



"There is no place for them in the inn"...

In our world, more than one person, more than one group go through this experience. Among them are the women victims of human trafficking and sex trade who find themselves in this situation the day they are released from prison. On November 22, 2006, CATHII (Action committee against internal and international human trafficking), in collaboration with the CRC (Canadian Religious Conference) and the Justice and Faith Centre offered a session on the theme "Is there a refuge for women victims of trafficking and trade?" At Maison Bellarmin, eighty-six persons from CATHII, religious communities, community organizations, public and government agencies accompanied by resource persons took part in the day of reflection and learned about the public and community resources set up to offer help to these victims. We strongly hope that concrete follow up will be given to this meeting.



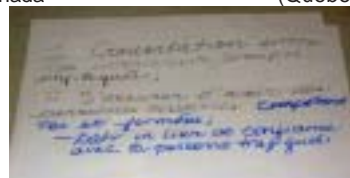
Déborah Isaacs, BC
Lise Gagnon,
facilitator,
Suzie Raymond
RCMP,
Nilu Singh, RCMP



Jacqueline Roby
Citoyenneté et
Immigration Canada



Sr. Pierrette Bertrand, ARPF
Serge Morin, street worker
(Quebec)



Lost in traffic.

Do you remember the play that was presented at the Parminou Theatre? Well, it has continued its journey and is now in Western Canada. This is the news we received from Sr. Sheila Moss.



"The members of Kelowna Kairos worked hard to get the word out about Le Theatre Parminou coming to Kelowna. We had a release in all the local papers, posters distributed and bulletin announcements in the churches. Until the last minute we were not sure how it will be financed. But, thanks to a sizable donation from the SSA Provincial Administration and from the Sisters of Charity plus ticket sales we made it! The theater was nearly full with many students from the university in attendance. We were thrilled to see young people getting informed on this issue.

We had invited Detective Lou Berube, from the RCMP special unit on trafficking to speak briefly of the situation in BC before the play. His comments on how the police learned of the presence of actual victims in Vancouver and his description of recent incidents involving trafficking and the needs related to the victims provided an excellent context for the play.

Many Sisters of St. Ann have seen the play which includes a narrator who interacts with the audience as well as actors who play a variety of roles in telling the story of deception and enslavement so I won't go into details.

I acted as MC for the Kelowna presentation and invited the audience to stay after to sign the petition and letters from Amnesty International and to chat with Detective Berube. We were delighted with the positive response of the audience and the large number who stayed to talk and pick up any materials on display.

I am grateful to our congregation for its strong support, financial and otherwise, of this educational project. I believe the well written and excellently acted play "Lost in Traffic" informed many, many people across Canada and provided an opportunity for them to protest this horrendous crime."



Submission of petitions before the Federal Parliament (Canada)

Monday, December 4: in the name of the group CATHII (Action Committee against internal and international human trafficking) Claudette Bastien, S.N.J.M., Denise Caron, S.S.A., Nicole Rivard, N.D.A. and Jean Bellefeuille were in the Parliament buildings in Ottawa for the submission of a petition signed by 10,210 Canadians, which was presented by Ms. Marlene Jennings, Deputy. We sincerely thank Ms. Jennings of the Notre-Dame-de-Grâce/Lachine Borough for presenting the petition of CATHII with enthusiasm. We thank her for having worked patiently so that this event could be carried out to everyone's great satisfaction and we also thank her for the other initiatives she has decided to pursue to provide assistance to victims of human trafficking and sex trade, whose cause she has adopted.



From left to right: Claudette Bastien, Denise Caron, Marlene Jennings, Jean Bellefeuille, Sheila Smith (CRC), and Nicole Rivard

Why this petition ? To ask the Government of Canada to "adopt a bill In view of offering the victims of human trafficking and sex trade a temporary visa – without necessarily having to witness before tribunals – so that they may get over their traumatic experiences without fear and reflect on various options possible." You may remember that on May 11, 2006, Stephen Harper's Government authorized government agents to give these victims, temporary residence permits (TRP). Today, we are asking him to issue temporary visas to ensure legal status in the country to these women, which they cannot obtain with a simple permit. CATHII and those who signed the petition have also asked the Government of Canada that the new law stipulate that a visa will be given to the victims of sex trade "without the need to testify". In fact, researches have shown that "victims hesitate to be recognized as such if they are told that they will have to face those who have exploited them."

*May our prayers and our actions,
open doors to those
"who have no place in the inn!"*

From Marie...

**... presently
in Haiti**

One thing I am doing while here is a project for UNANIMA International: arranging with an organization (MVM) that works with restevék children to bring two women, one a 16 year-old, to speak at the United Nations during the Status of Women Commission on the topic of discrimination against and violence towards the girl-child. Roodnir, the 16 year-old, is a former restevék who is now one of the leaders with MVM.

One of the things I have learned, directly related to our theme of trafficking, is that children are often "rounded up" in the interior of the country, supposedly to be brought to homes in Port-au-Prince to work as domestic "slaves." Instead, they are taken to the Dominican Republic and sold as sex objects. Usually, their parents never find out what has happened to them. Those who remain in the country, working in the homes of strangers are often so desperate for something to eat they sell their bodies to get money for food. This is truly a tragic situation and as always is directly related to poverty.



WATER

During the last week, the annual report of the United Nations Program for Development was made public. This year's report, entitled, **Power, Poverty and the Global Crisis of Water**, focuses on the **world crisis in water**. Although I have all that I need here (and more...), it has been sobering for me to read the report, aware that in the city around me as well as throughout the country, access to potable water as well as to water for sanitation purposes and irrigation is a serious problem for the majority of people. People die for lack of it.

Among the statistics of this report, two of them :

- More water is wasted each day in the rich countries than the amount used in the same time by 1 billion people in the poorest countries.
- The price anticipated for attaining the UN objective for access to potable water and water for sanitation is 10 billion dollars, representing less than the amount spent in 5 days on military expenses throughout the world and less than half of what the rich countries spend each year on mineral water.

The report calls this crisis a “silent crisis,” because it does not receive the media attention of natural catastrophes or of certain illnesses. The poor “submit” to it and **those who have the resources, technology and political power to end it, instead, tolerate it.**

The report makes it very clear that what is lacking is the political will and calls on both national governments and the world community to develop and implement a comprehensive plan of action to address this fundamental problem.

Unfortunately, though the report received significant coverage, I have not yet seen anything that specifically connects its findings to Haiti. However, we know that the interior is drying up because water was diverted to provide electricity for export “trinket” industries in Port-au-Prince; the impact on families who now cannot grow food and whose livelihood has been taken away from them is traumatic and generational. The majority of homes in Port-au-Prince do not have running water. Poor people – and even those not the most poor — have to go to public taps, then boil the water — or they buy it.

Today, I read that 54% of Haitians live on less than US\$1/day, the criteria for being considered the most poor in the world; another 24% live on less than US\$2/day. That means that only 22% of the population live on more than US\$2/day. We need only imagine what this means for access to water.



**Development
and Peace**

A recent press release from Development and Peace name as a step toward recognition of the right for water the resolution adapted on

last November 29, by the United Nations Human Rights Council. This resolution will conduct a detailed study on the relevant human rights obligations related to equitable access to safe drinking water.

The resolution, adopted without a vote, means that UN legal experts will study all existing UN human rights treaties, to determine exactly what is set out in each on the right to water, and the ensuing obligations on states that have ratified.

Legal analysts have argued that there are implicit references to the right to water contained in the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. All these treaties have been signed and ratified by Canada (and probably by U.S.).

The recognition of the right of water “would strengthen the international human rights system, and give the one billion people who still lack access to water a tool with which to demand this basic human right”, affirms the Development and Peace Executive Director, Mr. Michael Casey.

On last November 9, the United Kingdom declared its formal recognition of the right to water, in response to the UN Human Development Report on Water and Sanitation. Thus far, Canada refused to recognize the right to water, citing that other developing G8 nations also oppose this right.

Will other G8 countries
follow the example of the
United Kingdom?

Did you know that ?...

More than one hundred and thirty-five sisters of the Esther Blondin Province (Quebec) participated to a session on **water** facilitated by Sister Denise Caron and Ms. Diane Boudreault, of the Social Justice Office. Sister Lise Gagnon, S.N.J.M. had given it to the members of the Network last April.

The Social Justice Committee of Saint Marie Province hosted a Day on Immigration, at Saint Anne Convent, Marlborough, on October 21, 2006. SSAs, Associates and Friends were invited. The two presenters who know well the dossier of Immigration, helped the participants to understand U.S immigration law and policy.

(Sr. Carol Proietti, Saint Marie Prov.)

In Canada, among other countries, the immigration laws facilitate trafficking in women and children, not to say that they favor it.



*Merry Christmas
and
Happy New Year !*



**Deadline for articles
for next bulletin :
March 1, 2007.**

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