

MILLENNIUM GOAL # 1

Eradicate Extreme Poverty and Hunger

The Goals

-  Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
-  Achieve universal primary education
-  Promote gender equality and empower women
-  Reduce child mortality
-  Improve maternal health
-  Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
-  Ensure environmental sustainability
-  Develop a global partnership for development

Catholic Social Teaching

(These extracts are taken from “Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church”, Burns & Oates, English edition, 2005, marked by paragraph.)

“At the beginning of the New Millennium, the poverty of billions of men and women is the one issue that most challenges our human and Christian consciences. Poverty poses a dramatic problem of justice... characterized by an unequal growth that does not recognize the equal right of all people to take their seat at the table of the common banquet”.

Para.449

“Among the causes that greatly contribute to underdevelopment and poverty, in addition to lack of access to international markets, mention must be made of illiteracy, lack of food security, the absence of structures and services, inadequate health care, the lack of safe drinking water and sanitation, corruption, instability of institutions and political life itself. There is a connection between poverty and, in many countries, the lack of liberty”.

Para.447

“The Church’s social doctrine has often called attention to aberrations in the system of international trade, which often, owing to protectionist policies, discriminates against products coming from poorer countries and hinders the growth of industrial activity in and transfer of technology to these countries. So, the poor nations remain ever poor while the rich ones become still richer”.

Para.364

“When we attend to the needs of those in want, we give them what is theirs, not ours. More than performing works of mercy, we are paying a debt of justice”.

Para.184



Romans: 15: 25-27

“I am going to Jerusalem in a ministry to the saints; for Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to share their resources with the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. They were pleased to do this and indeed they owe it to them; for if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material things”.

Life expectancy figures cannot just be blamed on AIDS

Archbishop Pius Ncube of Bulawayo in Zimbabwe says that the humanitarian situation in his country is critical. Each week an estimated 3,500 Zimbabweans die from a unique convergence of malnutrition, poverty and AIDS. The figure suggests that far from the media spotlight, more people die in Zimbabwe each week than in Darfur. World Health Organisation figures place life expectancy in Zimbabwe at 34 for women and 37 for men. This is the lowest in the world. In Iraq, life expectancy for men is 51 and for women it is 61. Although Zimbabwe has one of the highest HIV infection rates on earth, with over 24% of the population infected, life expectancy figures cannot just be blamed on AIDS. South Africa has the same incidence of AIDS but life expectancy is 47 for men and 49 for women.

Archbishop Ncube said, “Zimbabwe is not a nation at war. It used to be able to feed itself and its neighbours. Now hunger, illness and desperation stalk our land. Cemeteries are filling up throughout the country. But no blood is being spilt. People are just fading away, dying quietly and being buried quietly with no fanfare, and so there is little international media attention. Without significant intervention, the situation threatens to develop into a humanitarian crisis of biblical proportions. The UN has recently warned that 6.1 million Zimbabweans now face starvation.”

He says Zimbabwe has never been in such a dire socio-economic or political position as at present. Inflation is 2,000%, over 10 times more than the next highest rate of Burma standing at 70%. Between 1991 and 2003, urban poverty trebled in Zimbabwe. Out of an adult population of around 5 million, an estimated 3 million – 70% of all people of employable age – have fled into the Diaspora, notably to South Africa.

Archbishop Ncube was visiting London for meetings at the Foreign Office and Houses of Parliament. He was hoping to raise awareness of the humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Zimbabwe. CAFOD (Catholic Fund for Overseas Development) is providing humanitarian assistance to over 37,000 families.

Triennial Report 2006

In 'Our Call to Jubilee' Maria Delaney reminds us of Constitution 56: "Our vows express that the mission of the Gospel is the root and purpose of our life".

She reflects:

- Our chastity now draws us into the wider community unencumbered but strongly connected to a power source. Our sharing of self and of resources flows from this commitment.
- Our poverty now calls us to simplicity of lifestyle.
- Where once strict obedience was demanded of Sisters, we now internalise obedience as we open ourselves to the movement of the Spirit among and within us. Our justice agenda demands this watchfulness from us.
- Where once silence was the rule, the ability to reflect upon situations and speak wise words is now enjoined upon us. p. 8

We are in a position to contribute to the fulfilment of some of the Millennium Development Goals. Being updated monthly on the major areas of concern at the United Nations opens us to this wider world reality and opportunities to participate in it. p.27

Living the social justice agenda requires grounding in prayer because the winds of opposition blow strongly and to be reactionary is not necessarily to be just or social. It compels us to witness more visibly the apostolic contemplative dimension of our lives. p. 26

And Camilla Burns writes:

We can honour Dorothy Stang's thirst for justice that led to her death with our own thirst that will "let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream".

(Amos 5:23-24). P.31

Constitutions and Directory

“In fidelity to Julie’s preference for the poor in the most abandoned places, we choose to stand with poor people as they struggle for adequate means for human life and dignity”.
C.17

“We recognize the call of God in a growing consciousness throughout the world of the dignity and value of each person, race and nation, and of the ways in which society, in its values, structures and systems, denies this dignity”. C.20

“We work with others to transform unjust structures and systems as we participate in creating new ways of relating which enable all to experience more fully the goodness of God”.
C.23

“Because of our awareness that unjust structures deny people their dignity, we study the relatedness of global issues. We also join with others in an effort to build peace and to search for an end to social evils, particularly war and the preparation for war, world poverty, racism, and discrimination against women”.

D.3

“In our decision-making we give priority to situations in which we can

- respond to the needs of the local church;
- promote Christian values by educating for justice and peace;
- accompany the poor as they work together to exercise their rights as human beings;
- work towards the alleviation of the effects of poverty;
- work towards the elimination of the systemic causes of poverty and oppression”.

D.5



"We will have time to reach the Millennium Development Goals – worldwide and in most, or even all, individual countries – but only if we break with business as usual. We cannot win overnight. Success will require sustained action across the entire decade between now and the deadline. It takes time to train the teachers, nurses and engineers; to build the roads, schools and hospitals; to grow the small and large businesses able to create the jobs and income needed. So we must start now. And we must more than double global development assistance over the next few years. Nothing less will help to achieve the Goals".

*Former United Nations
Secretary-General
Kofi A. Annan*

Suggestions for further study

Books

“Just One Year”, ed. Timothy Radcliffe O.P., (Darton, Longman & Todd, 2006)
(Prayer and Worship through the Christian Year)

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, (Burns & Oates, 2004)
(reference book)

Weekly periodical: “The Tablet”

e-mail: tablet@subscription.co.uk

Websites

Google: millennium goals

www.millenniumcampaign.org/site

www.data.org/whyme

www.cafod.org.uk/livesimply

www.dfid.gov.uk/mdg

Acts of the 15th General Chapter 2002

Commitment 3

“Impelled by Julie’s passion that everyone experience the goodness of God, we commit ourselves to help to create a more just and loving world”.

Calls to Action

- a. Bring new energy and creativity to our commitment to those in greatest need, especially poor women and children in the most abandoned places.**
- b. Make responsible choices, as a witness to our solidarity with poor people and as an expression of our desire to redistribute resources.**
- c. Educate ourselves and others in issues of justice and peace and the integrity of creation, and take action both individually and as a Congregation. Give particular attention to issues of ... debt cancellation ...trade agreements. Acts p.13**

Psalm 34:15-18

**“The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous (poor),
and his ears are open to their cry.
The face of the Lord is against evil-doers,
to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.
When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears,
and rescues them from all their troubles.
The Lord is near to the broken-hearted,
and saves the crushed in spirit”.**

Isaiah 1: 16-17

**“Cease to do evil,
learn to do good;
Seek justice
rescue the oppressed,
Defend the orphan,
plead for the widow.”**

A Paraliturgy

Gathering Hymn: "Christ, Be Our Light"

Longing for light, we wait in darkness. Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people, light for the world to see.

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.

Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in your church gathered today.

Longing for peace, our world is troubled. Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us. Make us your living voice.

Longing for food, many are hungry. Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others, shared until all are fed

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Prayer from the Christian Conference of Asia

Creator God, we believe that you have created all nations of the world to live together in peace, sharing their riches, enjoying their diverse languages, cultures and colours, and caring for one another's need. Grant us the wisdom and the courage to break down all the walls that we ourselves built to separate us one from another. Empower us to rid ourselves of selfishness, indifference, intolerance and hate. Fill us with your glorious vision that springs from our common beginning as human beings created in your image and points to our common goal as your renewed creation. Amen.

Scripture Reading Luke 11:19-31

Silence

Response "The Cry of the Poor," (John Foley, SJ, Oregon Catholic Press.)

A Reflection by Jon Sobrino, SJ

In today's world we celebrate many events Has no one ever thought of celebrating 'Conversion Day'? These days we need to be converted, not only to be Christian, but simply to be human. Has not the... poverty of three thousand million human beings, brought home the need for change in each and every one of us?

...Our Christian Churches have rarely welcomed the word of God. At least they have not dared to silence it, and every year, during Lent, they offer us time to think about conversion.

We have to be thankful for that, given that we live in a world of injustice and cruelty, where the seven richest men have enough wealth to wipe out poverty within a few years. A world where a footballer, a boxer or a singer earns more than entire towns and villages in Asia, Africa or Latin America and in which they are better known and more admired than the countless martyrs who have given their lives for love ...

Ignacio Ellacuria, the rector of the University of Central America in San Salvador who was murdered along with five other Jesuits, was right in the last speech he gave in Barcelona, November 1989, a week before his death. He said: 'Today's civilisation of abundance must become a civilisation of poverty'.

(From "Just One Year: A Global Treasury of Prayer and Worship," edited by Timothy Radcliffe, ©Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York, 10545-0308. 2007.)

Silent Reflection

Sharing (a) Your experience of action for the alleviation of poverty
 (b) Your response to Jon Sobrino's reflection

Intercessions - final prayer

God of justice, God of love, we keep praying for peace, while harbouring resentment in our hearts.

Have mercy on us.

Help us to live what we pray.

We keep praying for an end to the world's hunger, while enjoying the comfort of more than we need.

Have mercy

We keep praying for suffering people, forgetting that we could be sharing their load.

Have mercy

And teach us again to keep praying, not only with words, but in all that we say and do, that your love and your justice may be known on the earth in each generation. Amen.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.

1. Unemployment is the most immediate social/economic cause of poverty. Can you verify this from the area in which you live? Can you identify any group that is working to improve access to employment for those who are seeking employment?
2. The authors of this module list websites familiar to those living in Britain. Can you add websites and other sources familiar to other parts of the Notre Dame experience?
3. This module lists “ten targets for meeting Goal 1 by 2015” for SNDs, parallel to those set by the UN. Will you choose one or more as your own target, and share your efforts with someone or with a group?
4. What is your response to the reflection by Jon Sobrino in the paraliturgy included in this module?
5. “Poverty” is an abstract term. What happens when we talk about “poor people” rather than about “poverty” or “the poor”?