

**JUSTICE EN BREF
JUST NEWS
JUSTICIA Y ESPERANZA
YOU TI KOUT JE SOU LAJISTIS**

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Flash on the SSA Social Justice Network

The annual meeting of the members of the SSA Social Justice Network was held on September 24 to 27th in Lachine. It was a dynamic meeting composed of fraternal exchanges, prayerful moments and a time to deepen thoughts period with Carol Proietti and Ana Maria Gajardo (from Chile represented) from the St. Marie Province and Sandra Araya, our invited guest. The other participants were: Sheila Moss and Joyce Harris from the St. Joseph Province; Monia Joseph from the Notre-Dame-du-Perpétuel-Secours Province; Denise Breault and Denise Caron from the Esther-Blondin Province, Lucille Goulet from the General Administration and Renaude Grégoire from the Social Justice office. *(cont. page 10)*

In the North, we will be enjoying a colourful autumn and in the South, it is the beginning of spring.

Autumn will have the colours of compassion, solidarity and reconciliation. This fall, several partner organizations are launching or are continuing to launch their solidarity campaign. You can read more about this under the heading "Tool box" in this bulletin. At the end of September, the annual meeting of the SSA Social Justice Network was held.

We cannot lay down our arms at a time when more and more people are seeing the need to take care of creation. We continue to fight against human trafficking and the sexual exploitation of women and children.

During the next few weeks, we will continue to keep our eyes fixed on the Vancouver Olympic Games hoping that these Games will be free from exploitation.

Our action has to contribute in making our world a garden free from any exploitation of humans and of creation. •

SSA Social Justice Office

Photo above on the right: Sister Ana Maria Gajardo presents two posters against human trafficking made by the sisters of Chile.



In this issue

Flash on the SSA Social Justice Network	1
Reconciliation	2
Around the garden	6
Litany of Lamentation	11
Toolbox	12



Reconciliation: Canada/Canada's First Nations/SSAs

by Sister Marie Zarowny

The Sisters of Saint Ann in both Quebec and Canada's West have a long history of ministry with and to members of the First Nations (aboriginal people) of this vast land. In Quebec it was in day schools on reserves and at Queen of Angels Academy where Mohawk young women continue as students today. In British Columbia and in the North, the history dates from our arrival in Victoria in 1858 to the present and included involvement in both day and residential schools; pastoral ministries on reserves, in First Nations communities and in cities; solidarity work supporting First Nations' struggles within the Canadian mosaic; involvement with healing and reconciliation efforts; health care; adult education and various social services.

This history has coincided with a history of colonization of Canada's First Nations by successive waves of immigration from Europe resulting in a dominant Euro-Canadian society. Attitudes of superiority, discrimination and entitlement gave rise to structures that embedded these attitudes into all aspects of the civic community and continue to today. First Nations people and communities were made to feel intellectually, socially and economically inferior and spiritually damned. Lands which provided their basis of identity, spirituality, politics and economics were taken from them; misdeeds made to them by governments



April 29, 2009, Sister Marie represented the Religious Communities of Women involved in Canada's Indian Residential Schools as part of the First Nations/Catholic Church delegation that met with His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI. National Chief Phil Fontaine read a statement to His Holiness; the text can be found on the AFN website. "Copyright © Servicio Fotografico de l'Osservatore Romano." P.Baribeau, CCEPIRSS, D.Opekokew, AFN, Archbishop J.Weisgerber, CCCB (President), K.Mahoney, AFN P.Fontaine, National Chief, AFN, Benedict XVI Archbishop G.Pettipas, CCEPIRSS, E.John, AFN M.Zarowny, SSA, T.Kinew, AFN, T.Coonen, OMI (representing Religious Communities of Men)

were and are continuously broken and relationships of trust betrayed. In spite of the best intentions of many who worked in them, the establishment of residential schools in the late 1800's and their operation for almost a hundred years contributed to loss of identity, social disintegration and family breakdown.

Miraculously, these Peoples have endured. A revitalization of culture and renewed sense of identity began to take hold across the country in the 1960's; historic documentation of land rights contributed to the process and patient, repeated efforts to articulate and to regain rights to

self-government began to bear fruit. The wider Canadian population gradually became aware of and somewhat sensitized to the issues.

So much more, however, remains to be done. Today, far too many First Nations families live in poverty with sub-standard housing and inadequate health and educational opportunities; far too much mo-



ney, time and energy has to be extended for First Nations to have their rights recognized and upheld; far too many members of First Nations continue to be shamed by racist attitudes and behaviour.

Historically Canada's history of colonization is a history of injustice. Theologically, it is a classic example of social sin -- when one group of people seeks to dominate another, to take away from the other its identity and culture. Structural sin evolved when, to achieve those goals, institutions such as the residential schools and various laws forbidding spiritual practices were put in place.

In 1991, Pope John Paul II stated that *"To destroy such structures and replace them with more authentic forms of living in community is a task which demands courage and patience"* (*Centesimo Anno*). In my experience it also demands insight and determination. And yet I believe that we, in Canada, are at a unique moment of this history, what we might call a "graced time" in our relationship with First Nations. It is our privilege as Canadians and Religious to be invited by those whom Canada has victimized into a *process of reconciliation*.

In 1996 the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples stated:

Canada is a test case for a grand notion - the notion that dissimilar peoples can share lands, resources, power and dreams while respecting and sustaining their differences. The story of Canada is the story of many such peoples, trying and failing and trying again, to live together in peace and harmony.

But there cannot be peace or harmony unless there is justice. It was to help restore justice to the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada, and to propose practical solutions to stubborn problems, that the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was established.



In closing the report, the Commissioners stated: ***At heart, what we want to do is ... to ensure that Aboriginal children grow up knowing that they matter - that they are precious human beings deserving love and respect, and that they hold the keys to a future bright with possibilities in a society of equals.***

The Royal Commission asked for a 20 year commitment, an act of national intention to build a new relationship between First Nations and Canada built on the principles of ***recognition, respect, sharing and responsibility.***

Those who attended Residential Schools or who are descendents of those students have asked Canada and the Churches involved in the schools to acknowledge that no matter what other lofty objectives there might have been, the schools were part of a government policy designed to dominate and eradicate First Nations cultures. In a variety of ways the First Nations of this land have been pleading with us to hear their pain, to in some way provide reparation and to enter into a new relationship built on mutual respect.



What they ask for fits exactly the Christian understanding of *Reconciliation*, articulated in recent writings by Robert Shreiter, C.P.S. who has specifically addressed *historic and social wrongdoings that require reconciliation*. According to Shreiter, reconciliation is a sacred act with God its author; God's first concern is always the healing of the victim; and in reconciliation, God makes of both victim and wrongdoer a new creation.

This process begins with *Truth-Telling*, when the silence that hides wrongdoing is broken and the power of one group over another is revealed. The next step is *Pursuit of Justice*: justice can be in the form of reparation for wrongdoing and/or incarceration of the wrongdoer. When the wrongdoing, however, has been socially ingrained and structured, pursuit of justice requires the dismantling of attitudes of superiority and structures of inequality. It requires concrete actions that lead to mutually respectful and just relationships. The third phase of biblical reconciliation is the *establishment of relationships of equity and trust*.

June 11, 2008, Canada issued a formal apology to former residents of the Indian Residential Schools. In accepting the apology and responding, First Nations leaders spoke of a new beginning. One after the other they pleaded with the Federal Government and all Canadians to enter into a new relationship based on mutual respect and justice. They asked that the words spoken would move to concrete actions.

What is our role as Sisters of St. Ann in this process? Former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations stated that for *our people, reconciliation means the eradication of First Nations poverty ...and doing so will require the support and engagement of all Canadians*. He went on to say that we in the Catholic Church have a significant role to play, especially in using our *influence, experience and commitment to help lift native people out of poverty*.

Perhaps as we address the issue of poverty in our world and in Canada we can be specifically aware of those policies that keep aboriginal people here and elsewhere in poverty; we can learn how these policies and poverty itself impact aboriginal people; and we can join with others to try to address these issues.

More personally, we know that we, too, are shaped by the values and attitudes of the dominant society in which we live. Perhaps we need to discover our own latent attitudes of superiority and entitlement which often give rise to some expression of racism.

The invitation to rebuild relationships with Canada's First Nations is more than political and economic; I believe it is also a spiritual and religious imperative. The time is NOW, as Canadians and as Religious, to enter into this process.



On behalf of Women Religious, Sister Marie made a statement to the First Nations delegation during a reception at the Oblates of Mary Immaculate General House. The text of her message is posted on the CRC website: <http://www.crc-canada.org/main.cfm?nID=553&nsid=1283&nssID=8>

Around the garden

Saint Marie Province

Think Outside the Bottle Campaign - Corporate Accountability International by Sister Carol Proietti

Think Outside the Bottle is a campaign working to promote, protect and ensure public funding for our public water systems. That means we challenge corporations which undermine public confidence in tap water. It also means working with public officials, faith groups, restaurants, celebrities, campuses, and individuals to support public systems by opting for tap over bottled water. Sisters and Associates have sent postcards to the Pepsi and Coca Cola Companies, urging them to indicate on their product that it is from a water supply not a spring. Pepsi has finally complied; we are still waiting to see what Coca Cola owners will to do.

Esther-Blondin Province

A meaningful presence in Lachine by Sisters Françoise Rajotte and Denise Breault.

Sister Jeanne Arsenault has been involved in the soup kitchen in Lachine for more than 20 years. Winter is never an easy time and warm meals are essential for the 35 to 60 people who drop in for a meal and receive other services. Many people say that the soup kitchen “chases distress”. Sister Jeanne is also involved on the Administration Council in this work which is totally run by volunteers, including the director.

(cont. page 9).



Soup kitchen in Lachine

Saint Joseph Province

by sister Sheila Moss

Our Social Justice Committee invited Michael Marwick as guest speaker during our July Community Days. Michael's teaching, research and professional practice explores how to advance human dignity through effective social communication and social change. His doctoral research at Simon Fraser University examines the impact of the war on terror on human dignity and democratic communication. Michael's most recent "claim to fame" was to organize a Conference in Vancouver (March 2009) entitled "One Is Too Many: A Citizen's Summit on Human Trafficking at the 2010 Olympic Games and Beyond".

Before a Community Blessing for Michael, Sheila Moss gave a brief historical update about our Congregational and Provincial involvements in the effort to stop Human Trafficking.

In his introduction Michael thanked the Sisters for our tremendous commitment to education and social justice. His presentation was stimulating, passionate and challenging as he used art, scripture, Pope Benedict's encyclical "Caritas Veritate", personal stories and factual data to bring us on board as active participants in the Citizens Summit to end Human Trafficking.



Sister Sheila Moss

The Citizen's Summit is a grassroots coalition of many social service providers, legal, multi faith and political groups who desire to keep pressure on the B.C. Government and VANOC (Vancouver Olympic Committee) to ensure a "trafficking free" 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver. Their goal is not so much to raise awareness but to organize for change. To this end they worked very hard to prepare a Declaration which has been widely endorsed and will be presented in the Fall to the B.C. Solicitor General and VANOC. The Sisters of St. Joseph's Province have now also signed this Declaration.

The Declaration strongly advocates for 3 areas of change: effective prosecution of human traffickers; effective protection of victims of human trafficking and effective prevention of human trafficking.

Michael reminded us that the effective prosecution of human traffickers requires legislative and policy changes, additional training and the commitment of financial resources to those who would bring traffickers to justice.



Michael Marwick

In Canada some political parties are stating that they support Sweden's model. Small step but great news! Effective Protection of victims of trafficking involves coordination among law enforcement agencies, non-governmental social service agencies and border officials to free women and children from the violence and degradation of all forms of sex slavery, to enshrine the rights of victims and to actually assist them on the road to recovery. Effective prevention prior to, during and after the Olympic Games requires that border officials, RCMP and social service providers be proactive and well trained in identifying traffickers and their victims. Prevention must also address the demand for paid sex as a profitable industry that needs to be stopped.

After his "power point", Michael invited us to participate in the Fall Campaign once it begins and concluded his presentation by engaging us in a process to make change. In small groups we surfaced names of individuals and groups of decision makers who might be able to connect with each other to bring about effective change in thinking and action.

Everyone was impressed by the energy for change engendered by the various social service providers who for the first time collaborated together to form the Citizen's Summit and compose the Declaration to end Trafficking.

Lorraine LaMarre graciously thanked Michael for his own commitment and powerful presentation. We look forward to choosing specific actions to continue the pressure on all concerned so that there will not be one trafficked person for the 2010 games!



(from page 6)

Sister Jeanne states: “A meaningful presence among the poor is really part of social justice. Mother Marie-Anne gave us the example by being attentive to the poor. The Center also organises financial campaigns for present and future projects. The purpose is to help people become more self-sufficient. Furthermore, the milieu is becoming more and more aware of the needs of the unemployed who cannot find work or who are sick.



Presence in Rosemont – La Petite-Patrie

By Sister Jeanne Gareau

On 1st Avenue, over and above our concern to promote social justice at the national and international level, we targeted two areas in our surrounding.

First target: the “Centre Paulines” that opened its doors three years ago on Masson Street. There, Sr. Jeanne Lemire, f.s.p., runs the independent book store, the resto-café and the meeting room with success. The Daughters of St. Paul take every opportunity to express their solidarity in the neighbourhood. They attend marches organized by community organizations, are present in spiritual and cultural affairs and welcome children.



Second target: the Rosemont Square, a place where people in need are welcomed and accompanied. Last spring, we expressed our support to the staff and the clientele of the Square. Several of us visited the expo-sale of art works held on June 3-7, the theme of which was Let the sun shine in. Sister Clairette Brunet, Superior, was present at the launching as collaborator. The visitors who were warmly welcomed by those in charge were able to learn more about the vocation of the Square and to encourage the artists.



Rosemont Square

The Centre Paulines is more than a business: it is a lever and a testimony! To be in contact with the Daughters of St. Paul is an enriching learning experience.

(from page 1) **Flash on the SSA Social Justice Network**

Our theme was: **WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO WITNESS TO AND PROMOTE RECONCILIATION AND JUSTICE . Therefore, we chose TO ACT AS CONGREGATION.** We addressed the reality of reconciliation, looked at the challenges of social justice and what ACTING AS CONGREGATION means to us. Poverty is like a guiding thread which continues to spread its negative effects, whether it is in regard to the environment, human trafficking, the right to water, etc... But there is nothing better than asking one of the participants to talk about it in person. We will share the fruits of this meeting with you in our next bulletin.



Sisters Denise Breault and Denise Caron



Sisters Sheila Moss and Joyce Harris



Sisters Sandra Araya and Rita Larivée



Sister Lucille Goulet during the African diner



Sisters Monia Joseph and Carol Proietti

Litany of Lamentation

inspired by Kairos Forum 2009, in several languages

By the rivers of Babylon we sat mourning and weeping when we remembered Zion.
By the Fraser , Tsolum, Bulkley and Skeena Rivers, we sat down and wept when we remembered.
How can we remember the old ways
when strangers broke and fenced our land and banned our teachings,
when our children were taken from us?

Sur les rives du fleuve Saint Laurent, de la Romaine, de la Péribonka, nous nous sommes assis et avons pleuré en nous souvenant.

By the Sacramento, Cuyahoga and Ohio Rivers we sat down and wept when we remembered
Al pie de los glaciares Toro 1, Toro 2 y Esperanza we sat down and wept when we remembered
How can we remember the old ways
when strangers broke and fenced our land and banned our teachings,
when our children were taken from us?

Nou te chita bò larivyè Artibonite, larivyè Massacre,
larivyè Pédernales, nou t'ap kriye
By the Panda, Mura and Mponzo rivers we sat down
and wept when we remembered.
How can we remember the old ways
when strangers broke and fenced our land and banned our
teachings, when our children were taken from us?



St. Lawrence river

By the rivers of life we sit down and weep as we remember
By the rivers of life, let healing and justice flow from our tears.

Pope Benedict XVI, Caritas in Veritate :

The right to food, like the right to water, has an important place within the pursuit of other rights, beginning with the fundamental right to life. It is therefore necessary to cultivate a public conscience that considers food and access to water as universal rights of all human beings, without distinction or discrimination. (no 27)



The Church has a responsibility towards creation and she must assert this responsibility in the public sphere. In so doing, she must defend not only earth, water and air as gifts of creation that belong to everyone. She must above all protect mankind from self-destruction. There is need for what might be called a human ecology, correctly understood. (no 51)

TOOLBOX

Kyoto +

A Canadian public engagement campaign to support an urgent solution to the global warming crisis.

<http://www.kyotoplus.ca/>

Development and Peace

Fall Campaign 2009: Working our land, fighting for our rights

www.devp.org

Kairos Week of Action October 17 – 24, 2009

Connecting Climate Justice and Global Poverty

www.kairoscanada.org

Dignity for all:

the campaign for a poverty-free Canada

<http://www.dignityforall.ca/>

Immigration reform

CCIR is a coalition of Christian organizations, churches, and leaders from across the theological and political spectrum, united in support of comprehensive U.S. immigration reform.

<http://faithandimmigration.org/>

A Christian Creed on Health-Care Reform

“As one of God's children, I believe that protecting the health of each human being is a profoundly important personal and communal responsibility for people of faith.”

intercommunity peace and justice center

Now is the time to fix America's health care system

<http://www.ipjc.org/>

Entraide Missionnaire (french);

Solidarité avec Haïti et le Congo

<http://www.web.net/~emi/>

Groupe d'appui aux rapatriés et aux réfugiés en Haïti (french)

<http://www.garr-haiti.org/>

Center of concern

Cultivate a Climate for Justice. The Center of Concern is collaborating with Caritas Internationalis and CIDSE, international networks comprised of over 170 Catholic humanitarian and development agencies.

<http://www.coc.org/>

ICCR : Each year ICCR-member religious institutional investors sponsor over 200 shareholder resolutions on major social and environmental issues.

<http://www.iccr.org/>

Observatorio Latinoamericano de Conflictos Ambientales (spanish)

<http://www.olca.cl/oca/index.htm>

NEXT EDITION

The next issue of “Just News” will be published in December. In it, you will find more information about the SSA Social Justice Network meeting.

Next deadline for articles : November 15, 2009

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