



Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

NewsNotes

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Catholic peacebuilding

The following article is contributed by Marie Dennis, former director of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns (MOGC); since 2007, she has served as co-president of Pax Christi International.

Peacebuilding in its most comprehensive sense includes the transformation of cultural practices or political and socio-economic structures and systems that promote or perpetuate violence; conflict resolution, conflict transformation, the prevention of violent conflict, and the transition to a stable, just, peaceful society after war. Peacebuilding in the Catholic tradition is fully engaged with all of these dimensions of the work for peace to which it brings the institutional, theological and spiritual resources of the Catholic Church.

Fr. Robert Schreiter, C.P.P.S. and others describe well some of the specific characteristics of Catholic peacebuilding. Examples of each from different corners of the world abound:

- *the practice of presence and accompaniment* – During the civil war in El Salvador, lay pastoral workers, priests, sisters and Archbishop Romero himself walked with, and many died with, poor people suffering under horrific repression. In Sudan, Bishop Paride Taban and other Catholic leaders, including many missionaries, regularly visited local communities struggling to survive during the long years of war between north and south.
- *a belief in the pervasiveness of grace and in the agency of local people ... that seeds of peace are found in local communities even in the midst of conflict* – In Uganda, Catholic Archbishop John Baptist Odama and other members of the Acholi Religious Leaders' Initiative have made repeated efforts to support negotiations with the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and to promote reconciliation in local communities. Pax Christi played a quiet but very significant role in bringing LRA leader Joseph Kony to the negotiating table – an effort that was almost successful.
- *a rich sacramental tradition, particularly Eucharist and reconciliation; deeply meaningful symbols and rituals* – In Guatemala, the Catholic Church brought the richness of the Catholic tradition of Reconciliation and its belief in the importance of truth to the



Altar in Palestine; photo by Ryan Rodrick Beiler
www.ryanrodrickbeiler.com

REMHI (Recovery of the Historic Memory) process. [See Guatemala: Never Again! Orbis, 1999] In the U.S. at Fort Benning, Georgia each year a solemn litany of remembrance ties the suffering of people throughout the Americas at the hands of U.S-trained soldiers to the cross of Christ.

• *a belief in mediation; a recognition that peace characteristic of the reign of God is ultimately the work of the Spirit; and that prayer is an important part of the work for peace* - In the months leading up to the January 2011 referendum on the future of the country that would become South Sudan, a coalition of Catholic missionary communities, Solidarity with South Sudan, initiated "100 Days of

Prayer for Peace in Sudan" that ultimately involved thousands of people around the world in prayer. Pax Christi International is collecting reflections from members everywhere on the spirituality of their work for peace ... how God is present or absent as they promote active nonviolence in a context of war or violent conflict. [See www.paxchristi.net]

- *ongoing theological reflection on the morality of war and the practice of nonviolence* – The Catholic Peacebuilding Network (CPN) is a network of academics and practitioners who seek to enhance the study and practice of Catholic peacebuilding. CPN was established to address four needs, among them "developing a theology and ethics of peace." In its recently published book (Orbis: 2011), *Peacebuilding: Catholic Theology, Ethics, and Praxis*, leading Catholic theologians, ethicists, and scholar-practitioners examine the role of Catholic peacebuilders in preventing and resolving conflicts, and reconciling divided societies from Colombia and the Philippines to Indonesia and South Africa (See www.cpn.nd.edu)
- *a tradition of social (and, increasingly, ecological) analysis that identifies root causes of violent conflict* - Catholic social teaching and the work of Catholic organizations including Pax Christi and the MOGC point consistently to the importance of addressing the root causes of war and violent conflict. Two good examples are the anti-racism work of Pax Christi USA and MOGC work on ecological economics, addressing the disastrous consequences for humans and the rest of the earth community of an

unjust global economy.

- *well integrated structures that are both horizontal (parishes, dioceses) and vertical (global church; international Catholic religious communities and organizations) – Catholic religious communities, through collaboration of their justice, peace and integrity of creation promoters in Rome, have been able to educate and activate members around the world on the global debt crisis, human trafficking, the right to water, climate change and peace in Sudan. Catholic bishops conferences, aid agencies and organizations from different parts of the world regularly coordinate campaigns and advocacy efforts on major peace issues, including nuclear disarmament,*

reductions in military spending, peace in the Middle East, traffic in small arms and light weapons, and international action to protect civilians.

As its 50th anniversary approaches, it is worth the effort to read again Pope John XXIII's great encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*, that makes so clear the Catholic peace-building vocation: ... *may Christ inflame the desires of all men [sic] to break through the barriers which divide them, to strengthen the bonds of mutual love, to learn to understand one another, and to pardon those who have done them wrong. Through His power and inspiration may all peoples welcome each other to their hearts as brothers [and sisters], and may the peace they long for ever flower and ever reign among them.* (art. 171)

Women: G8, NATO leaders affirm equal rights

During their meetings in May at Camp David and in Chicago, the Group of Eight and NATO leaders highlighted women's rights on their discussion agenda.

At Camp David, President Obama introduced the topic, saying, "We agreed that both, when it comes to economic development and when it comes to peace and security issues, empowering women to have a seat at the table and get more engaged and more involved in these processes can be extraordinarily fruitful. This is something that we will also be introducing during the G20 [held in Mexico in June]."

The G-8 leaders' declaration affirmed this message:

We recognize that according women full and equal rights and opportunities is crucial for all countries' political stability, democratic governance, and economic growth. We reaffirm our commitment to advance human rights of and opportunities for women, leading to more development, poverty reduction, conflict prevention and resolution, and improved maternal health and reduced child mortality. We also commit to supporting the right of all people, including women, to freedom of religion in safety and security. We are concerned about the reduction of women's political participation and fundamental freedoms in the Middle East and North Africa countries emerging from conflict or undergoing political transitions. We condemn and avow to stop violence against the trafficking of women and children.

The NATO Chicago Summit Declaration focused on the role of women in peace building, conflict prevention, and in preventing gender-based violence ... The declaration reads:

Widespread sexual and gender-based violence in conflict situations, the lack of effective institutional arrangements to protect women, and the continued underrepresentation of women in peace processes, remain serious impediments to building sustainable peace. We remain committed to the full implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and related Resolutions which are aimed at protecting and promoting women's rights, role, and participation in preventing and ending conflict. In line with the NATO/Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) Policy, the Alliance, together with its partners, has made significant progress in implementing the goals articulated in these Resolutions. In this regard, we have today endorsed a Strategic Progress Report on mainstreaming UNSCR 1325 and related Resolutions into NATO-led Operations and Missions, and welcomed Norway's generous offer to provide a NATO Special Representatives for these important issues.

As noted above, sexual and gender-based violence continues to obstruct true peace in many areas of conflict; in the U.S., one effort to alleviate its effects is the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). Originally signed into law in 1994, VAWA provided \$1.6 billion toward investigation and prosecution of violent crimes against women, imposed automatic and mandatory restitution on those convicted, and allowed civil redress if prosecutors chose to leave a case unprosecuted. This year's reauthorization was one of the foci of the Maryknoll on the Hill event (see page 9); participants urged their members of Congress to support a version of VAWA that protects victims of domestic violence who are undocumented. The final version of the bill is still being negotiated.

Peru: Mine protestors beaten; two killed

For the past several months, Peruvian citizens in the province of Espinar have been calling for dialogue with the Anglo-Swiss mining company Xstrata Tintaya to address environmental, health and social concerns. They are asking for an investigation into presumed environmental damage and an increase in the company's contribution to local authorities.

After a week of protests at the Tintaya Marquiri copper mine, violence erupted on May 27 between demonstrators and police. By May 29, two civilians were reported killed along with many more injured, including police officers. Although Peru's Prime Minister Oscar Valdes stated that emergency measures (such as suspension of assembly of freedom and giving special powers to the police) taken by the government were to restore order, police abuses were reported by civilians and human rights advocates.

Those abuses include the illegal detention on Xstrata's mine site of Jaime Cesar Borda and Romualdo Tito Pinto, employees of the Vicariate of Solidarity of the Sicuani Prelature. They, along with 20 other civilians, were held in a make-shift police station for two days. (The mayor of Espinar, Oscar Mollohuanca,

was among those arrested for protesting.) The Catholic Church, through the Vicariate of Sicuani, sent lawyers to visit those illegally detained on Xstrata's property. The lawyers report that those imprisoned had their shoes removed and heels beaten, that they were verbally abused, kept in frigid conditions and deprived of sleep.

In addition to Cesar Borda and Tito Pinto, Sergio Huamani, a representative of the United Front for the Defense of the Interests of Espinar, was beaten at the scene of the arrests. Just a month prior to this confrontation, Sergio had participated in talks in London with representatives from Xstrata Tintaya, who promised to look into his group's concerns regarding the Tintaya mine.

It appears that the Peruvian government and the Espinar community are in negotiations, trying to prevent this kind of violence and conflict from occurring again. After authorities and representatives began their round table discussions on June 21, Peru's president, Ollanta Humala, lifted the state of emergency on June 23. The next round table discussion will take place on July 12 and will include representatives from Xstrata Tintaya, as well. Maryknoll missionaries in Peru will be monitoring and updating our office on any developments with the situation.

El Salvador: Partial victory but costs continue

A recent mixed decision by the International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), a part of the World Bank, means the government of El Salvador must continue to spend millions of dollars in court to defend itself from a lawsuit by Pacific Rim, a Canadian mining company. The following piece is an update from an article by Sarah Anderson with the Institute for Policy Studies, published in the March-April 2012 NewsNotes.

Pacific Rim (PacRim) sued the government of El Salvador in April 2009 when the country refused to grant a gold mining permit to the company. Numerous civil society organizations including the Catholic Church had raised concerns that the mine would use cyanide that would leak into the Lempa River, a major waterway which provides drinking water to almost half the country's population.

The ICSID decision at the end of June was a partial victory for the Salvadoran government and those who are concerned with growing numbers of similar international lawsuits. PacRim boldly tried to use the Central

America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) to sue El Salvador despite the fact that Canada is not a signatory of the pact. The company's CEO thought simply moving one of its subsidiaries from the Cayman Islands to Reno, NV would be enough to be considered a U.S. firm. Luckily, the court struck down that part of the lawsuit saying that the Canadian firm had no right to use CAFTA laws.

But the court did uphold PacRim's right to sue using El Salvador's own national investment law. This means the case will likely drag on for years forcing the Salvadoran government to spend millions of dollars that could otherwise be spent on health care or education.

As the Institute for Policy Studies reports, extractive industries are increasingly using international tribunals to force governments to permit them to mine. "Pacific Rim is just one of more than 40 pending 'investor-state' cases related to oil, mining, and gas before the International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes, the most frequently used international investment arbitration tribunal. By contrast, in 2000 there were only three ICSID cases related to these extractive industries."

Mexico: Caravan for peace with justice

In the past six years, Mexico's "war on drugs" has led to as many as 60,000 deaths and 10,000 disappearances, and has displaced 160,000 people. Characterized by an intense militarization, including the deployment of over 50,000 troops and federal police, this strategy has undermined the country's social fabric and security even more deeply, but has done little to address the painful iniquities of drug trafficking in Mexico. Some victims are saying enough, and demand an alternative to militarization and the war on drugs. Their message is not only directed at the government and people of Mexico: This summer they will bring their message to the U.S. to raise awareness around the U.S. connection to Mexico's war on drugs.

Less than two weeks after he took office in 2006, President Felipe Calderón declared an all-out war on Mexico's drug cartels. In the six years since then, that "war" has played out in the midst of daily life, sending the country into a vicious cycle of violence that has exploded beyond a battle between cartels and law enforcement. Much of it has been directed at civilians: Journalists have been kidnapped and/or killed; public officials have been assassinated; most appalling have been the massacres of random civilians. For example, gunmen killed 16 people—including two journalists—in a bar in the capital city of Chihuahua, Chihuahua in April 2012. More recently on June 12, gunmen killed 11 people at a rehabilitation clinic in Torreón, Coahuila. Indiscriminate killing and the escalation of violence has become commonplace in Mexico over the past six years, as the cartels have battled each other and attempted to intimidate and terrorize the population and force the military to withdraw their presence on the streets.

In the face of this horror, those affected most have not remained silent. The Movement for Peace with Justice and Dignity (Movimiento por la Paz con Justicia y Dignidad) emerged in March 2011, when poet Javier Sicilia called for protests after his son and six others were found suffocated and gagged inside a car on the Cuernavaca-Acapulco highway. The death of Juan Francisco Sicilia gave a name and face to the tens of thousands brutally murdered and disappeared during the conflict.

Since Sicilia's call, a social force of relatives of victims and others fighting to be heard has risen up, offering an alternative vision, articulated in their Pact for Peace and Justice—a six point proposal that emphasizes civic unity over violence and militarization:

- Victims' families deserve truth and justice and

should be provided with proper investigations and information.

- End the militaristic view of Calderón's strategy by emphasizing new security strategy, focused on the defense of human rights.
- The Mexican government should fight corruption in its government institutions.
- The Mexican government should address and combat the economic roots of organized crime.
- Develop a new social policy for young people focused on education, not violence, as the answer.
- Promote participatory, representative democracy.

Embodying these principles, Sicilia, along with 500 others, left Cuernavaca's Paloma de la Paz on May 5, 2011, marching and sharing stories about the violence and injustice that typifies the war on drugs. The March for Peace gained massive numbers along the way, eventually peaking at around 150,000 participants. Through these and other demonstrations Sicilia and the Movement for Peace have gained significant public support and political stature. After realizing the movement's growing momentum President Calderón agreed to series of public dialogues with Sicilia last year, but refused to end the militarization.

This summer, Sicilia and the movement will bring their message to the U.S., joining allies here on the month-long U.S. Peace Caravan. They will leave from San Diego on August 12, crisscrossing the country, before finally arriving in Washington, D.C. on September 10. Through the caravan, the group is seeking a dialogue with U.S. society and government on the need for a new strategy by the U.S. and Mexico for addressing the drug problem. (Through the Merida Initiative, the U.S. has provided Mexico with \$1.6 billion in military aid in order to combat the drug cartels.) As Sicilia told *The Nation* in June: "Drugs and weapons are a business, legal and illegal. We are producing dead people and we are destroying our nation. And if the American people don't do anything, they are accomplices to the crime. Each one of their addicts, and each one of their guns and weapons, are our dead. We want you to be aware of that; together we can stop this war."

Along the route, the caravan is calling for support from civil society organizations, and hopes to join with Latino and African American communities, whose members have been criminalized by the U.S. war on drugs.

Find details on the U.S. Peace Caravan here: <http://www.globalexchange.org/mexico/caravan>; in Spanish here: <http://movimientoporlapaz.mx/>

Sudan/South Sudan: Deteriorating conditions

As noted in the May-June NewsNotes, relations between Sudan and South Sudan dramatically deteriorated in April after violence surged along their shared border. Following repeated allegations that the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) carried out cross-border air and artillery strikes into South Sudan, South Sudan seized the Heglig oil facility that had been under Sudan's control. This military confrontation, the first since the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed, has resulted in a large mobilization on both sides, competing accusations of military support or aggression, and condemnation in the international community of Sudan and South Sudan for violating a non-aggression pact signed in February. Much of the following report is provided by Catholic Relief Services (CRS).

Many fear that what is currently largely a border conflict will grow into a full-scale war as the economies of both countries come under increasing strain with the expense of continued fighting and the loss of revenue from the oil production because the sides could not agree on its mutual management. If full-scale conflict does engulf these two countries, it raises the concern that the conflict would engage or affect the nine countries surrounding them. Most analysts attribute the violence to the economic and political pressures resulting from the failure to resolve the outstanding issues of the 2005 CPA, which called for an agreement on fees and revenues in the shared oil interest; negotiation and demarcation of the border between Sudan and South Sudan; a determination of the status of the Abyei area; and resolution of the citizenship status of South Sudanese remaining in Sudan and Sudanese remaining in South Sudan.

In an effort to address the violence and revive the negotiations the United Nations Security Council unanimously passed a resolution this month calling for both countries to withdraw all forces from disputed territories, end all air raids, and negotiate solution to the issue of payments by South Sudan for shipping oil through Sudan within three months or face possible sanctions. The resolution reinforces a peace plan outlined by the African Union and includes support from China, a major buyer of Sudan's oil, and Russia, which both generally oppose sanctions.

Even before the violence along their shared border,

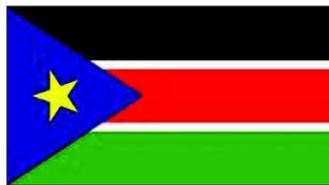
there were significant humanitarian emergencies in Sudan and South Sudan. The Darfur region of Sudan is still one of the largest humanitarian operations in the world. In Sudan's South Kordofan and Blue Nile states there is widespread displacement and severe hunger but inadequate humanitarian access to people who are suffering. South Sudan struggles to overcome its own inter-communal violence, a poor growing season, and a lack of the agricultural production and infrastructure necessary to prevent significant hunger. The UN reports that more than half the population of South Sudan, nearly five million people, are facing food shortages due to a deficit of cereal crops of nearly half a million tons - the worst in peacetime and more than twice last year's shortfall.

Because of the recent fighting, especially the bombing that Khartoum has been doing in the Nuba Mountains, the humanitarian situation has greatly deteriorated. The UN has received an urgent appeal on behalf of the Dinka Ngok people to make immediate efforts to stop the conflict. The Dinka Ngok tribes have suffered very great losses and the people need outside help in order to stop the constant invasions and fighting in their areas.

Further fighting will likely delay or prevent humanitarian operations and development efforts from reaching the people most in need. In addition, Sudan is facing internal issues such as "Arab Spring"-type student protests, some of which have turned violent.

April 8 marked the end of the transitional period during which South Sudanese nationals residing in Sudan needed to regularize their residency status or return to South Sudan. Despite assurances from President Omar al-Bashir that Sudan will not expel or take punitive action against South Sudanese individuals, there have been several reports of arrests and expulsions targeting South Sudanese or Christian communities.

A report from CRS South Sudan states that it continues to contribute food and services and help promote a post-conflict recovery phase through the Jonglei plan, an extensive Food for Peace funded three-year food security program in Jonglei State. CRS also continues its role in the on-going Jonglei Peace Initiative, in collaboration with the Catholic Church and other faith-based partners. At present it is reported that 56,000 refugees from Sudan have flooded into South Sudan which puts an even heavier burden on the government's already strained budget.



Africa: Concerns about increased militarization

In late June, the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns joined with other colleagues in signing the letter below to the U.S. Senate; it asks the Senate to reconsider the increasingly militarized relationship the U.S. has been fostering with African nations. In the next few weeks we might learn more about the recent resignation of Scott Gration from his position as U.S. ambassador to Kenya; initial analysis points to Gration's preference for a more conciliatory tone led to disagreements with the administration's larger plan for the region.

We write to urge you to resist the growing militarization of U.S. aid and policy toward Africa. Recent appropriations and policies reflect an increasing focus on both regional and bilateral military operations and assistance. In anticipation of the FY 2013 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) reaching the Senate floor, we ask that you oppose this detrimental approach that threatens to undermine African efforts toward stability and long-term peace.

In the House Armed Services Committee's recent report on the NDAA, the following language called directly for more "aggressive" and "surgical" operations on the African continent: "Specifically, the committee believes that activities that utilize U.S. Special Operations Forces and an 'indirect approach' that leverages local and indigenous forces should be used more aggressively and surgically in Africa..."

Section 1203 of the Senate Armed Services Committee's NDAA echoes this approach, appropriating funding to train and equip security forces for counterterrorism purposes in Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti and countries participating in the African Union Mission in Somalia. While a recent article in the *New York Times* cited a failed attempt by the military's Special Operations Command to gain additional authority in places "like Kenya," it also noted that other programs – such as the Global Security Contingency Fund – already exist to support these operations. Most disturbingly, [a recent] *Washington Post* article on the subject revealed widening covert intelligence and targeted assassination operations in Africa, as well as deeply concerning reports of airstrikes, raids and drone use in Somalia specifically.

Though such initiatives are presented as being in the interest of U.S. national security, "aggressive" operations in Africa and elsewhere instead have a history of resulting in exacerbated instability, increased threat to civilian safety and further radicalization. Training and equipment programs have also been criticized in the past

for lack of clear accountability and minimal evaluation of impact on related conflicts and communities. In light of these and other concerns, we urge you to reverse the trend of increasing focus on U.S. counterterrorism and military operations and assistance – an approach that could both pose an immediate danger and undermine long-term peace. Specifically, we ask that you:

- **Reject language in support of and funding requests intended for military operations in Africa – including section 1203 – and instead encourage increased support for Africans' work to address root causes of violence and promote peaceful, just solutions.** Foreign policy experts worldwide have raised concerns around the impact of U.S. special military and counterterrorism operations and targeted assassinations ..., citing significant civilian casualties and further destabilization. This growing emphasis overshadows and undermines support for the U.S. and African civilian entities working to address sources of instability and prevent violence in the long-term. While this year's State and Foreign Operations budget request includes only a few references to reconciliation and civilian peacebuilding in East Africa, for example, it frequently mentions the region with regard to various counterterrorism and military accounts.
- **As a first step, ensure vigilant monitoring and oversight of military and counterterrorism assistance to African countries.** Push for greater transparency and halt aid immediately in the event of human rights abuses or exacerbated insecurity. A comprehensive [list] of current U.S. military and counterterrorism assistance to African countries is impossible to find, while language encouraging additional funding for special operations only increases. ... Immediate risks include potential ... human rights abuses and diversion of equipment into illicit markets, a major concern given that arms trafficking already poses a threat to many African countries.

Ultimately, we believe military operations and aid are the wrong tools to strengthen partnerships and support peace and development on the continent. While we advocate for an end to these military operations and related assistance, we urge you to take the steps above to immediately address this worrying trend. Rather than undermining African civilian efforts and its own related programs, U.S. policy should instead support the peace and stability that will best improve security in the long-term.

Maryknoll on the Hill

On May 16-17, over 70 Maryknoll missionaries, Affiliates and staff members gathered in Washington, D.C. for a special event to help mark the Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers' and the Maryknoll Sisters' centennial years (2011-2012).

For many years, the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns (MOGC) has brought the lived experience of Maryknoll missionaries and the people with whom they live and work to the decision-making tables in our nation's capital. The authentic understanding that Maryknoll brings to discussions of international policy is respected by our colleagues and by lawmakers alike. This gathering of the Maryknoll family helped to raise awareness of the critical issues of justice, peace and the integrity of creation, and illuminated the work of the MOGC and its efforts on behalf of the Maryknoll community.

Our time together began with Mass on May 16 at Holy Redeemer Parish, where the MOGC is located. Fr. David Bava, the pastor, celebrated the Eucharist. Sr. Janice McLaughlin, president of the Maryknoll Sisters, gave an opening reflection before Mass began. Following Mass, we shared dinner together in the church's social hall; Robert Ellsberg, Orbis Books publisher and editor-in-chief, spoke about Maryknoll's corporate commitment to justice and peace. At the end of the evening, the MOGC executive committee -- Fr. Paul Mason, Sr. Janice McLaughlin and Sam Stanton -- presented Marie Dennis with a gift in recognition of her many years of service to Maryknoll.

On May 17, our entire group gathered at the White House Conference Center for a briefing by White House and administration staffers on a number of issues, including overcoming the marginalization of women (with Melanne Vermeer, Ambassador-at-large for Global Women's Issues, U.S. Department of State); immigration reform (with Felicia Escobar, senior policy advisor, White House Domestic Policy Council); addressing HIV and AIDS (with John Monahan, office of the Global AIDS Coordinator, U.S. Department of State); and

environment and climate change (with Celeste Connors, director of Environment and Climate Change, National Security Council.)

The staffers presented their work on their respective topics, and Maryknollers were able to ask some questions and raise a few issues during the briefing.

Following the White House meeting, we regrouped at the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church for a time of reflection; Sr. Simone Campbell, executive director of NETWORK, a national Catholic social justice lobby, helped prepare us for visits with members of Congress.

During the afternoon, participants visited Capitol Hill, had some good conversations with a few members of Congress and with staffers, and were able to deliver Maryknoll's statements on immigration, trade justice, and nuclear power/weapons.

We wrapped up our time together that evening with a reception with colleagues. Marie Dennis, who recently resigned as the director of the MOGC after 22 years with Maryknoll, gave a talk about how Maryknoll's lived experience has shaped its analysis and advocacy work.

Videos of Robert Ellsberg's and Marie Dennis' talks, plus a couple of other videos from our time together, are available on the MOGC YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/user/MaryknolLOGC); links are also found on our website. (Thanks to outgoing Maryknoll Affiliate coordinator Fred Goddard for his videography work.)



A few of the folks who attended: L to R, Fr. John Martin, Cecilia Espinoza, Sr. Rosemarie Milazzo, Lynn Monahan, Sr. Roni Schweyen, Fr. Bob Jalbert, Debbie Kair, Sr. Claudette LaVerdiere, Sam Stanton, Fr. Tom Henehan, Sr. Ann Braudis

Earth Summit Rio+20: Driving the agenda forward

Four Maryknollers attended the United Nations Earth Summit Rio + 20 which took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 2012. Sr. Ann Braudis, one of the participants, wrote the following reflection.

One of the achievements of the first Rio Conference in 1992 was the creation of a system for including civil society in the United Nations work for sustainable development through the formation of nine major groups. One of the established groups is labeled non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which is the category that encompasses Maryknoll for purposes of UN work. Maryknoll brings to the international table voices of marginalized people, particularly women and children, from many forgotten corners of the globe. It brings anthropological and theological perspectives rooted in hope and the promise of fullness of life. It brings as well the work of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns regarding moving beyond the current economic model rooted in unsustainable growth; and the critique of gross domestic product (GDP) as a development measure. (See related article on page 15.)

A significant major group category is science and technology. Throughout the past decades, the scientific organizations that belong to this UN major group have engaged in sustainable development research rooted in the nature of the planet and its boundaries and have worked relentlessly to establish consensus within the scientific community concerning their findings. Within the UN arena, respect for the scientific community is more and more in evidence.

The Rio Conference opened with a brief and stunning animated film produced by the Planet under Pressure conference, held in London in March, just prior to the Rio Summit. The title of the film is Welcome to the Anthropocene (www.anthropocene.info) and it demonstrates the scientific community's capacity for translating its findings into compelling language and visuals. Anthropocene is a fairly new word; it refers to humanity as a global force on the scale of the major geological processes experienced by the planet in its formation through the millennia. The film acts as educator regarding the unsustainable influence of modern humanity on the planet and as source of inspiration toward shaping the future we want. It provided a dramatic opening to the conference, which was the United Nations' largest ever.

In this age of the Anthropocene it is difficult for



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Development

state leaders to provide the vision and leadership needed to guarantee a sustainable future because they are constrained by the current urgent needs of their states, as they understand them. Thinking and acting in planetary terms are skills that have yet to be developed. However,

thanks to the tireless work of the scientific community, negotiators have been nudged to a new border from where it can be seen that a sustainable future will require the best knowledge available regarding the planet and its boundaries. It is significant that the outcome document, The Future We Want,

adopted by all the nations present at the Summit, states repeatedly the necessity to base decisions for the future in science based fact. In itself this is a large achievement. Awareness or consciousness must precede action.

Speaking to the representatives of the major groups at the Summit, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon noted that the present time is very rich because of all that is known and can be done but also very complex with immense challenges for multilateral processes and negotiations. He noted that the Summit outcome document is weaker than we would have wanted and that the negotiations were slow and painful. However, he pointed out, to have been able to reach agreement after such prolonged and difficult dealings beginning last December in New York, is nothing less than extraordinary. At the very least humanity has decided to go forward together to build a sustainable future. Hopefully, implementation will match this aspiration. He thanked each of the major groups for providing essential information and depth of vision and values and asked that we continue to raise the voices of the world, particularly in the work ahead in delineating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are mandated by the outcome document. This work will begin in the fall under the auspices of the UN General Assembly. It will be important to ensure that these goals are informed by scientific findings.

While it is expected that the SDGs may become the most important practical outcome of the Summit, another significant achievement is the call to replace GDP with a new metric that will include emerging ideas concerning environmental, social and economic progress.

The Rio+20 outcome document is 53 pages long. It reaffirms and builds on the amazing documents that were produced in the first Rio Summit in 1992. As Ban Ki-moon said in his address to the major groups, Rio 1992 made the sustainable development map; now we must use the map and drive the agenda forward.

Migration: Movement toward humane policy?

After a long stretch of immobility on immigration policy in the U.S., two noteworthy events occurred in June: On June 15, President Obama announced that the federal government would defer deportation of young people without criminal records who were brought to the U.S. without documentation, and on June 25, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the federal government has authority to block several sections of Arizona state law SB 1070, aimed at undocumented persons. Both President Obama's decree and the Supreme Court's decision speak to the frustrating lack of a just and humane migration system in this country. The Catholic Legal Immigration Network (CLINIC) published the following information as a guide to the Supreme Court's ruling on SB 1070.

- **Can Arizona make it a state crime to ask for or accept unauthorized work?** No. The Court's decision means that Arizona cannot turn someone into a criminal just because s/he asks for work. Congress deliberately chose not to make it a crime for a worker to seek or engage in unauthorized employment. The decision both affirms Congress' intent and protects the dignity of work.
- **Can Arizona make it a crime to fail to complete or carry federal noncitizen registration papers?** No. The Court held that Congress has created a complete, federal system of noncitizen registration laws (which already regulates these violations), leaving states no room to pass any of their own laws in this field.
- **Can Arizona police arrest you without a warrant if they believe that you are deportable?** No. The Court saw that this section of SB 1070 would have given state police officers wider enforcement authority than even trained federal immigration agents have. It would "allow the State to achieve its own immigration policy," the Court said.
- **What about SB 1070's "reasonable suspicion" provision?** One part of SB 1070 (Section 2B) requires police to ask about a person's immigration status if they have a "reasonable suspicion" that the person is undocumented and the person was lawfully stopped on some other charge. Section 2B also requires officers to determine every arrested person's immigration status before s/he is released. The Court did not block Section 2B. But the Court was clear: if Arizona enforces Section 2B in a way that violates any part of the Constitution, advocates may bring new legal challenges.
- **Will SB 1070's "reasonable suspicion" provision go into effect tomorrow?** No. The Court's decision hasn't changed the law in Arizona yet. There are still more steps in the legal process. Be sure to stay informed. Racial profiling is still – and is always – unlawful. Remember: whatever your immigration status, you have rights when police officers stop, question, search or arrest you.
- **Will there be more legal challenges to SB 1070's "reasonable suspicion" provision?** Yes. The Court's decision will not be the last word on "reasonable suspicion." The Court made clear that other legal challenges to Section 2B would be perfectly appropriate if, after going into effect, this Section is enforced in an unconstitutional manner. And another lawsuit has already been filed in Arizona to try to block Section 2B from ever going into effect. That lawsuit makes arguments that the Court did not – and could not – consider in this case, such as whether Section 2B would always violate a person's Constitutional right to be free from unlawful detention or racially discriminatory policing.
- **What will happen to SB 1070 copycats in other states?** So far, five other states ... have passed their own state immigration enforcement laws that are modeled on Arizona's SB 1070 and are therefore called "copycats." All five of these state laws have been challenged in court; all five of the cases were placed on hold pending [this] decision. Because the U.S. Supreme Court is the highest court in the country, the courts in these states must now interpret the copycats in light of what the Court has held. Where the sections are similar enough to those blocked by the Court ..., they will probably be blocked as well. And where copycat "reasonable suspicion" provisions differ importantly from SB 1070's, they may also be blocked, if the Court's reasoning compels that outcome. Finally, remember that there are many more sections of SB 1070 and other state enforcement laws that were not even considered by the Court ...; judges will have to apply the Court's reasoning to these other sections. In the coming weeks, CLINIC will provide specific analyses of the likely impact of the Court's ruling in these five states. But overall, the Court's opinion describes a strictly limited role for states in immigration enforcement.
- **What kind of advocacy can we do now?** [The June 25] decision presents state and local advocates ... with both challenges and opportunities. We must work to ensure that police implement Section 2B in

a constitutional manner. To this end, representatives should record in detail every one of their clients' encounters with state and local police.

- **What can advocates do with this information?** We can: make formal complaints to the state's attorney general or to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security; share our stories with our parishes,

our local law enforcement partners, and the media; and assist the many civil rights organizations that will continue to file lawsuits to challenge Section 2B. Second, we must explain the importance of [the] decision and its very limited vision for state involvement in immigration enforcement. ...

Faith leaders urge strong Arms Transfer Treaty

From July 2-27, the world's governments will convene to negotiate an Arms Trade Treaty. Around the world Maryknollers will attest that it is people of faith who are frequently the first to recognize and speak up about the devastating impact of irresponsible arms use and the moral duty to regulate the trade of these deadly devices. The following "Interfaith Declaration in Support of an Arms Trade Treaty" gives voice to concerns about the humanitarian suffering caused by irresponsible arms transfers and urges governments to remain mindful of their responsibility to negotiate the strongest possible treaty.

Every year, communities are divided or destroyed and millions of people are killed, injured, raped, and forced to flee from their homes as a result of war and armed violence. The poorly regulated global trade in conventional arms and ammunition fuels conflict, poverty, gender-based violence and human rights abuses. Such injustices are an affront to human dignity and the sacredness of life.

As the world's governments convene to negotiate a global Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), we, as religious leaders and communities, faith groups and faith-based organizations urge them to negotiate in good faith an effective ATT that will reduce the human suffering caused by irresponsibly traded weapons.

While existing national, sub-regional, and regional regulations are important, they are not enough to stop irresponsible transfers of arms and ammunition between countries. That is why a global treaty for arms trade that sets binding standards for arms transfers is needed. A strong ATT will clarify and set obligations under international law and thereby reduce the human cost associated with the proliferation of all conventional arms. Furthermore, an ATT will make it easier to distinguish between legal and illegal trade and elucidate when an arms transfers should be prohibited. A comprehensive agreement will also help close existing loopholes that make the diversion of arms possible.

In 2009, a UN General Assembly resolution estab-

lished a process for elaborating an ATT with preparatory committee meetings in 2010 and 2011 and a four-week UN Conference in 2012 that seeks to produce a "legally binding instrument on the highest possible common international standards for the transfer of conventional arms."

The summer 2012 conference is rapidly approaching and the world's leaders have a moral responsibility to ensure that a robust treaty is negotiated. At a minimum, the ATT should establish that no international transfers of arms and ammunition will take place if there is a substantial risk that the transfer will be used in serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law or impair poverty reduction or socio-economic development.

As religious leaders, faith groups and faith-based organizations we strongly welcome these steps toward a negotiated ATT. We call upon the member states of the United Nations to negotiate and deliver a strong and effective ATT that has real impact on people's lives.

We raise our collective voice to call on all governments to work together to save lives and end the human suffering caused by irresponsible transfers of conventional arms. Furthermore, we urge governments to remain mindful of the humanitarian imperative that drives this process and find a solution that moves all nations further along the path to peace and development.

This is a chance for all involved to make history, to uphold human dignity, and to save lives.

The Interfaith Declaration is a sign-on letter created by several member groups of the Control Arms Coalition. Since its launch, the Interfaith Declaration has been signed by more than 279 religious leaders and 77 faith-based organizations located in 44 countries. The declaration will remain available to sign until it is presented to governments ahead of the 2012 treaty negotiations. To sign the declaration, please email Control Arms at info@controlarms.org. View a current list of religious leaders and faith-based organizations that have signed the Declaration at <http://speakout.controlarms.org>.

NATO: Report from Chicago

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) held meetings in Chicago on May 20-21. Members of the Maryknoll family participated in side events connected to the NATO meeting, and used the lens of faith to bring attention to several of the issues on NATO's agenda which included the Arab Spring, the Libyan civil war, the global financial crisis, transition for NATO forces in Afghanistan, and a missile shield system for Europe. The following report was written by Curt Klueg, who, with his family, recently rejoined the Maryknoll lay missionaries and is now living and working in Kenya.

Leading up to the NATO meetings, the Maryknoll Affiliates Chicago Chapter organized a panel discussion with a focus on education and examination of NATO and the G8 from a faith perspective. Panelists included former Maryknoll lay missionaries, representatives from the Archdiocese of Chicago Peace and Justice Office, Catholic Workers, as well as faith oriented peace organizations such as Voices for Creative Nonviolence and Christian Peacemaker Teams.

The substance of these panel discussions, attended by more than 100 people in two different parish settings, focused on the Catholic and Christian response to these global bodies. Panelists discussed poor allocation of funds for purposes of military adventurism rather than for the needs of poor and vulnerable people. Additionally, the presentations addressed NATO's initial goals and purpose and how those goals have morphed in recent decades from a Cold War era defensive posture into a more offensive military adventurism of recent Afghanistan and Libyan assaults. The G8 was viewed as the powerful, economic decision-making body that negatively affects the Global South while excluding its voice.

Throughout the evenings of prayer and education,

Catholic social teaching served as an anchor. For instance, while discussing military expenditures in light of pervasive poverty, we were reminded that our own Catholic bishops in their pastoral letter Economic Justice for All tell us that “[t]he needs of the poor take priority over the desires of the rich; the rights of workers over the maximization of profits; the preservation of the environment over uncontrolled industrial expansion; the production to meet social needs over production for military purposes.” #94

In the week leading up to the NATO summit, Catholic Workers from around the country gathered for their yearly Faith and Resistance Retreat which ended with the week's first act of civil disobedience and arrests. Nearly 100 Catholic Workers and their extended community participated in a nonviolent protest at Barack Obama's Chicago office. They offered a symbolic bread-breaking as a reminder of the Gospel orientation of peace and community, and decried lives lost and resources poorly spent on NATO supported wars, particularly the war in Afghanistan.

As NATO leaders gathered, two large-scale marches took place on Friday, May 18 and on Sunday, May 20. The first, organized by the National Nurses United Union (and endorsed by the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, MOGC), promoted the “Robin Hood Tax” on speculative financial transactions. (See page 14 for more information.) The nurses' union (and the MOGC) supports the “Robin Hood Tax” because it is a relatively simple way to raise funds for health, education and environmental concerns.

Prior to the weekend's largest march on May 20, Pax Christi organized a Mass in Grant Park, attended by well over 100 Catholics from local parishes, Catholic Worker communities, Maryknoll, and others associated with the 8th Day Center for Justice. Despite a culture of fear promoted by the city and to an even greater degree the media, the entire week remained overwhelmingly nonviolent with few arrests for violent behavior.

For the thousands who participated (including a broad spectrum of labor, religious and human rights organizations) the climax of the march was when 45 veterans returned their combat and ser-



Participants gather for the "Robin Hood" rally in Chicago during the NATO meetings in May

vice medals. With grief and anger, most veterans referenced their participation in the loss of innocent life and the illegality of a war that left them severely wounded in mind, body and spirit. They lamented that these NATO wars left many others, military and civilian, dead.

“NATO is a hammer and as such it sees everything

as a nail” was an analogy heard often in discussion regarding as NATO’s role as the military entity serving the economic interests of the G8. Our Christian faith, however, calls us to address humanitarian crisis with compassion, love and self-sacrifice. We are called to love our enemy, not kill them.

Robin Hood Tax campaign launched

Harkening back to legendary English figure who “robbed from the rich and gave to the poor,” a coalition of more than 60 national and international organizations launched a Robin Hood Tax campaign on June 20 to pressure governments to place very small taxes on financial transactions (financial transaction tax, FTT) in order to raise money for health, education and environmental programs. Campaigners argue that such a tax is necessary to raise increasingly limited public funds and to help decrease some of the dangerous speculation partly responsible for the financial crash of 2008.

In the same way that Robin Hood took money from Britain’s richest people to give to the poor, an FTT would take funds from the financial sector which now comprises a large portion of the overall economy. As Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) said in 2010 – and confirmed by fact-checking organizations – “Fifteen years ago, the assets of the six largest banks in this country totaled 17 percent of GDP... The assets of the six largest banks in the United States today total 63 percent of GDP.”

The Robin Hood Tax would place a miniscule tax on different transactions, (varying between 0.005 percent and 0.5 percent, depending on the items traded, such as derivatives, stocks, bonds, currency, etc. (It is broader than the proposed Tobin Tax, which focused only on currencies.) Being so small, the tariff would barely be noticed by regular traders. Only high frequency traders, whose computer programs make millions of trades per second skimming money off of infinitesimal price changes, would likely catch the difference. (Limiting this sort of trading may be a good idea as increasingly markets have been forced to shut down temporarily due to high frequency programs run amok.) More than 1,000 economists from 53 countries and 1,000 parliamentarians in more than 30 countries have signed letters in support of financial transaction taxes. Even though the tax would be felt by very few, it would bring in hundreds of billions of dollars to be used to benefit the poorest people in society.

While the fabled Robin Hood had a conflicted re-

lationship with the church, the current campaign using his name has wide support from faith leaders around the world. A letter to the U.S. Congress signed by more than 100 organizations, many of them faith-based, reads, “[T]hree years after the financial meltdown and a taxpayer bailout, Wall Street is booming with record profits and bonuses being reported. At the same time folks on Main Street are still suffering with zero new job growth and rising poverty. It is both fair and practical to call on Wall Street to do more to aid the recovery.”

A statement from German Catholic and Protestant churches said, “The taxation of capital is far below the taxation of goods and services. The FTT would increase the taxation of the financial sector which has in the past been exempted from contributing financially to society. The FTT can potentially create more stability in the financial markets and at the same time could create the means for global poverty eradication and protection of the environment and tackling climate change.”

The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, the Catholic Church’s socioeconomic think tank, wrote, “[T]axation measures on financial transactions... would be very useful in promoting global development and sustainability according to the principles of social justice and solidarity.”

Even a number of financial market experts have come out in support. Seven former executives of Wall Street banks, together with four current and former European bank heads and over 40 other hedge fund and portfolio managers, wrote a letter to G20 leaders saying, “New FTTs, whether agreed by the G20, EU, or by individual countries, offer a real opportunity to help restore the financial sector to its proper role, while raising massive revenues for people in urgent need at home and in the world’s poorest countries. We believe this is an opportunity that should not be missed.”

Faith in action:

Learn more about the campaign at its website, www.robinhoodtax.com, and help spread the word to your friends and families.

How to make the world happier

A subtle but profound change is currently taking place that could potentially improve the living conditions of people everywhere: Governments around the world are acknowledging finally that increasing gross domestic product (GDP, the market value of all officially recognized goods and services produced within a country in a given period) does not necessarily indicate success or improvements in well-being. In fact, sometimes well-being decreases as GDP increases, especially in higher-income countries. Alternatives to GDP, specifically “happiness” measurements that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions, are gaining respect as practical tools to shape public policies.

The Earth Institute recently released the World Happiness Report which summarizes the decades of research into causes of happiness and techniques for measuring it. While dismissed by many for years, research shows that “happiness, though indeed a subjective experience, can be objectively measured, assessed, correlated with observable brain functions, and related to the characteristics of an individual and the society... It can signal underlying crises or hidden strengths. It can suggest the need for change.”

Happiness surveys have been carried out for many years by the Gallup World Poll (GWP), the World Values Survey (WVS), and the European Social Survey (ESS). The GWP is the largest, covering more than 150 countries. The surveys have shown, perhaps not surprisingly, that “[h]igher income, better health of mind and body, and a high degree of trust in one’s community (‘social capital’) all contribute to high life satisfaction; poverty, ill health, and deep divisions in the community all contribute to low life satisfaction.”

But a higher income does not guarantee more happiness: “A household’s income counts for life satisfaction, but only in a limited way. Other things matter more: community trust, mental and physical health, and the quality of governance and rule of law. Raising incomes can raise happiness, especially in poor societies, but fostering cooperation and community can do even more, especially in rich societies that have a low mar-

ginal utility of income. It is no accident that the happiest countries in the world tend to be high-income countries that also have a high degree of social equality, trust, and quality of governance. In recent years, Denmark has been topping the list. And it’s no accident that the U.S. has experienced no rise of life satisfaction for half a century, a period in which inequality has soared, social trust has declined, and the public has lost faith in its government.”

The studies show, and more governments agree, that “GDP is a valuable goal, but should not be pursued to the point where economic stability is jeopardized, community cohesion is destroyed, the vulnerable are not supported, ethical standards are sacrificed, or the world’s



climate is put at risk. While basic living standards are essential for happiness, after the baseline has been met happiness varies more with quality of human relationships than income. Other policy goals should include high employment and high-quality work; a strong community with high levels of trust and respect, which government can influence through inclusive participatory policies; improved physical and mental health; support

of family life; and a decent education for all... The most basic goal is that by measuring happiness across a society and over time, countries can avoid ‘happiness traps’ such as in the U.S. in recent decades, where GDP may rise relentlessly while life satisfaction stagnates or even declines.”

The potential for significant change in public policy caused by focusing on better measurements of well-being must not be underestimated. Our obsession with GDP for so many decades has led many governments to adopt policies that increase economic growth while at the same time decreasing happiness and overall health of citizens. This has resulted in new crises of obesity, smoking, diabetes, depression, and other ills of modern life. By focusing on increasing happiness instead of an outdated number like GDP, perhaps the U.S. could truly fulfill its promise to help people secure their God-given right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

HIV and AIDS: Progress update

The 19th annual International AIDS Conference, convened by the International AIDS Society (IAS), will be held July 22-27 in Washington, D.C., with an expected attendance of 25,000 people. Health workers, scientists and all related personnel agree that giant strides have been made to confront this elusive disease, but much more needs to be done to solve the challenges of HIV and AIDS.

According to the World Health Organization, the number of new cases around the world was 2.7 million in 2011, with 1.9 million of those cases – nearly three quarters – in Sub-Saharan Africa. Possible factors contributing to this high incidence of HIV cases in Africa include cultural traditions; conflicts (which lead to a large number of refugees); and a lack of education about HIV and AIDS. Doctors, nurses and health care workers who are dedicated to serving people with HIV are over-burdened.

Many African countries struggle economically; combatting HIV and AIDS takes precious financial resources. In the Abuja Declaration of 2001, African nations pledged to allocate 15 percent of their annual budgets to healthcare, which would include responding to HIV. However, more than 10 years later, most countries have not met this target. Kenya, as an example, spends 6.5 percent of its annual budget on health.

In May, it was announced that the Global Fund to Fight HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria would be allotted an estimated \$1.6 billion in additional funds for the 2012-14 period. The availability of the new monies is believed to be the result of renewed confidence in the newly restructured Global Fund. Certainly this is good news for all of those struggling in the field. Dr. Jennifer Cohn with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF, Doctors Without Borders) told *The Guardian* (February 2) that in eight of the 19 countries where MSF works with people with HIV, more than 80 percent of patients receive medicine paid for by the Global Fund.



This year marks the first time the International AIDS Conference will be held in the U.S. since 1990. The gathering will host discussions on the current situation, evaluate scientific research, and map a way forward while facilitating dialogue among policy makers, individuals living with HIV, and those who are working in the field.

The conference was first held in Atlanta in 1985; in 1990 the IAS resolved to hold the meeting only in

countries where participants would not be barred due to their HIV status. This decision therefore excluded the U.S. as a location due to its restriction on international visitors who were HIV positive.

In 2009, President Obama reversed the then-22-year ban, and the IAS announced that the 2012 conference would mark a return to the United States.

A coalition of advocacy groups from around the world have organized the “We Can End AIDS” campaign, which hopes to mobilize thousands of supporters in Washington, D.C. on July 24 for a march towards the White House with the goal of increasing the local and international political will around HIV and AIDS.

The march has been divided into branches with different meeting points; all will march towards the White House, merging together for the final convergence at Lafayette Park midafternoon. Themes of the branches include:

- ending corporation-friendly trade deals that allow drug companies to prioritize profit over people;
- using the proposed Robin Hood tax to raise money from banks in order to fund treatment and prevention programs (see related article on page 14); and
- promoting sound public policies based on science and human needs (which includes ending the federal ban on syringe exchange programs).

Learn more about the conference at www.aids2012.org; learn more about the July 24 march at www.wecanendaids.org.

Torture: End prolonged solitary confinement

On June 19, the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Human Rights held the first-ever Congressional hearing to reassess the use of solitary confinement. Attendance was so high the hearing room filled and an overflow room contained over 100 more spectators. Following the hearing, Kathy McNeely, director of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns (MOGC), spoke at an interfaith press conference held by the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT). The following article was written by Ainsley Rossitto, an intern with the MOGC.

“Do you believe that ... solitary confinement, 23 hours a day — five hours a week when you’re allowed to leave that box or something that size — do you believe based on your life experience that’s going to have an impact on an individual?” Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL) asked Charles Samuels Jr., director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, who responded, “I don’t believe it’s the preferred option.”

The use of long-term solitary confinement has been proven to cause detrimental psychological and physiological effects, particularly on juveniles and those with mental illness. Sen. Durbin labeled the issue as a “truly bipartisan” concern of this country’s morals since the U.S. holds more prisoners in solitary than any other democratic nation. (Sen. Durbin noted that the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department declined the invitation to testify.)

Sen. Durbin is working on legislation that will minimize the use of this practice and strictly forbid the holding of juveniles and those with mental illness in solitary. Christopher Epps, commissioner of the Department of Corrections in Mississippi (one of the growing number of states already implementing solitary reform), testified that the reduction of the use of solitary has proven to lower prison violence and save millions of dollars. Another large concern, noted by Sen. Durbin, is “the impact of isolation on the vast majority of prisoners who will be released one day to rejoin our communities.”

Testimony was also heard from Anthony Graves, who was wrongly convicted of murder and served a decade of his 18.5 years in

Kathy McNeely speaks at an interfaith press conference organized by the National Religious Campaign Against Torture on June 19, the day of a Senate hearing on the use of solitary confinement.

a Texas prison in solitary. He described how he “lived under some of the worst conditions imaginable with the filth, the food, the total disrespect of human dignity” in his solitary cell, similar to the replica placed at the back of the hearing room, measuring seven feet by ten feet, containing only a bunk and toilet.

In support of the hearing, a nationwide 23-hour fast began June 18, symbolizing the 22-24 hours per day for weeks, months, or even years that prisoners in solitary confinement spend in their cells. It was ended with a breaking of the bread at a press conference attended by various religious leaders active in NRCAT’s interfaith coalition. McNeely gave a statement that embodied the Catholic concern about solitary confinement; the Protestant, Jewish, and Muslim communities also offered testimonies.

McNeely detailed the debilitating effects torture and solitary confinement had on Maryknoll missionaries Sister Rosalia Kettl and Bishop James Walsh. Kettl, who was imprisoned during her mission in Hong Kong, became “ill from the tension, cramped quarters, and lack of hygiene.” Walsh spent two years in solitary in China where he was not permitted to celebrate Mass, let alone communicate with anyone; when released from solitary he reflected, “I will live each present moment, filling it to the brim with love.”

McNeely ended her presentation by saying, “Catholic social thought is built on the dignity of the human person ... According to Church teaching all people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all... The practice of solitary confinement undermines this right and duty.”



Shareholders react to bribery allegations

In April 1999, over 400 Walmart shareholders, (including the Maryknoll Fathers & Brothers, Maryknoll Sisters and Maryknoll Lay Missioners), academics and non-governmental organizations sent a letter to then-CEO David Glass, which began:

“The unparalleled growth of Wal-Mart as an aggressive and competitive global retailer raises serious concerns that the company’s strategic vision to achieve success in the marketplace comes without an ethical standard of measurement on which to base decisions about the company’s support of human rights, a living wage for employees world-wide, a diverse work force with attainable upward mobility in management, respect for Indigenous rights, environmental improvement and transparency, and a commitment to sustainable communities in its service areas.”

In that letter, shareholders called on Walmart to “develop a strategic vision that includes objectives committing the company to 1) exert leadership in community relations in all locales where it has stores; 2) participate in diversity programs and public disclosure regarding these objectives; 3) establish policies on Indigenous issues along with Indigenous leaders; 4) environmental improvement and transparency in accordance with the CERES Principles; 5) pay wages that enable their employees and employees of their vendors to meet their basic needs and provide some discretionary income; and 6) effectively monitor and implement an independent monitoring process for its supplier plants to eliminate sweatshop conditions.”

Thirteen years later, shareholders spoke out in light of the April 21, 2012 *New York Times* article describing how Walmart de Mexico allegedly paid millions of dollars in bribes to speed building permits and to gain other favors. The Times reported that Walmart executives in the U.S. subsequently thwarted any investigations into Walmart de Mexico’s actions.

In a press release issued by the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) on April 25, Sister Barbara Aires, leader of ICCR’s Walmart Caucus said: “We have a tremendous investment in this company in terms of our time, expertise and yes, capital, and find these allegations deeply disturbing on so many levels. Should these reports be confirmed, we deem this a significant breach of trust and a loss of management credibility.” ICCR members called on Walmart to support publicly the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and oppose the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s attempts to weaken the law. They also urged the company to cooperate with the

US Department of Justice’s investigation of the Walmart bribery and cover-up charges.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the Retail Industry Leaders Association have participated in efforts to scale back the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, which prohibits bribes to officials of foreign governments. Walmart executives serve as directors at both groups.

When Walmart did not respond to ICCR’s statement, Sister Barbara sent a letter on May 29 to Rob Walton, Chair of Walmart’s Board of Directors and son of the company’s founder, Sam Walton, expressing dismay that the Board had not publicly addressed the bribery allegations and writing:

“We believe the Board needs to take a leadership role to ensure that:

- Members of the Board most directly involved do not have any conflict in pursuing a rigorous investigation of the allegations
- The Board acknowledges its critical role in creating a culture of strict compliance and accountability
- Transparency and openness is evident in all public communications so that this breach of trust is addressed and management credibility can be restored.”

Since the Times’ report, Walmart has begun an internal investigation of possible bribery in its operations in Mexico, and it has also been reported that the company is reviewing its operations in Brazil, China, India and South Africa.

In her letter, Sister Barbara noted these reviews, but wrote, “we do not see any indication of how the results of that assessment will be communicated either internally or externally. The Board must have a clear, transparent communications and accountability plan similar to what other companies have implemented in crisis situations in order to restore credibility and stakeholder trust.”

At Walmart’s annual shareholder meeting, the two largest state pension funds in the country (California Public Employees Retirement System and California State Teachers Retirement System) opposed the re-election of the Board of Directors. However, since the Walton family owns nearly 50 percent of the company shares, the outcome was never in doubt. Yet 13 percent of shareholders voted against the re-election of former CEO Mike Duke and Rob Walton, and over 15 percent voted against ex-CEO Lee Scott. A representative of the New York City Comptroller’s Office called the result “unprecedented opposition to the key leadership of the company.”

Resources

- 1) **Friends Across Borders immersion experiences:** Friends Across Borders, a project of the Maryknoll Lay Missioners, has several immersion trips planned: 1) Cambodia, February 15–March 1, 2013 and 2) São Paulo, Brazil, March 9–21, 2013. Both trips will include site visits to Maryknoll ministries, daily reflections on the work of the Maryknoll community and contemporary issues, and opportunities to visit cultural and historic sites. Trips to Bolivia, Tanzania and Kenya are also being planned for 2013. For more information, visit www.friendsacrossborders.org or call 914-762-6364, ext. 207.
- 2) **The Scale of the Universe 1 and 2:** These web tools take viewers from the smallest elements to the largest to understand the scale of creation, and opens the possibility to deepen the knowledge of the elements by clicking on each of them. In its simplicity, it is a beautiful experience that makes us realize how large (and small) the world is in which we live. Watch them at <http://www.htwins.net/scale/> and <http://www.htwins.net/scale2/>.
- 3) **Video: Solitary confinement: Torture in your backyard:** This 20-minute video produced by the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT) is a resource for churches/communities to learn about the destructive use of solitary confinement in U.S. prisons and to engage people of faith in calling for its end in their state. The film could also work well in a college group setting, prayer group, prison ministry or social justice committee, and interfaith groups. NRCAT has prepared discussion guides and promotional materials to use to facilitate a group discussion. Visit NRCAT's website for details: www.nrcat.org.
- 4) **Video: Iraq Veterans Against the War:** The first part of this four part series, produced by Voice of Art, was released on June 29. The episode features the historic march and returning of service medals by members of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) in Chicago during the May 2012 NATO summit. The Voice of Art team spent the month of May following members of the Chicago IVAW chapter as they planned and carried out their action, which echoed the throwing back of medals by anti-war Vietnam veterans in Washington, D.C. in 1971. Find the videos at the Voice of Art YouTube chan-



nel; the remaining videos will be released July 6, July 13 and July 20.

- 5) **Global Footprint Network** is an international think tank working to advance sustainability through use of the Ecological Footprint, a resource accounting tool that measures how much nature we have, how much we use and who uses what. By making ecological limits central to decision-making, we are working to end overshoot and create a society where all people can live well, within the means of one planet. Go to www.footprintnetwork.org to read more and to try some of the interactive tools and resources.
- 6) **Overpriced and underwritten: The hidden cost of public-private-partnerships:** An online tool from the CEE Bankwatch Network, this website provides critical information about public-private partnerships to those who might be curious to dig deeper: activists, NGOs, researchers, journalists, and anyone else. Bankwatch is a non-governmental organization with member groups from around Europe. It monitors the activities of international financial institutions (IFIs) and promotes environmentally, socially and economically sustainable alternatives to their policies and projects. <http://bankwatch.org/public-private-partnerships/>
- 7) **At God's table: Food justice for a healthy world:** Plan now to attend the 2013 Ecumenical Advocacy Days, April 5–8 in Crystal City, VA near Washington, D.C. The theme of food security is one of great importance to Maryknoll. Learn more about the annual gathering at www.advocacydays.org.