



J/P ALERT

CONFERENCE OF MAJOR SUPERIORS OF MEN JUSTICE AND PEACE OFFICE



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- [Bishop Murphy Urges Tax Credits for Working Poor Families](#)
- [Religious Leaders Say Peace Is Possible](#)
- [2010 RFK Human Rights Award to Mr. Abel Barrera Hernández](#)
- [Senate Addresses Child Trafficking](#)
- [Opportunity and Community Renewal Act - CCUSA](#)
- [Eyes Open in the Amazon](#)
- [Global Women's Project Briefing Paper](#)
- [Ecological Economics](#)
- [Immigration in a New Congress](#)

Bishop Murphy Urges Congress to Preserve, Improve Tax Credits that Benefit Working Poor Families and Children

WASHINGTON-The chairman of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), Bishop William Murphy of Rockville Centre,

New York, urged Congress to give priority attention to working poor families and their children as it debates tax policy.

"Too often the weak and vulnerable are not heard in the tax debate," wrote Bishop Murphy in a September 20 letter to Congress. He specifically asked them to preserve and improve the Child Tax Credit (CTC) and Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

"Poverty is increasing in our nation. How you structure taxes can make this moral challenge better or worse," wrote Bishop Murphy. "Recently the U.S. Census Bureau reported that in 2009 43.6 million people in the United States lived in poverty. It went on to point out that if 'refundable credits like the Earned Income Tax Credit were added to income, then almost three million children would move above the poverty line.'"

Bishop Murphy added, "We believe these essential programs assist workers and families raising children to provide the necessities of life. Unless Congress acts, these vulnerable workers and their children will be left worse off than they are now. The ethical principles of all Americans lead us to recognize that we have a social and civic responsibility to stand with these families and children."

[The full text of the letter is available online at: www.usccb.org/sdwp/national/2010-20-09-ltr-murphy-taxcredits.pdf]

In Message to White House, Religious Leaders Say Peace Is Possible

WASHINGTON-In visits to the White House and the State Department, religious leaders representing the Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities offered support for the Obama administration's efforts to continue peace talks between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

The leaders, who included Bishop Howard J. Hubbard of Albany, New York, Chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), and Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, retired Archbishop of Washington, presented a statement at meetings on September 29 with National Security Advisor General James Jones and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, on behalf of the National Interreligious Leadership Initiative for Peace in the Middle East (NILI).

"We are people of hope. We call upon the members of our religious communities to pray for the peace of Jerusalem and to support active, fair, and firm U.S. leadership to advance comprehensive peace in the Middle East," said the statement. "It will be difficult to achieve, but peace is possible."

The statement called for a two-state solution as the only viable path to peace and said sustained U.S. leadership for peace is essential.

"One of the biggest obstacles to peace in the Middle East is cynicism," said Bishop Hubbard of the meeting. "As people of faith, we must remember that with God all things are possible. The human spirit can overcome even the longest and most violent of conflicts."

"We are always hopeful for peace," Cardinal McCarrick added. "History shows us repeatedly that historic change can occur at unlikely times, and so we must never give into despair."

[Full text of the statement can be found at
www.cmep.org/Statements/NILI092910.html]

2010 RFK Human Rights Award to Be Presented to Courageous Champion of Mexico's Indigenous and Peasant Communities

Washington DC, September 23, 2010 - Mr. Abel Barrera Hernández, the founder and Director of the [Tlachinollan Human Rights Center](#) of the Montaña in Guerrero, Mexico will receive the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award for his determined efforts to end human rights abuses resulting from military impunity and narco-violence.



Mr. Barrera and his colleagues work under constant threat to protect the rights of peasants and indigenous peoples against forced disappearances, rape, arbitrary detentions, intimidation, dispossession of lands and illegal interrogations, and to improve their access to healthcare, legal representation and education.

"Justice for the indigenous peoples of the

Mexican mountains does not exist; it must be won inch by inch and confronting grave dangers. Those that seek a better life and organize to realize their human rights are sought out and assassinated," said Abel Barrera Hernández. "The award that we are presented today by the RFK Center for Justice & Human Rights comes to refresh our dreams."

The Tlachinollan Center, established in 1994, engages grassroots groups in the struggle for justice and the protection of human rights. The Tlachinollan Center's expert staff use a broad array of tools, including legal aid, advocacy on public policy and psychological support for victims. "Tlachinollan" is an indigenous word for the mountainous region of east Guerrero and symbolizes the commitment of the Tlachinollan Human Rights Center to serve the indigenous peoples of the "montaña" (mountain).

"Our friends at the Tlachinollan Center represent true courage in their struggle to expose and confront ongoing human rights abuses. By standing with the most vulnerable communities, Abel Barrera Hernández and his colleagues are at great personal risk and we are proud to recognize their work with this prestigious award," said Claudio Grossman, RFK Human Rights Award Judge and Dean of Washington College of Law, American University.

"In giving him the award, we recognize his tireless efforts to defend the rights of peasants and indigenous peoples, and we begin a long-term partnership to support him and the Tlachinollan Center in their struggle," said Monika Kalra Varma, Director of the [RFK Center for Human Rights](#).

Mrs. Robert F. Kennedy will present Mr. Barrera with the 2010 Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award in Washington, D.C., in a ceremony in mid-November. Mr. Barrera joins 41 RFK human rights laureates in 24 countries as the recipient of the 27th annual prize and multi-year partnership with the RFK Center.

For 42 years, the RFK Center has worked for a more peaceful and just world. The Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award was established in 1984 to honor courageous and innovative human rights defenders throughout the world who stand up against injustice, often at great personal risk. The award signifies the beginning of an on-going partnership with the RFK Center for Human Rights in Washington, DC. Winners are selected by an independent panel of human rights experts. The 2010 panel included Claudio Grossman, Dean of Washington College of Law, American University; Gay McDougall, UN Independent Expert on Minority Issues; Makau Mutua, Dean of University at Buffalo Law School, The State University of New York; Sushma Raman, President of Southern California Grantmakers; and Dr. William F. Schultz, Senior Fellow at Center for American Progress.

Senate Committee Passes Cardin, Boxer, Brownback Bill Addressing Child Trafficking

Legislation Would Aid State Department in Combating Exploitation of Children

WASHINGTON- The Senate Foreign Relations Committee unanimously approved Tuesday the Child Protection Compact Act, a bipartisan bill introduced by U.S. Senators **Benjamin L. Cardin** (D-MD), **Barbara Boxer** (D-CA), and **Sam Brownback** (R-KS) that would give the State Department additional tools to combat child trafficking, exploitation and enslavement.

"If we are going to combat human trafficking at its root, we need to strengthen cooperation between the United States and other countries, and this bill does that," said Senator Cardin, chairman of the [Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe](#) (U.S. Helsinki Commission) and a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. "Congress should pass this legislation this year to give the State Department the flexibility it needs to create strong partnerships with foreign governments who are committed to protecting children from modern-day slavery."

Senator **Boxer** said, "The trafficking of children is one of the most heinous crimes imaginable. I am so proud that my colleagues, both Democrats and Republicans, supported this bill, which will give the State Department new, innovative tools to help protect vulnerable children around the globe." Senator Boxer chairs the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on International Operations and Organizations, Human Rights, Democracy, and Global Women's Issues.

According to the [International Labour Organization](#), 1.8 million children worldwide are exploited for pornography and prostitution, with many more exploited through trafficking and enslavement.

The Child Protection Compact Act (S. 3184) aims to facilitate a more targeted approach to child trafficking by authorizing the Secretary of State to enter into three-year "Child Protection Compacts" with countries that are eager, but currently unable, to combat the high prevalence of tracking within their borders. No country would be eligible for more than \$15 million in assistance over three years, and participants that violate compact requirements will lose funding.

This legislation was developed in collaboration with the non-governmental organizations International Justice Mission and World Vision.

A similar bill, H.R.2737, was introduced in the House of Representatives by Commission Ranking Republican Representative Chris Smith (R-NJ) and Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) with 110 bipartisan cosponsors.

The National Opportunity and Community Renewal Act -Catholic Charities USA

Washington, DC- Sen. **Robert P. Casey** (D-PA) and Rep. **James McGovern** (D-MA) today introduced The National Opportunity and Community Renewal Act, S. 3845/H.R. 6222, a culmination of twelve months of work by [Catholic Charities USA](#) (CCUSA) in their Centennial year to identify innovative strategies existing in communities throughout the country that will serve to revamp our nation's approach to poverty prevention and alleviation.

"With this legislation, today we tell the tens of millions of Americans living in poverty that there is a new hope. That they are not destined to live in poverty for their entire lives," said Fr. Snyder. "That with the help provided in this legislation, people in need will be propelled onto a path of self-sufficiency, enabling them to achieve new legacies of health and happiness for their families."

The National Opportunity and Community Renewal Act updates current service eligibility criteria, set by approximation of a 1960's food budget, using both the Human Development Index and the Supplemental Poverty Measurement. Recognizing that individuals and households who receive social services do not require the same amount or type of resources, this legislation establishes a tiered system for determining those needs. In an effort to develop an adequate measurement for evaluation of poverty relief programs, it also encourages the design of a system that would incorporate the gathering and analysis of qualitative information alongside quantitative data to illustrate the success (or failure) of existing programs and in turn inform decisions to invest in those programs.

"This legislation represents an essential step forward if our country expects to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those struggling with poverty," said CCUSA's *Candy S. Hill*, Senior Vice President for Social Policy and Government Affairs. "For far too long our nation has been satisfied with the status quo and our safety nets have suffered. The National Opportunity and Community Renewal Act puts a focus on market driven solutions and results oriented programs to make sustainable change for the 43 million Americans living in poverty today."

Catholic Charities USA has served as advocate for the poor for over one hundred years. For more information on The National Opportunity and Community Renewal Act, visit www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/netcommunity/Document.Doc?id=2397.

Eyes open in the Amazon [excerpts]

By Barbara Fraser

IQUITOS, PERU (Sep. 20, 2010)-- On a steamy Sunday afternoon, Br. Paul McAuley FSC huddled in a thatched-roof shelter with a group of college students from remote indigenous communities. The promised government meal subsidy had not arrived, and the students were out of food. There had been no breakfast or lunch that day, and there was no money for dinner.

Their urgent need temporarily eclipsed the threat hanging over McAuley, who has been their adviser, supporter and friend for the past decade. A month earlier, Peruvian immigration officials had announced that they were revoking his visa, accusing him of disturbing the peace. Although he had won a stay, McAuley, a De La Salle brother from England, did not know if he would be around long enough to see the young people graduate.

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In Peru's Loreto Region, a vast swath of rainforest in the northeastern corner of the country, he is determined to help indigenous communities learn to defend their rights and stave off threats to the forest and rivers on which their lives and livelihoods depend.

And that, apparently, has annoyed some authorities.

"We were doing a campaign slowly and quietly about the dangers of a couple of parts of the [proposed new] forestry law, and I suspect that touched a nerve," McAuley said.

Peru's use of its natural resources is contentious. With annual growth of up to 10 percent in the past decade, the country was touted as Latin America's answer to the Asian tigers. Instead of high-tech industries, however, the export of raw materials drives the economy.

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When McAuley founded the Loreto Environmental Network in 2004, his message of environmental stewardship dovetailed with that of indigenous people's right to territory, culture and livelihood.

A package of presidential decrees issued in 2009, which indigenous leaders said would make it easier for private companies to strip their lands of natural resources, sparked protests that ended with a violent confrontation in Bagua, in north-central Peru, in June 2009, leaving 34 people dead. Two months later, official papers show, immigration authorities decided to revoke McAuley's residency, but they did not act until June 30, 2010.

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Amid the uncertainty, McAuley said, his religious life as a brother witnesses to community and solidarity. His troubles also cast his vow of celibacy in a new light.

Without family obligations, he said, "you're free -- you can take risks that others can't take. Others can't speak out. If they do, they'll lose their jobs and their families will suffer. It makes sense of religious life."

Nevertheless, when the deportation threat arose, two women offered to marry him so he could qualify for permanent residency. "I said, 'It's a lovely gesture, but it will get me in trouble with my community,'" he laughed.

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Now, despite the troubles and setbacks, the Amazon has captured McAuley's heart.

"The frustration makes me work harder," he said. "I try to be creative, I try to be positive, I try to infect others with my concerns." And he remains committed to the students. "While there's one of them that needs help to get through the university and survive," he said, "it's worth it."

[Barbara Fraser is a freelance writer living in Peru. You can read the entire article on [the National Catholic Reporter web site.](#)]

A Crisis Ignored - Global Women's Project Briefing Paper



Worldwide, women have been entering the paid labor force for a number of years. Unfortunately, our current social contract identifies the work-life conflict as a personal rather than a political problem. As a result, families around the world suffer and are left to address child and elder care on their own, often times with inadequate solutions.

Read "A Crisis Ignored" to learn about the care crisis and how it has manifested in the United States and abroad. This briefing paper lays out foundational ideas behind the crisis and discusses the work the [Global Women's Project](#) is focusing on currently.

Available online: www.coc.org/node/6596

Focus for 2010-2011 - Ecological Economics

In a natural progression from our recent focus on climate change and ecological sustainability, in the coming months the [Holy Cross International Justice Office](#) will explore "ecological economics."

What is Ecological Economics? Ecological economics is an alternative economic model that challenges the current growth-driven system, presenting instead a model that recognizes Earth's biophysical limits and embodies both social and ecological values.



Image credit: University of Vermont Gund Institute for Ecological Economics

Among other things, ecological economics calls for:

- "Right-sizing" national economies in order to respect Earth's need to rest and rejuvenate, and less industrialized countries need to develop in sustainable ways.
- Measuring the success of economies not by mindless growth in production and consumption, but by increased human wellbeing and ecological integrity.
- Creating strong, thriving, interdependent local/regional economies and human communities that are rich in social ties.
- Shifting to a sufficiency-based economy in which the gifts of Earth are shared equitably; everyone has enough and no one has excess.

We will be organizing our work around a visionary statement "A Call to Integrate Faith, Ecology and the Global Economy" created by the Faith-Economy-Ecology-Transformation Working Group, a coalition of faith-based organizations and individuals with which the office is affiliated. This statement has been endorsed by over 80 organizations, many of which are religious congregations.

We invite you to

- Learn more about ecological economics by reading the statement (faitheconomyecology.wordpress.com/about/).
- Consider endorsing it yourself (faitheconomyecology.wordpress.com/2010/07/26/130/) Both individual and organizational endorsements are welcome.

Immigration in a New Congress: Justice for Immigrants National Convening



November 3-5, 2010

- Answering the tough questions on immigration
- Responses to local anti-immigrant initiatives
- Analysis of election results
- Best practices for organizing
- Immigration 101 - the basics of immigration laws
- Catholic Social Teaching and Migration
- Opportunities to network
- Messaging, communications and media
- Developing a long term strategy for immigration reform

Registration costs:

\$150 for a double room (if you share a room)/\$225 for a single room. The registration fee covers the costs of food, lodging, the conference, and materials. Scholarships are available to help cover the registration fee.

Where:

Chicago, Illinois
Four Points Sheraton
Chicago O'Hare
10249 West Irving Park Road
Schiller Park, Illinois 60176
(Free Shuttle from O'Hare International Airport)

For more information, please contact Jaci Braga by phone at (202) 541-3344 or via email, at jbraga@uscgb.org. The application to register for the event can be found at: <http://quest.cvent.com/d/ndqv6m>

CMSM



- *assists major superiors in their role as leaders;*
- *promotes dialogue and collaboration with the conference of bishops and other major groups in church and society;*
- *provides a corporate influence in church and society.*

8808 Cameron St., Silver Spring, MD 20910-4152
Tel: 301-588-4030 • Fax: 301-587-4575 • www.cmsm.org

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It is also sent to justice and peace directors of CMSM member organizations,
and to others who have expressed an interest.

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