



# J/P ALERT

CONFERENCE OF MAJOR SUPERIORS OF MEN JUSTICE AND PEACE OFFICE



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## *Pope, cardinal affirm safeguarding of religious freedom*

In his annual message for the 2011 World Day of Peace, celebrated on January 1, Pope Benedict said, "Religious freedom is an authentic weapon of peace," which fosters the human qualities and potentials that "can change the world and make it better." Pope

Benedict's message, which was delivered to world leaders by Vatican ambassadors, was released at the Vatican Dec. 16. The message, titled "Religious Freedom, the Path to Peace," made special mention of the "theater of violence and strife" in Iraq and the deadly attack on a Syrian Catholic church in Baghdad Oct. 31.

Cardinal Peter Turkson, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace who delivered the Pope's message in a press conference, noted the threat of "raging secularism, which is intolerant of God and of any form of expression of religion" as well as "religious fundamentalism, the politicization of religion and the establishment of state religions." He pointed out the "increasing instances of the denial of the universality" of human rights "in the name of different cultural, political, social and even religious outlooks."

The text of the pope's World Peace Day message is available on the Vatican web site in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

## *Haiti Earthquake Update*

*By Tom Price, Senior Communications Manager for [Catholic Relief Services](#)*

### **Your Support is Touching Lives**

It is now almost one year since the earth shook in Haiti, ending so many lives and changing many more forever. So much shifted on January 12, but if you travel the streets of Port-au-Prince it can seem that little has changed since. Rubble can be seen everywhere and the tent communities that sprang up following the quake still dot the city.

But despite enormous challenges – 1.2 million people homeless and the capital's infrastructure devastated – tangible progress has been made.

Marie Lucienne Charles, like so many others, lost her home in the earthquake. This would bring severe hardship for anyone, but is especially challenging for an elderly woman like

Marie. Today she has a home again, away from the crowded camps. Marie now calls home a transitional shelter, constructed in her home neighborhood of Christ Roi in Port-au-Prince. Marie was identified as someone who could be housed back in her neighborhood by Catholic Relief Services' (CRS) Haitian partner, Hospice St. Joseph.

The transitional shelter, while not a permanent dwelling, is a huge improvement on conditions in the tent camps. It is a two-room wooden structure built on a concrete foundation and is both hurricane- and earthquake-resistant. Crucially, since she was able to return to her home neighborhood, Marie also has access to the community support she enjoyed in the past.



As of November 2010, CRS has provided some 1,200 transitional shelters and is building another 120 to 150 every week. The transitional shelters are crafted at a timber yard in Port-au-Prince. CRS currently employs 12 skilled carpenters in addition to many Cash-for-Work beneficiaries at the shelter pre-fabrication yard. The pre-fabrication work crew is divided into teams for carrying and stacking lumber, pre-cutting lumber, laying out frames on the production tables and nailing together the completed frames. These transitional homes are made to be easily and quickly assembled by people with little construction experience, although CRS also employs and trains additional crew for on-site help.

CRS's Cash-for-Work program creates short-term employment that has benefited more than 10,000 people through work projects that provide income to vulnerable people and aid communities through improved infrastructure. The laborers at the timber yard are just one example of this. Other Cash-for-Work activities include the construction of drainage ditches in camps, cleaning and sanitation work, and the clearance of debris from drainage canals.

The Cash-for-Work employees are men and women very much in need of an income. They are most often residents of the tent camps and as well as supporting family with their pay, they are putting vital cash back into the local community.

Transitional shelters and Cash-for-Work are just two examples of the support that Catholics in the U.S. have made possible.

### **Responding to Cholera Emergency**

CRS is providing Haitians with soap, water purification tablets and hygiene guidance to counter the cholera outbreak. More than 22,000 families have received soap from CRS. CRS is also increasing water and sanitation activities in several camps, including latrine and water station repairs, extra disinfection, extra water treatment and additional solid waste removal. CRS staff are engaged in education and awareness-raising campaigns to make sure people understand the basics around cholera transmission, treatment and prevention.

CRS' health team, with colleagues from the University of Maryland, has also been working to help 7 CRS-supported hospitals and four health centers around the country to respond to an influx of cholera patients.

Also over the past year, CRS and church partner Caritas Haiti have:

- Provided food to nearly 900,000 people and continue to provide monthly food rations to more than 100,000 children in more than 370 schools, orphanages and child-care centers;
- Provided emergency shelter materials to more than 215,000 people;
- Performed over 974 emergency operations and conducted 64,000 outpatient

consultations through on-going support to St. Francois de Sales Hospital;

- Installed over 600 latrines, wash stations, potable water tanks and inflatable water bladders in Port-au-Prince and surrounding area;
- Registered 339 separated or unaccompanied children for family tracing and reunifications services, and currently providing them with interim care and support;
- Provided 6,000 families with livelihood support through vouchers that allow them to choose the most appropriate types of seeds and fertilizers -- an approach that also benefits local seeds suppliers and the local economy.

We at CRS are proud of our achievements to date in the most difficult working conditions imaginable. But these accomplishments have only been possible with your support. Our work continues, as together with the Haitian people and local Catholic Church, we strive to build a brighter future.

## *Christians Are Called to Be Peacemakers*

*[The following are excerpts from an address by Cardinal Peter Turkson, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, during a congress of the German Bishops' Conference Commission for Justice and Peace, which was held Nov. 25-27 in Berlin. The theme of the congress was "Wars of Today, Peace of Tomorrow." A [pdf version of the address](#) can be downloaded.]*

"There are many books, films, and documentaries that talk about war, people often spend a lot of energy watching the horrors that war causes and the suffering of those who endure them. And every now and then somebody gets up and cries: 'Never again!' But inevitably everything starts all over again."

These are the first lines of *Difendersi senza aggredire*, a book written by Pat Patfoort, a Belgian anthropologist engaged in conflict mediation. The message is clear: it's not enough to show and to document the atrocities of war. The risk, in fact, is that people begin to look at everything with detachment, as if war was a show, or with indifference, since it's always possible to switch over to another TV-channel. War ceases thus to be "real"; it becomes something that happens "somewhere else" and doesn't concern us, that doesn't affect our personal and social conditions, what we consider "our world."

But that's just not true! It is becoming increasingly clear, especially in today's world, how a seemingly "small" and "local" conflict can trigger "global" consequences. But there is still another reason, a deeper one: war and peace originate in the heart of man, and it's impossible to have a divided heart. So, war, to some extent, affects everyone, and peace concerns everyone.

A very lucid picture of this reality was offered by Pope Paul VI in his Message for the World Day of Peace in 1974, dedicated to the theme: *Peace Depends on You Too*. Addressing himself to everyone, believers and non believers alike, the Pope reminds us that:

The present moment of history, marked as it is by fierce outbreaks of international conflict, by implacable class warfare, outbursts of revolutionary freedoms, the crushing of human rights and fundamental liberties, and by unforeseen symptoms of worldwide economic instability, seems to be destroying the triumphant ideal of Peace as if it were the statue of an idol.

In place of the pale and timid abstraction with which Peace seems to be treated in recent political experience and thought, preference is once more being given to the realism of facts and interests, and man is once more thought of as a permanently insoluble problem of a living self-conflict. Man is likened to a being that bears in his heart the destiny of fraternal strife. In the face of this crude and re-emerging realism, we propose not a purely notional concept of Peace, undermined by the reality of new and crushing experiences,

but an indomitable idealism -that of Peace- destined to be affirmed progressively.

Brethren, men of good will, wise men, suffering people, believe our humble and repeated words, our untiring plea. Peace is the ideal of mankind. Peace is necessary. Peace is a duty. Peace is beneficial."

After almost forty years, the call of Pope Paul VI for shared responsibility is as real and pertinent as ever. The era of Pope Paul VI was that of the Cold War, when people thought that somehow everything would end with the decline of the great "ideological blocs and the fall of the Iron Curtain." But that's not what happened. The end of the Cold War was directly followed by other conflicts. The dream that the end of the Cold War would make for a passage from an equilibrium of fear, based on nuclear deterrence, to a new order, based on peace and cooperation,[2] seems to have vanished with the terrorist attacks in New York, on September 11th, 2001 and the advent of international terrorism.

...

Our future, then, is the present of new generations. Accordingly, the duty of the present generations to build peace is out of a sense of solidarity and responsibility towards future generations. The wars of today do not and will not make for the peace of tomorrow. The axiom: if you want peace prepare for war, is out of tune and outdated. It has in history caused only misery and pain: more harm than good. War is evil whenever it is directed outside. It inflicts suffering; and the good of peace cannot be achieved with evil of the suffering that it inflicts, except for the suffering that brings witnesses to love and bring peace to one's person in imitation of Jesus' revelation of the love of his Father.

Starting today, in a world not yet at peace, all men of good will, especially Christians, are called to be peacemakers, to cultivate dialogue and the meeting of civilizations, to witness the love of God's children precisely by yearning for peace for the future generations. In this way, the love of God, who renews everything, can become incarnate and transform the present and the future of mankind, while waiting for the coming of Jesus Christ, true love and true peace.

## *Nationwide Actions Shame Wage-Stealing Bosses*

by **Eduardo Soriano-Castillo, Jenny Brown**

Organizers of the rallies say wage theft is an epidemic, with billions legally earned by workers but stolen by their employers. For most victims of this crime, the theft is on top of already inadequate wages.

"This Thanksgiving, as a nation we are struggling with how to boost the economy," said Kim Bobo, executive director of [Interfaith Worker Justice](#). "What better way to stimulate the economy, put more money back into neighborhood businesses, than to assure that workers are paid all their wages?"

Wage theft takes the form of work done off the clock, stolen tips, pay below minimum wage, no time and a half for overtime, and other employer tricks, such as not being allowed your break or your lunch. In addition, around 3 million workers -- from construction workers to janitors -- are misclassified as independent contractors, allowing their employers to deny overtime pay premiums and to escape paying in to Social Security.

The Economic Policy Foundation, a business-funded group, estimates that workers miss out on \$19 billion a year in unpaid overtime alone.

The extent of wage theft is hard to measure. The Chinese Progressive Association in San Francisco attempted to recently, conducting a study which found that half of Chinatown restaurant workers are working for less than minimum wage. A study they released in

September, "[Check Please!](#)", found that 20 percent work more than 60 hours a week.

With stolen wages so widespread, advocates are looking to strengthen the tools they use against employers. Ten states have passed laws that strengthen protections against wage theft and misclassification.

But federal wage and hour laws have a restrictive statute of limitations. Prosecutors are forced to resolve wage-theft cases within two years, so advocates are pushing federal legislation that would permit prosecutors to pursue a case for as long as it takes, as long as it's filed within two years of the crime.

[More information is available on the [Interfaith Worker Justice](#) web site and [Labor Notes](#).]

## *Archbishop of Huancayo, Peru, Receives Human Rights Award*

**PERU:** 700 people and more than 100 institutions expressed their solidarity with Mons. Pedro Barreto Jimeno SJ, Archbishop of Huancayo, who was attacked and insulted for advocating in favor of legal action against the Doe Run Company. The U.S. multinational's use of chemicals for treatment of impure metals had affected the health of 107 local children. On 10 December, 2010, the [National Coordinator of Human Rights of Peru](#) (CNDDHH), which is an organization linked to the [Economic and Social Council of the United Nations](#), honored Mons. Barreto with the human rights award "[Premio Anual de Derechos Humanos Angel Escobar Jurado](#)" for his long-term commitment to the defense of human rights and support of the poorest of the poor.

## *DREAM Act message from [Justice for Immigrants](#)*

On Saturday, December 18, the U.S. Senate failed to reach the 60 votes needed to obtain cloture on H.R. 5281, the Development, Relief, and Education of Alien Minors Act (DREAM) Act of 2010. The vote was 55 in favor of cloture and 41 against it. Because the Senate was unable to reach cloture and cut off debate on the bill, the legislation was not able to move forward and will not be considered again this year.

Although this is a setback for the DREAM Act and the long-term goal of immigration reform, it should not be considered a defeat. Having won 55 votes in favor of DREAM (as well as passage in the U.S. House of Representatives) shows that it has the support of the majority of Congress and the American public. We are confident that the DREAM Act will one day become the law of the land.

The JFI team here at USCCB would like to thank all of you for your hard work on the DREAM Act. We will continue to fight for the DREAM Act and the rights of immigrants in the new Congress.

See the [roll call vote](#).

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Tony Cube at 202-541-3165.

## *Columban Resolution for International Migrants Day, December 18, 2010*

The Missionary Society of St. Columban announces the release of a [resolution](#) in honor of International Migrants Day, December 18, 2010. Columban missionaries have lived and

worked with migrants around the world for over 90 years. The resolution reads in part:

... we, as missionaries living and working with immigrants, hereby endorse the following principles as guidelines for a better world for immigrants. We urge all others to uphold these principles as we work together to improve the conditions for low-wage immigrant workers and their families.

JUSTICE -- All immigrant workers deserve and must receive the following support to lead healthy, decent and productive lives:

- True legalization should be given in the form of permanent legal status and citizenship. This should not be limited to any country of origin or work industry.
- Greater protection and enforcement of international labor laws, which will guarantee at least minimum wage and security from blacklisting, harassment and intimidation of any kind.

DIGNITY – All immigrant workers and their families deserve:

Clean, safe and proper working conditions to prevent illness, stress and workplace accidents.

- Access to decent and quality healthcare, and nutrition.
- Permanent, stable and secure work.
- Access to quality education.
- Access to safe affordable housing.

## *Resistance in Southern Bolivar Province, Colombia*

By Duane Ediger

*"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." -Mt 5:11-12*

Farmers and small scale miners in Southern Bolivar province are in a pinch. Palm oil conglomerates and international mining firms have set their sights on lands where they've lived and worked for decades. Land titling, along with other basic civil government functions, has never been established here. Military bases dot the region. Paramilitary groups carry out selective assassinations -- about one every day or two.

Simon\*, a regional community organizer, and I listened as a local leader shared her story of displacement several years ago from neighboring province where lands are legally titled to the people. Colombian military-backed paramilitaries took legal ownership of land there through acts which included child rape that she personally witnessed. In her case, threatening her life, they forced her to sell her ranch for two percent of its value.

The next day, Simon, probably seeing in my face or posture signs of the pain to which I had become a secondary witness, approached me and shared the following story.

"There is a village not far from here where paramilitaries have come repeatedly. They have pillaged and burned houses there on seven different occasions. At a certain point, the community assigned a lookout to give them advance warning when they were coming. When they got the word, the people would get their electrical generator, their music and beer and hide them. The paramilitaries would arrive, kill chickens and pigs, take what they wanted and burn some houses. But you know what? By the next day, the people of that village would get out their generator, put on their favorite music and throw a party.

"Foreigners, when they see this kind of behavior, are dumbfounded. But these people have learned something. If you let the loss and violation get to you, you get worn down and eventually give up; that's what the attacks are meant to do. It doesn't mean they don't take time to cry and feel the loss. But celebrating for these people has become a form of

resistance."

May this be a lesson when we are hesitant to take risks for justice. Get started, with joy. Keep risking until the persecution comes; then we will have both a cause for celebration and a means to conquer fear!

--

\* Name changed to assure presence at future parties.

**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.*

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