



# J/P ALERT

CONFERENCE OF MAJOR SUPERIORS OF MEN JUSTICE AND PEACE OFFICE



*January 2012* ([en español](#))

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## *Message of Pope Benedict XVI for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, January 1, 2012 (excerpts)*

[The complete [text of the Pope's message](#) can be found on the Vatican web site.]

### **EDUCATING YOUNG PEOPLE IN JUSTICE AND PEACE**

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The concerns expressed in recent times by many young people around the world demonstrate that they desire to look to the future with solid hope. At the present time, they are experiencing apprehension about many things: they want to receive an education which prepares them more fully to deal with the real world, they see how difficult it is to form a family and to find stable employment; they wonder if they can really contribute to political, cultural and economic life in order to build a society with a more human and fraternal face.

It is important that this unease and its underlying idealism receive due attention at every level of society. The Church looks to young people with hope and confidence; she encourages them to seek truth, to defend the common good, to be open to the world around them and willing to see "new things" (Is 42:9; 48:6).

#### *Educators*

Education is the most interesting and difficult adventure in life. Educating – from the Latin educere -- means leading young people to move beyond themselves and introducing them to reality, towards a fullness that leads to growth. This process is fostered by the encounter of two freedoms, that of adults and that of the young. It calls for responsibility on the part of the learners, who must be open to being led to the knowledge of reality, and on the part of educators, who must be ready to give of themselves. For this reason, today more than ever we need authentic witnesses, and not simply people who parcel out rules and facts; we need witnesses capable of seeing farther than others because their life is so much broader. A witness is someone who first lives the life that he proposes to others.

...

Every educational setting can be a place of openness to the transcendent and to others; a place of dialogue, cohesiveness and attentive listening, where young people feel appreciated for their personal abilities and inner riches, and can learn to esteem their brothers and sisters. May young people be taught to savor the joy which comes from the daily exercise of charity and compassion towards others and from taking an active part in the building of a more humane and fraternal society.

I ask political leaders to offer concrete assistance to families and educational institutions in the exercise of their right and duty to educate. Adequate support should never be lacking to parents in their task. Let them ensure that no one is ever denied access to education and that families are able freely to choose the educational structures they consider most suitable for their children. Let them be committed to reuniting families separated by the need to earn a living. Let them give young people a transparent image of politics as a genuine service to the good of all.

...

#### *Educating in justice*

In this world of ours, in which, despite the profession of good intentions, the value of the person, of human dignity and human rights is seriously threatened by the widespread tendency to have recourse exclusively to the criteria of utility, profit and material possessions, it is important not to detach the concept of justice from its transcendent roots. Justice, indeed, is not simply a human convention, since what is just is ultimately determined not by positive law, but by the profound identity of the human being. It is the integral vision of man that saves us from falling into a contractual conception of justice and enables us to locate justice within the horizon of solidarity and love.

We cannot ignore the fact that some currents of modern culture, built upon rationalist and individualist economic principles, have cut off the concept of justice from its transcendent roots, detaching it from charity and solidarity: "The 'earthly city' is promoted not merely by relationships of rights and duties, but to an even greater and more fundamental extent by relationships of gratuitousness, mercy and communion. Charity always manifests God's love in human relationships as well, it gives theological and salvific value to all commitment for justice in the world" (*Caritas in Veritate*, 6).

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (*Mt* 5:6). They shall be satisfied because they hunger and thirst for right relations with God, with themselves, with their brothers and sisters, and with the whole of creation.

#### *Educating in peace*

"Peace is not merely the absence of war, and it is not limited to maintaining a balance of powers between adversaries. Peace cannot be attained on earth without safeguarding the goods of persons, free communication among men, respect for the dignity of persons and peoples, and the assiduous practice of fraternity" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 2304). We Christians believe that Christ is our true peace: in him, by his Cross, God has reconciled the world to himself and has broken down the walls of division that separated us from one another (cf. *Eph* 2:14-18); in him, there is but one family, reconciled in love.

Peace, however, is not merely a gift to be received: it is also a task to be undertaken. In order to be true peacemakers, we must educate ourselves in compassion, solidarity, working together, fraternity, in being active within the community and concerned to raise awareness about national and international issues and the importance of seeking adequate mechanisms for the redistribution of wealth, the promotion of growth, cooperation for development and conflict resolution. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God," as Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount (*Mt* 5:9).

Peace for all is the fruit of justice for all, and no one can shirk this essential task of promoting justice, according to one's particular areas of competence and responsibility. To the young, who have such a strong attachment to ideals, I extend a particular invitation to be patient and persevering in seeking justice and peace, in cultivating the taste for what is just and true, even when it involves sacrifice and swimming against the tide.

#### *Raising one's eyes to God*

Before the difficult challenge of walking the paths of justice and peace, we may be tempted to ask, in the words of the Psalmist: "I lift up my eyes to the mountains: from where shall come my help?" (*Ps* 121:1).

To all, and to young people in particular, I wish to say emphatically: "It is not ideologies that save the world, but only a return to the living God, our Creator, the guarantor of our freedom, the guarantor of what is really good and true ... an unconditional return to God who is the measure of what is right and who at the same time is everlasting love. And what could ever save us apart from love?" Love takes delight in truth, it is the force that enables us to make a commitment to truth, to justice, to peace, because it bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (cf. *1 Cor 13:1-13*).

...

All you men and women throughout the world, who take to heart the cause of peace: peace is not a blessing already attained, but rather a goal to which each and all of us must aspire. Let us look with greater hope to the future; let us encourage one another on our journey; let us work together to give our world a more humane and fraternal face; and let us feel a common responsibility towards present and future generations, especially in the task of training them to be people of peace and builders of peace. With these thoughts I offer my reflections and I appeal to everyone: let us pool our spiritual, moral and material resources for the great goal of "educating young people in justice and peace."

## *Estas son las Mañanitas...of the Hispanic Bishops*

*[The Hispanic/Latino Bishops of the United States published a [letter to immigrants](#) on the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe [Dec. 12, 2011], with their own very special version of the "Mañanitas." Signed by 33 bishops, the letter was released simultaneously from Los Angeles and San Antonio, the sees of the two highest ranking Hispanic archbishops. ([en español](#))]*

Dear Immigrant Sisters and Brothers,

May the peace and grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you!

We the undersigned Hispanic/Latino Bishops of the United States wish to let those of you who lack proper authorization to live and work in our country know that you are not alone, or forgotten. We recognize that every human being, authorized or not, is an image of God and therefore possesses infinite value and dignity. We open our arms and hearts to you, and we receive you as members of our Catholic family. As pastors, we direct these words to you from the depths of our heart.

In a very special way we want to thank you for the Christian values you manifest to us with your lives—your sacrifice for the well-being of your families, your determination and perseverance, your joy of life, your profound faith and fidelity despite your insecurity and many difficulties. You contribute much to the welfare of our nation in the economic, cultural and spiritual arenas.

The economic crisis has had an impact on the entire U.S. community. Regretfully, some in reaction to this environment of uncertainty show disdain for immigrants and even blame them for the crisis. We will not find a solution to our problems by sowing hatred. We will find the solution by sowing a sense of solidarity among all workers and co-workers — immigrants and citizens—who live together in the United States.

In your suffering faces we see the true face of Jesus Christ. We are well aware of the great sacrifice you make for your families' well-being. Many of you perform the most difficult jobs and receive miserable salaries and no health insurance or social security. Despite your contributions to the well-being of our country, instead of receiving our thanks, you are often treated as criminals because you have violated current immigration laws.

We are also very aware of the pain suffered by those families who have experienced the deportation of one of their members. We are conscious of the frustration of youth and young adults who have grown up in this country and whose dreams are shattered because they lack legal immigration status. We also know of the anxiety of those whose application

process for permanent residency is close to completion and of the anguish of those who live daily under the threat of deportation. This situation cries out to God for a worthy and humane solution.

We acknowledge that, at times, actions taken in regard to immigrants have made you feel ignored or abandoned, especially when no objection is raised to the false impressions that are promoted within our society. Through the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops we have testified before the U.S. Congress for change in our immigration laws and for legislation that respects family unity and provides an orderly and reasonable process for unauthorized persons to attain citizenship. The new law should include a program for worker visas that respects the immigrants' human rights, provides for their basic needs and ensures that they enter our country and work in a safe and orderly manner. We will also continue to advocate on behalf of global economic justice, so that our brothers and sisters can find employment opportunities in their countries of origin that offer a living wage, and allow them to live with dignity.

Immigrants are a revitalizing force for our country. The lack of a just, humane and effective reform of immigration laws negatively affects the common good of the entire United States.

It pains and saddens us that many of our Catholic brothers and sisters have not supported our petitions for changes in the immigration law that will protect your basic rights while you contribute your hard work to our country. We promise to keep working to bring about this change. We know how difficult the journey is to reach the border and to enter the United States. That is why we are committed to do all that we can to bring about a change in the immigration law, so that you can enter and remain here legally and not feel compelled to undertake a dangerous journey in order to support and provide for your families. As pastors concerned for your welfare, we ask you to consider seriously whether it is advisable to undertake the journey here until after just and humane changes occur in our immigration laws.

Nevertheless, we are not going to wait until the law changes to welcome you who are already here into our churches, for as St. Paul tells us, "You are no longer aliens or foreign visitors; you are fellow-citizens with the holy people of God and part of God's household" (Eph 2:19).

As members of the Body of Christ which is the Church, we offer you spiritual nourishment. Feel welcome to Holy Mass, the Eucharist, which nourishes us with the word and the body and blood of Jesus. We offer you catechetical programs for your children and those religious education programs that our diocesan resources allow us to put at your disposal.

We who are citizens and permanent residents of this country cannot forget that almost all of us, we or our ancestors, have come from other lands and together with immigrants from various nations and cultures, have formed a new nation. Now we ought to open our hearts and arms to the recently arrived, just as Jesus asks us to do when he says, "I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was an alien and you took me into your house" (Mt 25:35). These words of the Lord Jesus can be applied to the new immigrants among us. They were hungry in their land of origin; they were thirsty as they traveled through the deserts, and they find themselves among us as aliens. (See Daniel G. Groody, CSC, "Crossing the Line," in *The Way*, Vol. 43, No. 2, April 2004, p. 58-69). Their presence challenges us to be more courageous in denouncing the injustices they suffer. In imitation of Jesus and the great prophets we ought to denounce the forces that oppress them and announce the good news of the Kingdom with our works of charity. Let us pray and struggle to make it possible for these brothers and sisters of ours to have the same opportunities from which we have benefited.

We see Jesus the pilgrim in you migrants. The Word of God migrated from heaven to earth in order to become man and save humanity. Jesus emigrated with Mary and Joseph to Egypt, as a refugee. He migrated from Galilee to Jerusalem for the sacrifice of the cross, and finally he emigrated from death to life in the resurrection and ascension to heaven.

Today, he continues to journey and accompany all migrants on pilgrimage throughout the world in search of food, work, dignity, security and opportunities for the welfare of their families.

You reveal to us the supreme reality of life: we are all migrants. Your migration gives a strong and clear message that we are migrants on the way to eternal life. Jesus accompanies all Christians on our journey toward the house of our Father, God's Kingdom in heaven. (See Pope John Paul II, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, No. 50.)

We urge you not to despair. Keep faith in Jesus the migrant who continues to walk beside you. Have faith in Our Lady of Guadalupe who constantly repeats to us the words she spoke to St. Juan Diego, "Am I, who am your mother, not here?" She never abandons us, nor does St. Joseph who protects us as he did the Holy Family during their emigration to Egypt.

As pastors we want to continue to do advocacy for all immigrants. With St. Paul we say to you: "Do not be mastered by evil; but master evil with good." (Rm 12:21).

May Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, accompany you and bless you always.

Sincerely in Christ our Savior,  
The Hispanic/Latino Bishops of the United States

## *Immigrant Welcoming Communities Statement*

Ten communities of Catholic Sisters of the Upper Mississippi River Valley join together to call upon President Obama and Congress to work together to enact comprehensive immigration reform.

We make this call in affirmation of our Catholic tradition that holds sacred the dignity of each person. We also recognize our immigrant history in a nation established by the rich contributions of generations of immigrants and migrants.

Today, we are witnessing the violation of human rights under our current immigration policies, particularly in the separation of families due to unjust deportations, and in the exploitation of immigrant workers. We are deeply grieved by the violence done to families through immigration raids and unjust detentions. We cannot in good conscience ignore such suffering and injustice.

Failure on the part of the federal government to reform the present unworkable system has resulted in states passing legislation that is punitive and harmful to human rights AND IS based upon inaccurate information and assumptions.

We understand that enforcement of law is part of any immigration policy. However, the present policy of involving state and local law enforcement agencies in the enforcement of federal immigration law, such as in the Secure Communities program, has resulted in abuses and the undermining of the trust between immigrant communities and the law enforcement agencies which is necessary to ensure public safety.

Therefore, we declare ourselves "Immigrant Welcoming Communities." We do this because we know that true security lies in building relationships and respecting human rights. We invite other communities and people of faith to join us in becoming Immigrant Welcoming Communities through prayer, reflection, education and action.

*an immigrant*  
~~I was a stranger~~  
and you welcomed me.

Matt. 25:35

*Jesus*

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## ***Bishops Renew Poverty USA Campaign in Response to Growing Domestic Poverty***

WASHINGTON--With 15 percent of all Americans, including nearly 1 in 4 children, living in poverty, the Department of Justice, Peace and Human Development (JPHD) of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) is renewing its poverty awareness campaign, Poverty USA, complete with a revamped website and a new social media presence and Poverty Awareness Month event in January.

"Our culture of life begins with a love that binds us to the hopes and joys, the struggles and the sorrows of people, especially those who are poor or any way afflicted," said Bishop Jaime Soto of Sacramento, California, chairman of the bishops' domestic anti-poverty effort, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD). "We march with immigrant families toward a society made stronger and safer by their inclusion. We embrace the mother and her unborn child, giving to both of them hope and opportunity. We measure our own health by the quality of care we give to those most vulnerable. We labor with those whose work is burdensome."

The campaign will promote awareness about domestic poverty with updated statistics on the [Poverty USA landing page](#) on the USCCB website, as well as resources including an interactive poverty tour and a newly-launched [presence on Facebook](#).

For Poverty Awareness Month, the new page on Facebook will also launch a month-long event on January 1. Catholic families and individuals can take part in Poverty Awareness Month by joining the Facebook event and participating in daily activities that build greater understanding about poverty in the United States. The content is also recommended for use by diocesan social action directors, CCHD directors and program coordinators, as well as parish social ministry leaders, teachers, and others.

## *Statement of Support for the Jesuits of Colombia*

December 16, 2011 - The [U.S. Jesuit Conference](#) and the [Jesuit Refugee Service/USA](#) join in offering the following statement of support for the Program for Development and Peace of Magdalena Medio (PDPMM), the [Center for Investigation and Popular Education](#) (CINEP), the [Jesuits of Colombia](#) and their Provincial, Fr. Francisco "Pacho" de Roux, the [Universidad Javeriana](#), and the Association of Cacaoteros of Buenos Aires (ASOCAB) in response to the recent indictment by the Prosecutor General of Cartagena, which attempts to discredit these parties and their work with displaced communities in Colombia.

Since its creation in 1995, the Jesuit Program for Development and Peace of Magdalena Medio has engaged in efforts aimed at fostering peace, development, and reconciliation, and has supported the attendant legal processes to return displaced communities to their land. The founder of PDPMM and current Jesuit Provincial of Colombia, Fr. Francisco "Pacho" de Roux, SJ, has been honored for his work and less than three months ago Colombian President Juan Miguel Santos named Fr. de Roux one of the top ten peacemakers in Colombia.

As part of this effort PDPMM has accompanied ASOCAB, a farming cooperative from the Las Pavas community of Colombia's Magdalena Medio region, in its effort to vindicate the rights of its members to land restitution, safety, and protection from further displacement. *Accion Social*, the Colombian agency responsible for verifying incidents of displacement has registered the farmers of Las Pavas as victims of forced displacement. Accordingly, ASOCAB initiated legal proceedings for land restitution with the appropriate governmental entities, the Colombian Institute for Rural Development (INCODER) and the Ministry of Agriculture.

In representing the interests of these displaced farmers, PDPMM has diligently and transparently complied with the series of processes required under Colombian law. We are thus saddened to learn of accusations recently made by the Prosecutor General of the Cartagena region, alleging that the Las Pavas community defrauded the state and falsified evidence to claim displacement. **The indictment also asserts that the Society of Jesus, CINEP, and professors of a Jesuit university (Universidad Javeriana) have assisted in manufacturing fraudulent claims as part of a plot to "orchestrate staged displacement."** We are disturbed by the character of these allegations and the manner in which they were disseminated to the public and the press, wholly outside of the proper legal avenues for investigating supposed irregularities. The actions of the Prosecutor General could very well jeopardize the success of Colombia's newly passed law for Victim's and Land Restitution, and has already endangered the lives and well-being of the Las Pavas farmers and the civil society organizations that have accompanied their fight to reclaim their lands.

The Society of Jesus (Jesuits), ASOCAB, PDPMM, CINEP, and the Universidad Javeriana wholeheartedly reject the accusations of the indictment and have asked for a full review of the facts of the case before the appropriate tribunal. Our partners in Colombia manifest that claims of the Las Pavas community have always been well-documented and presented in a manner that is respectful of the Colombian government and its laws.

We join our Colombian colleagues in their urgent request that the indictment be scrutinized through applicable judicial processes, and we believe that such a process will confirm the truth of the claims made by ASOCAB, and the information PDPMM, CINEP, and Universidad Javeriana have compiled in support of the Las Pavas farmers.

We share the concern of PDPMM that this indictment is a strategy being deployed to weaken the legitimacy of the demands of Colombia's vulnerable displaced population, and we highlight the recent statement of the Ministry of Agriculture and INCODER which characterizes the indictment as "dangerous," and "hope[s] the decision was not made with the bad intention of using this episode and the accusations... to decontextualize or to cast a mantle of doubt upon legal stability and respect for the Rule of Law and the ability to

rigorously apply to the Law of Victims and Land Restitution."

We note this is a critical time for the victims of displacement in Colombia, and we implore the relevant Government agencies of Colombia and the media to avoid premature judgments and allow the facts to be determined through the appropriate investigation and judicial procedures.

The U.S. Jesuit Conference and Jesuit Refugee Service/USA know that the PDPMM, Universidad Javeriana, CINEP, the Society of Jesus have always acted with honesty, transparency and respect for the laws of Colombia, and we are confident that a proper review of the case will show the accusations made against them to be unfounded.

*[The complete translated version of the statement from the Bishop of Barrancabermeja, the Jesuit Provincial of Colombia, and the directors of CINEP and the Programs for Development and Peace of Magdalena Medio can be found at*

*<http://amaryservir.org.co/index.php/es/noticias-del-dia/declaracion-de-apoyo-a-los-jesuitas-de-colombia-qcaso-las-pavasq.>]*

## ***Ecumenical Advocacy Days, March 23-26, 2012***



[Come to the 10th Annual EAD, March 23-26, 2012, in Washington, DC](#) where we will explore Economy, Livelihood and Our National Priorities through the lens of Isaiah 58. Join other Christians in seeking a global economy and a national budget that break the yokes of injustice, poverty, hunger and unemployment throughout the world - heeding Isaiah's call to become "repairers of the breach and restorers of streets to live in."

[Register Here Online Now](#) or [Download the EAD Brochure and Registration Form](#)

In a global economy based on scarcity, corporate greed, and individualism, we will seek God's alternative vision for global community: one that breaks the chains of injustice and creates the possibility of a sustainable livelihood with dignity for all, thus living into a reality of God's abundance.

Come to "*Is This the Fast I Seek?*" EAD's Tenth Anniversary Celebration, March 23-26, 2012, in Washington, DC, and help shape our national priorities. Ecumenical Advocacy Days for Global Peace with Justice is sponsored by the ecumenical Christian community and is grounded in biblical witness and our shared tradition of justice, peace and integrity of creation. Our goal is to strengthen our Christian voice and mobilize for advocacy on specific U.S. domestic and international policy issues.

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