distinction of race, sex, belief or color with the capacity to truly insure human rights and fundamental freedoms

**Article 8:** Each people has an exclusive right to its natural wealth and resources. It has the right to recuperate them if they have been taken from it or if it was forced to pay some form of indemnity to use them

**Article 9:** Each people has the right to participate in that scientific and technological heritage which belongs to all of humanity
Article 10: Each people has the right to have its manpower equitably judged financially and to just and non-discriminatory terms in its international trade.

Article 11: Each people has the right to choose freely its economic and social system and to pursue its own path to development without foreign intrusion.

Article 12: The economic rights previously mentioned must be undertaken within a spirit of solidarity with the other peoples of the world all while respecting their proper interests.

Article 13: Each people has the right to speak its own language, to preserve and develop its own culture by allowing it to contribute to the enrichment of the overall culture of all of humanity.

Article 14: Each people has a right to its artistic, historical and cultural treasures.

Article 15: Each people has the right to refuse a culture which is not its own.

Article 16: Each people has the right to conserve, protect and improve its environment.

Article 17: Each people has the right to use the common patrimony of humanity such as the high seas, the sea floor and celestial space.

Article 18: In the exercise of the previous rights each people must take into account the need to establish coordination and solidarity between the needs for its own development and that of the other countries of the world.


Article 1
1. All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.

2. All peoples may, for their own ends, freely dispose of their natural wealth and resources without prejudice to any obligations arising out of international economic co-operation, based upon the principle of mutual benefit, and international law. In no case may a people be deprived of its own means of subsistence.

3. The States Parties to the present Covenant, including those having responsibility for the administration of Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories, shall promote the realization of the right of self-determination, and shall respect that right, in conformity with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

Article 2
1. Each State Party to the present Covenant undertakes to take steps, individually and through international assistance and co-operation, especially economic and technical, to the maximum of its available resources, with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the rights recognized in the present Covenant by all appropriate means, including particularly the adoption of legislative measures.

2. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to guarantee that the rights enunciated in the present Covenant will be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

3. Developing countries, with due regard to human rights and their national economy, may determine to what extent they would guarantee the economic rights recognized in the present Covenant to non-nationals.
Article 3
The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights set forth in the present Covenant.

Article 6
1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right to work, which includes the right of everyone to the opportunity to gain his living by work which he freely chooses or accepts, and will take appropriate steps to safeguard this right.
2. The steps to be taken by a State Party to the present Covenant to achieve the full realization of this right shall include technical and vocational guidance and training programs, policies and techniques to achieve steady economic, social and cultural development and full and productive employment under conditions safeguarding fundamental political and economic freedoms to the individual.

Article 7
The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of just and favourable conditions of work which ensure, in particular:
(a) Remuneration which provides all workers, as a minimum, with:
   (i) Fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value without distinction of any kind, in particular women being guaranteed conditions of work not inferior to those enjoyed by men, with equal pay for equal work;
   (ii) A decent living for themselves and their families in accordance with the provisions of the present Covenant;
(b) Safe and healthy working conditions;
(c) Equal opportunity for everyone to be promoted in his employment to an appropriate higher level, subject to no considerations other than those of seniority and competence;
(d) Rest, leisure and reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay, as well as remuneration for public holidays.

Article 8
1. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure:
(a) The right of everyone to form trade unions and join the trade union of his choice, subject only to the rules of the organization concerned for the promotion and protection of his economic and social interests. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those prescribed by law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public order or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others;
(b) The right of trade unions to establish national federations or confederations and the right of the latter to form or join international trade-union organizations;
(c) The right of trade unions to function freely subject to no limitations other than those prescribed by law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public order or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others;
(d) The right to strike, provided that it is exercised in conformity with the laws of the particular country.
2. This article shall not prevent the imposition of lawful restrictions on the exercise of these rights by members of the armed forces or of the police or of the administration of the State.
3. Nothing in this article shall authorize States Parties to the International Labour Organisation Convention of 1948 concerning Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize, to take legislative measures which would prejudice, or apply the law in such a manner as would prejudice, the guarantees provided for in that Convention.
Article 9
The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to social security, including social insurance.

Article 10
The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize that:
1. The widest possible protection and assistance should be accorded to the family, which is the natural and fundamental group unit of society, particularly for its establishment and while it is responsible for the care and education of dependent children. Marriage must be entered into with the free consent of the intending spouses.
2. Special protection should be accorded to mothers during a reasonable period before and after childbirth. During such period working mothers should be accorded paid leave or leave with adequate social security benefits.
3. Special measures of protection and assistance should be taken on behalf of all children and young persons without any discrimination for reasons of parentage or other conditions. Children and young persons should be protected from economic and social exploitation. Their employment in work harmful to their morals or health or dangerous to life or likely to hamper their normal development should be punishable by law. States should also set age limits below which the paid employment of child labour should be prohibited and punishable by law.

Article 11
1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of this right, recognizing to this effect the essential importance of international co-operation based on free consent.
2. The States Parties to the present Covenant, recognizing the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, shall take, individually and through international co-operation, the measures, including specific programs, which are needed.
   (a) To improve methods of production, conservation and distribution of food by making full use of technical and scientific knowledge, by disseminating knowledge of the principles of nutrition and by developing or reforming agrarian systems in such a way as to achieve the most efficient development and utilization of natural resources;
   (b) Taking into account the problems of both food importing and food-exporting countries, to ensure an equitable distribution of world food supplies in relation to need.

Article 12
1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.
2. The steps to be taken by the States Parties to the present Covenant to achieve the full realization of this right shall include those necessary for:
   (a) The provision for the reduction of the still birth rate and of infant mortality and for the healthy development of the child;
   (b) The improvement of all aspects of environmental and industrial hygiene;
   (c) The prevention, treatment and control of epidemic, endemic, occupational and other diseases;
   (d) The creation of conditions which would assure to all medical service and medical attention in the event of sickness.
Article 13

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

2. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize that, with a view to achieving the full realization of this right:

   (a) Primary education shall be compulsory and available free to all;

   (b) Secondary education in its different forms, including technical and vocational secondary education, shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education;

   (c) Higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education;

   (d) Fundamental education shall be encouraged or intensified as far as possible for those persons who have not received or completed the whole period of their primary education;

   (e) The development of a system of schools at all levels shall be actively pursued, an adequate fellowship system shall be established, and the material conditions of teaching staff shall be continuously improved.

3. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to choose for their children schools, other than those established by the public authorities, which conform to such minimum educational standards as may be laid down or approved by the State and to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

D. We can also study the Islamic Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1981) which has the following Preamble:

"Considering that the constant aspiration of humans seeking a more just world order where peoples could live, develop and prosper in an environment free of fear, oppression, exploitation and privatization is far from being satisfied; considering that the overabundant means of economic subsistence that Divine Mercy has granted humanity are presently wasted or unequitably or unjustly refused to the earth's inhabitants; considering that Allah had given humanity, through revelations in the Holy Koran and the Sunna of his Holy Prophet Mohammed, a lasting legal and moral framework allowing the establishment and the administration of institutions and human relations; considering that human rights ordained by the Divine Law have as their purpose to grant dignity and honor upon humans and are destined to eliminate oppression and injustice; considering that in view of their divine source and sanction these rights cannot be restricted, abrogated, nor transgressed by any authority, assembly or other institution, nor can they be abdicated nor alienated, Therefore we Muslims,


who believe in the kind and merciful God, Creator, Sustainer, Sovereign, Only Guide of humanity and Source of all faith;
- who believe in the vicariousness of humans who were created to accomplish God’s will on earth;
- who believe in the wisdom of the divine precepts that were passed on by the Prophets whose mission reached its climax in the final Divine Message given to us by the Prophet Mohammed (on him be God’s Peace and Salvation) for all of humanity;
- who believe that rationality of itself, without the enlightenment of the Revelation of God, cannot be an infallible guide in the affairs of humanity nor spiritually nourish the human soul; and knowing that the teachings of Islam represent the quintessence of the divine precept in its perfect and definitive form, and we estimate that our duty is to remind humans of the lofty condition and dignity that God has granted them;
- who believe that the message of Islam is to be shared by all;
- who believe that according to the terms of our ancestral covenant with God our duties and obligations have priority over our rights and that each one of us has the sacred duty of passing on the teachings of Islam through word, through actions and all peaceful means and to apply them not only in our own lives but in the whole of the society that surrounds us;
- who believe in our obligation to establish an Islamic order:
  + where all human beings are born free
  + where slavery and forced labor are banished
  + where conditions exist that allow the preservation, the protection and the honoring of the institution of the family as foundational for all social life
  + where governor and governed are subject in an equal manner to the Law and are equal before it
  + where orders in conformity with the Law only will be obeyed
  + where all earthly power is considered as a sacred trust to be exercised within the limits prescribed by the law, in a way approved by it and by taking into account the priorities that it establishes
  + where all economic resources are considered as divine blessings given to humanity, that all are to benefit from in conformity with the rules and values presented in the Koran and the Sunna
  + where all public affairs are determined and conducted and administrative authority undertaken after mutual consultation between those believers empowered to take part in a decision compatible with the law and the common good
  + where each person assumes obligations according to his or her capacities and is proportionately responsible for his or her actions
  + where no one is deprived of rights that are guaranteed according to the law, unless in accordance with the said law and to the extent authorized by it
  + where each individual has the right to undertake a legal action against anyone who would have committed a crime against society as a body or against one of its members
  + where all efforts are made to free humanity of all kinds of exploitation, injustice, oppression and to guarantee to each person security, dignity and freedom according to stipulated conditions, through approved methods and within the limits established by the law.

Affirm in the present letter that we commit ourselves to promote the sacred and inalienable rights of humans...
2. RIGHTS ACCORDING TO THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

(found in Pacem in Terris and in the Justice and Peace Commission Letter of 1975)

a) Rights of association
- the right of free assembly and association
- the right of peoples and nations to development.
- the right of communities and minority groups to life, to personal and social dignity.

b) Religious rights
- the right to worship God according to one's conscience
- the right to practice one's religion privately and publicly

c) Sexual and family rights
- the right to found a family, with equal rights for husband and wife. Parents have the right to beget children and prior rights in their support and education
- the right of children and young people to education and to morally sound conditions of social life
- the right to a family living wage
- the right to a share of earthly goods sufficient for oneself and one's family

d) Communication rights
- the right to act according to one's conscience and to investigate the truth freely
- the right to express one's ideas freely and to be correctly informed about public events

e) Economic rights
- the right to work and to develop one's personality and talents.
- the right to decent working conditions and to a reasonable amount of free time.
- the right to strike as worker's ultimate means of defence of their own rights
- the right to private ownership—(within limits)

f) Rights to movement
- the right to freedom of movement and residence within one's country,
- the right to emigrate

g) Bodily rights
- the right to existence, bodily integrity and well-being
- the right to maintain a decent standard of living
- the right of the old, orphans, the sick, to the care and assistance they need

h) Political rights
- the right to equal protection before the law.
- the right of equality with men in participating in educational, cultural, economic, social and political life.
- the right to participate actively in public life and to contribute to the common good.
- the right to vote.

i) Individual rights
- the right to a good reputation, to respect and to privacy
- the right to choose freely one's state of life

3. METHODOLOGY OF THE “FRAY F. DE VITORIA” CENTER (Mexico)

The Center is the result of brothers and sisters working together with many lay persons in order to defend human rights within Mexico and to make people aware of these problems. The Center publishes a review entitled Justicia y Paz.
The core team writes up a data base of the complaints received. It is extremely important that these complaints of violations be thoroughly researched and verified so as to be certain about the events, their constitutional basis and the legality of the right; along with this data, other facts are also transmitted to them by other friendly associations (network). This data bank is expanded on a continuous basis. Those responsible make sure that the following points are always kept up to date:
- date and place when the violation took place,
- coded description of the violation and the number of victims,
- the names of the persons presumed responsible for the action.

There are ten categories under which the violation can fall:
- the right to life (murders particularly in prison or disappearances),
- the right to freedom (arbitrary detention),
- the right to physical and psychological respect (torture, psychological abuse),
- the right to land,
- indigenous rights,
- workers rights,
- the right to freedom of expression, opinion and information,
- political rights,
- impunity related to legal condemnations.

There are six ways in which these rights can be violated:
- assaults against groups,
- denial of justice,
- arbitrary execution,
- intimidation,
- illegal deprivation of freedom,
- torture and humiliation.

Each year the center publishes an updated version of the statistics on the state of human rights in Mexico. Every year a calendar is put out containing the actions undertaken for the defense of human rights and any new national legislation that may have been passed.

Helpful bibliography:

Some addresses:
International Human Rights Services: BP 16, CH 1211, GENEVA 20 CIC, Switzerland. This NGO, created in 1984, promotes actions by other associations in favor of human rights. It publishes a magazine called «Monitoring Human Rights».
FI-ACAT (International Federation - Action des chrétiens contre la torture): 27 rue de Mauberge, 75009 PARIS (fax 33.1.42.80.20.89). This coalition of associations seeks to mobilize Christians against torture and other related forms of violence.

FI-ACAT has branches:
- ACAT Canada: 6349 rue de Saint Vallier MONTREAL H2S 2P6, CANADA
- ACT-England: Quex Rd Methodist Church, Kilburn, LONDON NW6 4PR, U.K.
- OV-ACAT: Herengracht 218/220, 1016 AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS
- CAT: 16 Melbourne Rd, Llanishen, CARDIFF CF4 5NH, U.K.
- ACAT: 521 West 122nd Street N.45, NEW YORK, NY 10027, USA
- CAT: 37 Cordillera Street, Quezon City, MANILLA, PHILIPPINES.