

Recognizing discrepancies in our world

One “snapshot” of the world situation:

- 50% of the world’s population lives on \$2/day or less (Population Reference Bureau, 2005)
- 1.2 billion people (or 20% of the world’s population) live on less than \$1/day (World Bank, 2006)
- 852 million people, about 1/7th of the world’s population, are chronically malnourished (UN, 2005); 24,000 of them die every day from hunger – that’s 17 per minute, 12 of them children.
- More than 113 million children are without access to basic education; 60% are girls (CRS, 2004)
- 18 million children (1 in 8) are engaged in unjust and unsafe child labor
- 2.6 billion people lack safe sewers; 1.1 billion have no access to clean water (UN, 2006)
- 1.1 billion people don’t have adequate housing; and nearly 1 billion have no access to modern health service of any kind
- 33.6 million people (about 10.7% of households) in the United States experience hunger and poverty

On the other hand.....

- In the United States, 65% of the adult population is overweight and 35% are obese; about 1 billion people in the world are obese (St. Cloud Times, 2003)
- The richest 1% of adults owns 40% of the world’s assets; the richest 10% owns 85% of the world’s assets; the bottom 50% of adults owned barely 1% of world assets; the three richest people in the world have assets that exceed the combine domestic product of 48 of the least-developed countries. (UN, 2006)
- The richest 20% of the world consumes 45% of all meat and fish, 58% of all energy used, 84% of all paper, has 74% of all telephone lines, and owns 87% of all vehicles.
- Only 20% of the world takes in about 86% of its income, while 20% of people receive less than 1.3% of its income.
- If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep, you have access to more resources than 75% of the people on earth.
- Enough grain was produced in 1983 to provide for every man, woman and child on the planet with two loaves of bread each day. If all food on earth each year were divided EQUALLY among all people, every person would receive about 5 pounds of food/day – more than 3 times the minimum amount needed to support life.

4% of the world’s 225 richest people could provide basic education, health care, food, clean water and safe sewers for the entire globe (estimated at about \$42 billion per year) (UN in 2007)

Combining world wide social goals and earth restoration components would require an additional annual expenditure of \$161 billion (Lester R. Brown, Worldwatch Institute, 2008)

Compare that to other spending:

- Video game revenues in 2002 totaled \$10 billion. (New York Times, 2002)
- Teenagers in the U.S. spent over \$141 billion in 1998.
- College students spend between \$5.5 billion and \$7 billion on alcohol each year. (St. John’s Health Initiative)
- \$80 billion per year is spent on shoes, jewelry and watches in the United States. (St. John’s Health Initiative)
- \$31 billion was spent on pets – that’s over \$2 billion more than what could provide basic health and nutrition for the world.
- \$8 billion is spent per year on cosmetics in the United States – that’s \$2 billion more than what’s needed to provide basic education for everyone. (St. John’s Health Initiative)
- Europeans spend \$11 billion a year on ice-cream – that’s \$2 billion more than what’s needed to provide safe water for the world.
- U. S. military spending is nearly \$500 billion/year, (more over 10 times the amount needed to provide basic needs for the entire world); total world military spending was \$1,118 billion in 2005 (almost 30 times the amount needed).

Time for a priority check! Time for equal distribution! Time for justice and dignity for all GOD’s people – all our brothers and sisters!

A look at the documents of our Church, beginning with Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* (*The Condition of Labor*) in 1891, and ending with Pope John Paul II's *Centesimus Annus* (*On the 100th Anniversary of Rerum Novarum*) in 1991. Listed below are major themes from 12 documents by the two Popes listed above as well as, Pope Pius XI, Pope John XXIII, Pope Paul VI, and *Gaudium et Spes* (*Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World*) from the Second Vatican Council, and *Justitia in Mundo* (*Justice in the World*) from the 1971 World Synod of Bishops.

Principles of Catholic Teaching

1. We are all one Body in Christ. When one part of the Body suffers, all suffer.
2. Christians are called to promote the good of every person and of the whole person.
3. Christians work on both individual conversion and transformation of structures.
4. We show a preferential option for the poor and marginalized; giving to the poor is not a gift, it is handing over what is rightfully theirs because Creation was meant for the good of all.
5. Evangelization is not complete without work on behalf of development and justice for others.
6. Human dignity requires a simplification of lifestyle for those with abundance:
 - For the “superdeveloped,” having interferes with being and prevents pursuit of deeper values;
 - For the “underdeveloped,” deprived of bare essentials, they are unable to reach their true vocation and realize the potential for which they were created.
7. Now is the time for action:
 - We must work for greater justice in the sharing of the earth's goods.
 - Christians must work for fair economic and political policies on the national and international levels.
 - International trade and world financial systems must be reformed. Internat'l trade should be regulated.
 - Intermediary bodies are necessary to reduce inequalities.
 - Markets of richer nations should be opened;
 - Fairer prices should be given for raw materials;
 - Manufactured goods from developing nations should be given preferential treatment.
 - World economy should be shaped by respect for rights of workers rather than maximization of profit.
 - New models of production and consumption must be developed; it is not a matter of giving from one's surplus, but helping those excluded to enter the sphere of economic and human development.
 - The United Nations Organization should be supported and enhanced.
 - The wealthy must abandon all imperialism and self-interest.
 - Development must be composed of both economic growth and participation. Poor peoples and nations must be full participants and the primary agents of their advancement; development rests, not so much on the exploitation of natural resources, as much as on the proper use of human resources.
 - Cultures of developing peoples must be respected; they must be allowed to make a contribution to the common good with their treasure of humanity and culture.
 - Traditional, spiritual values of poorer people must be upheld.
 - Spiritual values must be part of true development which is more than merely economic. The quality and truth of human relations, and the degree of participation and responsibility, is equally important as the amount of goods produced and consumed.
8. One's neighbor is not only a human being with rights, but a *living image of God*, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and placed under the permanent action of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, they must be loved, even if an enemy, with the same love that God loves them.
 - Human resources and energy should be devoted to the advancement of people rather than weapons of war.
 - “War and military preparations are the major enemy of the integral development of peoples.” Funds for weaponry “injure the poor to an intolerable degree.”
 - Relationships based on force do not bring about lasting justice. War is an intolerable means of resolving disputes.
 - Build up peace day after day rather than prepare for war.