



# Spiritan Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation and Interreligious Dialogue

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## SHOWING THE MERCY OF GOD TO GOD'S PEOPLE THROUGH JPIC INITIATIVES

JUDE NNOROM, CSSP.

Praying the Angelus with the faithful gathered at St. Peter's square on 8 September 2015, Pope Francis appealed to parishes and religious communities in Europe to welcome refugees as "a concrete sign of God's hope and mercy." Earlier in the year on the 11th April he proclaimed 2016 as the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. Perhaps, the Pope's call to welcome refugees and the Jubilee year of mercy are connected in the way that justice and mercy "are a single reality that unfolds progressively until it culminates in the fullness of love" *Misericordiae Vultus* MV20. Welcoming refugees in our communities and homes not only denotes a virtuous act of mercy, but also seeks to exemplify action for justice, especially for the most vulnerable, children, women, the elderly,

those living with disabilities and many others who are running away from wars and political repression. Ministry amongst those living on the margins of society enables us "to be merciful, as our Heavenly Father is merciful" (Lk. 6:36). Our ministry draws us closer to the vision of our founders Claude Poullart Des Places and Francis Mary Paul Libermann, who were motivated by the mercy of God to reach out at different

times to those on the peripheries of society. Following in the footsteps of Christ – whom the Pope reminds us is "the face of God's mercy," (MV1), and the example of our founders, many confreres and Spiritan associates reach out to refugees, internally displaced persons and those whose voices may never reach the corridors of power. These confreres and associates bring Christ - the face of God's mercy - to the most vulnerable. While mercy and compassion may have motivated their initial outreach, they seek in justice and fairness to overcome those structures that incubate violence.

In this issue of our newsletter, Dr. Fintan Sheerin, a Spiritan associate from Ireland, shares his experience as a volunteer seeking to show the face of God's mercy to the refugees stuck between France and the UK in Calais. Fr Belfred Brice BOUETOUMOUSSA tells us about *Espace-Jarrot*, a post-conflict initiative begun by the confreres in Congo-Brazzaville to provide a caring and supportive home to street children. From Nyarugusu camp in Tanzania, Br Mariano, from Paraguay, tells us about the effects of the low intensity conflict in Burundi and the Spiritan response motivated by mercy. On the global level, more needs to be done to show the mercy of God to God's people. We share with you part of the summary of

COP 21 in Paris. Our interreligious section invites us to read the document on the relationship between Catholicism and Judaism. We also highlight the positive outcome of a multi-religious and multi-stakeholder conference co-hosted by our network AEFJN in Nairobi, Kenya on the issue of land-grabbing and just-governance in Africa. Edward Flynn shares with us his experiences of representing VIVAT International in Geneva, for the past six years. With gratitude, we welcome Andrzej OWCA from the province of Poland who will continue the work of Edward in Geneva.



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# REFLECTIONS ON 'THE JUNGLE'

DR. FINTAN SHEERIN

As I reflect on my recent visit to the refugee 'camp' in Calais, I do so with a lingering sense of anger at the terrible injustice that is being bestowed on these people, our fellow humans, these 'children of Adam and Eve'. I don't think that this anger will abate and, to be honest, I don't want it to, because I have spent too many years of my life happily blinkered like so many other people against the realities of those who have been forced to the margins of society...getting on with my life. In essence, we are saying 'To hell with them all!'

I recall standing in a lodge by Lake Malawi; beautiful scenery in front of us and desolate poverty outside the lodge gates. When asked for their opinion on that poverty, two young white South African backpackers replied 'We don't care about *them!*' I understand now that we are, in reality, no different to those young men.

The margins that exist on the edge of our blinkered consciousness are vast spaces, populated by those whose diversity is considered by the rest of us to be so deviant as to be unacceptable. These spaces are realities that we often do not enter... places where qualitatively different things happen and where the shared values of our society are not applied. They are parallel realities. As I entered Calais, I saw young men moving in groups to form a larger force so as to try and break through the barriers and escape to the United Kingdom. They moved silently past the French houses, stopping to rest under the motorway bridges. It reminded me of the old Celtic stories

in which there existed two parallel worlds: our world and that of the suppressed fairy folk. In this situation, though, these suppressed folk were the young men moving in a world parallel to that of the native French existing, not as part of their reality, but rather as another which was in constant movement, seeking inclusion and respite.

Visiting the refugee 'camp' was not my first entry into such a reality; I have engaged in the realities



REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS IN CALAIS

of people with disabilities, with people in rural parts of Africa and with those in the city slums. It was, however, my first entry into this reality, and one which gave me some small understanding of the situation of the people living there. The great Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire wrote of the need to come to knowledge of the other through dialogue and engagement. He argued that this was the way to becoming solidary with the other and, thus, to achieving true solidarity. I feel that I have come to know something of the reality of these other people and it is in this knowledge that my anger is grounded; an anger which drives me to want to fight alongside my fellow humans.

I use the word 'camp' guardedly, for this is no camp! My idea of a camp is of a space, bounded by a

fence, with structure, order and services. This is not like that! There is no such boundary, save that created by the ever-attendant riot police. There is no real order or structure outside of that which has been developed by the people themselves. And, shamefully, there are no services, no sanitary facilities, no clean water, no safety and no public health. Indeed, the only thing that the French government has placed in this 'camp' is the police! The utter disgrace is that this exists in a rich 21st Century European country which supposedly prides itself on the values of its republic: liberty, equality and fraternity. It is also a desperate indictment of us all, in the wider European region, that we have stood by and accepted this, making excuses which have dehumanised these people in our eyes and justified our exclusion of them. That this camp has existed for 8 years is evidence of our inaction and culpability.

One Iraqi man told me of the torture he had endured when held for a month by ISIS. As he showed me the marks that the hot poker made on his ankles, and described the daily threat of having his throat slit, he explained: 'They tortured me and treated me as an animal'. He continued describing his current predicament, noted that 'In Europe, they do not torture me, but they still treat me like an animal'. Indeed, others noted that animals had more rights in Europe than they do! Despite the situation of these people, however, and the inhumanity afforded them by Europeans, it was humbling to experience the warmth and humanity that these people afforded us; the welcome, the etiquette, the generosity,

the tolerance and the manners. The question as to who is really dehumanised in situations such as this is a pertinent one! Freire suggests that the oppressors themselves become dehumanised a fact vividly demonstrated by the indiscriminate targeting of these people by police which was captured on video. Humanisation can only come from those who have been oppressed, and it was in our engagements with them that we felt our own humanity welling up and challenging us to respond. Their humanity is, however, often not recognised as they are stereotyped through the use of words such as 'migrant' drawing all of the negative concepts that have become associated with such terms. This was exposed to me during my visit when one night, a group of about 200 people attempted to gain access to the Euro Tunnel. They were repelled by police and many were injured (we treated their wounds the next day). The BBC News website reported this event, focusing, however, on the delays caused to commuters due to a 'migrant break-out', rather than on the injuries to those people or the reasons underlying their situation. Such issues are of no concern. Why would they be? These are not people like us! They are not valued human beings, only 'migrants'.

I was lucky enough to get an opportunity to visit the famous Ethiopian Orthodox Church which has been constructed from tarpaulin and wooden laths. I was moved to tears at the creation of such a beautiful and prayerful space in the midst of suffering. Other faiths have done likewise. I spoke with one elder who welcomed me as a brother Christian but also remarked that *all* were welcome irrespective of faith, ethnicity or gender. 'We are all humans' he

said. Some days later, I was travelling in Rome with my daughter, and while we entered many churches, none equated with that which I had encountered in 'The Jungle'.

Before I travelled to Calais, I heard people saying that 3 out of 4 people in these camps are from ISIS-related



THE ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN CALAIS

groups; that they were fundamentalists and that, as a lady in a local pharmacy had told me, they wanted 'to come over here and kill us all'! I saw no evidence of this. I met people just like me: engineers, academics, carpenters, nurses, doctors, a father with his son who has intellectual disability and epilepsy, a couple who had lost half of their 13 children to the Mediterranean. Men, women and children seeking refuge from the terror of war and fundamentalism.

Fifty-three people came together for the Irish Convoy to Calais, of which I was part. These too were ordinary people, eager to help others and to enter into dialogue and engagement. Some of us were health workers; others were builders; yet others were litter collectors and warehouse sorters. We were all, however, humans and it was this which allowed us to start to feel the awfulness of our brothers' and sisters' pain. It was also this which allowed them to see that not all Europeans are the same. It is no wonder, therefore,

that these courageous people told us that when we were there they no longer felt like refugees but rather like humans. Many Europeans may argue about issues of immigration, asylum seeking, economics, national homelessness, ISIS, etc. If we park these for a moment and just consider the situation of the thousands of people living in Calais and in similar camps around Europe. What must it be like? What would it be like for me, if war raged in my country and I had to seek refuge elsewhere? What would it be like if I was consigned to 'The Jungle'...to a former landfill site? When we do consider this reality, there is no way that anyone can

suggest that it isn't wrong. It is wrong, it is dehumanising, it is inhumane, it is disgusting and it is unacceptable! No one should live like this. These, our fellow human beings, who sought solidarity in a union of countries based on human rights, are stuck in a cesspit of human waste and in the wastage of human life.

***It must stop now!***



DR. FINTAN SHEERIN IN FRONT OF THE ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

# A BRIEF GLANCE AT 'ESPACE-JARROT'

BELFRED BRICE BOUETOUMOUSSA, CSSP.

In order to better engage in what they consider an essential part of their mission (evangelization, the integral liberation of people, action for justice, peace and the integrity of creation, and participation in the development and promotion of people - SRL 14), the Spiritans of the Province of Congo Brazzaville, through the Association of the Spiritans in the Congo (ASPC), put in place a structure for welcoming and listening to street-children, called "Espace Jarrot," named after Father Michel Jarrot, a Spiritan missionary and initiator of the project. Living in a neighborhood of Braz-



CHILDREN OF ESPACE JAROT WITH THEIR SUPERVISORS

zaville, Michel Jarrot welcomed the most abandoned children. At his death, as the number of abandoned children kept on growing, other confreres continued and developed this work with the support of partners such as the Fondation d'Auteuil, the French Embassy, UNICEF, the European Union, and many other generous donors and benefactors. We take this opportunity to reiterate our gratitude to all our partners, especially the Fondation d'Auteuil, which, each year, spares no effort to bring us support and assistance.

This structure corresponds to the missionary vision of one of our founders Claude François Poullart des Places who, from the beginning, had always dreamed of training and educating "pauvres écoliers" (poor children) who were to be given a better future.

The "Espace Jarrot" is a place of welcome, listening, attention, and consideration for all street-children. It is also intended as a place of respite, relaxation, reunion, and friendliness, ensuring that these abandoned children get access to certain basic vital needs and social life, as a way of reconciling them with the essential values of human growth: TRUST, RESPECT, and LOVE.

The Centre's mission is to restore confidence and hope to these street-children so that they can build their own future. It welcomes and educates



helpless and suffering children. Through school and vocational training; it facilitates the reintegration of some within their own families and offers them a chance for socio-professional reintegration.

Since 1997, the "Espace Jarrot" receives, each year, about 400 children



AN EDUCATOR DISTRIBUTING BREAD

aged between 4 and 17 years. A team of educators, a nurse-psychologist, a director as well as a chaplain invest their energies daily to ensure that these children have access to sanitation, health, food, education and instruction. The current team consists of 9 members.

In order to carry out its activities, the "Espace Jarrot" implements several complementary approaches:

Work in an open environment: this work is now amplified by the establishment of a "mobile antenna", equipped with a vehicle that allows educators to go out regularly and meet street-children in their environ-





RELAXATION, ENTERTAINMENT AND DANCING AT THE CENTER

ment in order to establish a climate of trust, dialogue and support that will continue in the counseling centres, if the child agrees to it.

The listening centres in Bacongo and Mougali: because their daily life goes hand in hand with exclusion..., three days a week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday), children come to relax, wash, receive treatment, be fed, to be cared for, but also and most especially to be listened to, share moments of playful activities (singing, theatre, games, dance...) and schooling (literacy, reading...). This service allows us to observe and to stabilize the child before setting up approaches to family and/or socio-professional reintegration.

The: "Espace Jarrot" family-mediation team works systematically to re-establish family ties, because



the child is in need of his family to grow. When the family is found, accompaniment and follow-up work is done.

The welcome Centre (Case David): when a return to his own family is not possible, and the child manifests his wish to leave the street, the Centre welcomes him - in exchange for his commitment to school (for the

younger ones) or professional training (for the older ones, from 16 years old).

Despite this effort to help these street-children to aspire to a better life, we encounter a lot of difficulties in our mission. These difficulties are often in terms of finance, personnel, and equipment. For an example, 17 years onwards since its creation, "Espace Jarrot" often faces an increase in number of children welcomed in the Centre. Food supplies and drinking water are essential, but these gradually became irregular, often times uncertain. This makes quasi-impossible and random the transmission and the application of the necessary hygiene rules.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, the Spiritans in the Congo are happy

## SPIRITAN DIARY FROM NYARUGUSU REFUGEE CAMP

MARIANO ESPÍNOZA, CSSP.

At the beginning of May this year, we were surprised by the influx of many Burundian refugees, who came into Tanzania because of the political crisis and subsequent violence in their country. Hundreds of women, children and men, especially from the Southern part of Burundi, crossed over to Tanzania and settled in Kagunga, a small village, surrounded by mountain slopes on one side, and waters of Lake Tanganyika on the other. Within a short period of time, the number of refugees swelled into thousands. Kagunga village found itself in a precarious situation, as the large number of refugees stretched social services. Food, health, sanitation and shelter became too small for the thousands who settled in the village. With poor sanitation, cholera broke out, leading to the death of many people.

In collaboration with the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the government of Tanzania provided ferries which transported some of the refugees from Kagunga to Kigoma town. This operation lasted for about



LIFE IN NYARUGUSU CAMP



UNHCR CAMP HOUSES

by International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGO) operating under the auspices of UNHCR. The existence of these services and facilities although not sufficient, made it easy and logical to receive the refugees in Nyarugusu. Thanks be to God, that Nyarugusu camp is still existing, otherwise things would have been different. A good example is that those who arrived in

three weeks. Temporarily, the refugees were located in Lake Tanganyika stadium, and the sick among them were treated in the hospital in Kigoma. Other Burundian refugees came by road into Tanzania through villages in the North West, and many were located in Nyarugusu camp. In my opinion, the decision to locate them in Nyarugusu was based on the existing and available facilities. Already, Nyarugusu hosts over 55, 000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). However, the transfer of the newly arrived Burundian refugees to Nyarugusu is still ongoing. Many buses were hired to bring the refugees to the camps. We are heartened to hear that there is a decrease in the number of refugees from Burundi. Latest figures indicate that about 53, 000 arrive Tanzania frequently.

Nyarugusu is the latest camp in Tanzania supported by UNHCR. Facilities and services such as education, health, food, social services, water and environment, are administered

the camp with cholera, were immediately controlled and treated because of the availability of health services. Other INGOs have also come to assist.

However, bringing the Burundian refugees to Nyarugusu has also created many challenges. For example, schools were closed, and classrooms were made available for the newcomers. Some churches were used to host refugees; many families were put together under big tents mounted on the playing grounds. Consequently, ordinary and normal activities stopped. However, the INGO's have mounted tents for each family. According to the information from a government representative, the newcomers will be relocated from Nyarugusu to another place already identified, but we do not know when this will happen.

On our part, we continue with the activities as usual but the number of people we serve has increased significantly. The challenge is that

the situation in Burundi is still volatile, and our lives are contingent. Because of this, we cannot predict what the future will be. We continue to receive the refugees, pray together and give them all the necessary pastoral services. We make ourselves available and present to them. Happily enough, many of them lived in Mutabila Camp where we served some years ago; they were our parishioners, so we know them and they know us.

My dream was to meet them in a better and more humane environment, but not in a refugee camp! Often, I wonder, "Oh my God, when will such a situation end? Until when will these poor people continue to flee?" Who can find a lasting solution to this human tragedy in the East African region?

We pray for God's forgiveness! We are all human beings and what affects one affects all. Please pray for us.



MARIANO WITH SOME OF THE CHILDREN IN THE CAMP

## CONFERENCE OF PARTIES (COP21) PARIS 2015 SUMMARY

REPRODUCED WITH PERMISSION OF THE JPIC PROVINCE OF IRELAND

**C**OP21 brought every country to the table. They all accepted the science of climate change, and agreed to work together to do something about it. But some proved more ambitious than others, and the rich countries didn't come up with enough money to get the best deal possible.

The bottom line is that the agreement gets us far closer to containing climate change than we were a few weeks ago, but still far short of where we need to go. In fact, we won't even know for years what it will accomplish. How much the agreement reduces greenhouse gas emissions, and through that reduces warming, will depend on whether countries meet their targets for curbing emissions and deploying renewable energy and whether they ramp up their ambition in the years ahead. In terms of climate justice, there is even less to cheer. Rich countries like the U.S., Canada, and the Europe-

an Union upped their pledges for climate finance slightly, but nowhere near enough to compensate for the hugely outsized share of the global carbon budget they have devoured.

Still, the Paris Agreement builds the architecture for greater progress in the next decade. Here is your guide to the basics of what the deal does, what it contains, and what it doesn't:

### So what does it do?

The Paris Agreement commits 196 countries to work together to limit global warming to no more than 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, with a stretch goal of keeping below 1.5 C. It also calls for stopping the rise of greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible. Before the Paris conference began, each country submitted an action pledge, known as an Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC), laying out what it will do to curb emissions, increase renewable energy, and/or reduce deforestation. The pledges vary wildly. And there are two very, very big

loopholes: **The INDC commitments are voluntary**, which means there is no penalty for failing to meet them. And even if they are met, they will not put the world on a path to less than 2 C of warming. Under the most optimistic assumptions, the INDCs still set us on a path to 2.7 to 3.5 C of warming. That's why climate experts like Joe Romm of Think Progress say they are merely buying us more time to take real action. But that's better than just heading straight off the cliff.

The good news is that the agreement includes a process for strengthening INDCs. In 2018, countries will take stock of their progress on meeting their pledges, and by 2020 they will have to produce new INDCs. They could simply restate the same goals, but the hope is that they will go further as the problem grows more urgent, the political movement for climate action becomes more powerful,

and clean technology gets cheaper and more widespread. President Obama, who worked hard for success in Paris, argues that countries will find as the U.S. has since he took office that once you start down the path of expanding renewable energy, it's easier than expected. That's why the U.S. and its allies in the negotiations made this their top request.

***The Paris Agreement is not a treaty, and countries INDCs are not binding.*** (The Obama administration



FLAGS OF SOME OF THE PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES AT COP 21 PARIS

made sure of this so it wouldn't have to submit the deal to the U.S. Senate for approval.) Still, the deal contains some binding elements, such as requiring countries to participate in a system for measuring their progress on achieving their goals.

### What made it into the deal?

Everyone is involved. Previous agreements put all the responsibility for reducing emissions on rich countries. In the Paris Agreement, all 196 signatories agreed that every country must take action, while acknowledging that richer countries should start immediately and cut emissions more steeply, while poorer countries contributions will depend on their individual situations.

**A ratchet mechanism.** This is the technical term for the agreement to submit new pledges by 2020. It's the most important victory within the agreement, as many large developing

nations, like India and Indonesia, were reluctant to agree to a system that would pressure them to up their ambition within the next decade. Most INDCs set goals through 2030, but if we don't improve upon them, it will be impossible to stay below 1.5 C and almost impossible to stay below 2 C. The ratchet mechanism requires countries to return to the table in 2020 and spell out their plans for 2025 to 2030. This creates the opportunity for the world to potentially put itself on a course to stay below 2 C, but we won't know the outcome until 2020 and beyond.

### ***Small increases in climate finance, including adaptation aid.***

It was clear from the first day of the conference, as heads of state spoke, that for many developing countries experiencing the effects of climate change, increased aid for adaptation was a top priority. Thus far, most climate finance has been for reducing emissions. And, overall, rich nations have fallen far short of the 2009 goal of providing \$100

billion in climate finance per year by 2020. Developed countries the most generous being Germany, France, the U.K., and the European Union as a whole made new pledges of several billion dollars each while in Paris. That mostly isn't earmarked specifically for adaptation, but some of it is. And Secretary of State John Kerry, in an effort to give the negotiations a boost and show developing nations that the U.S. is listening to their concerns, announced on Wednesday that the U.S. would double its adaptation aid from \$400 billion to \$800 billion over five years. That may have helped get a final agreement, but it's still a pittance in the context of the U.S. economy, its budget, and its massive historical climate debt.

Richer developing countries have started contributing to climate finance. Under the original U.N. Framework Convention on Climate

Change, a specific set of developed nations those who were rich in 1992, when it was first negotiated were given the general responsibility of paying for climate change mitigation and everyone else was exempted. But some countries left out, like China, Singapore, and South Korea, have enjoyed dramatic economic growth since then. Others, such as Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, are fabulously wealthy and the worst carbon emitters per capita. Meanwhile, we've seen economic collapse and a consequent drop in emissions in former Soviet states in Eastern Europe. It's silly to say they must pay but richer countries in the Middle East and Asia shouldn't. At COP21, richer developing nations, in particular China, refused to accept formal responsibility to contribute, but they agreed to do it on a voluntary basis. In fact, China committed \$3.1 billion to climate finance between now and 2020, slightly more than the U.S.'s commitment of \$3 billion.

**Loss and damage, sort of.** When developed countries pledged in 2009 to come up with \$100 billion annually in climate finance by 2020, they had two purposes in mind: reducing and preventing emissions, and preparing for the effects of existing and inevitable warming. But as the devastating effects of rising seas and extreme weather have become more visible, developing countries have demanded a third form of assistance: loss and damage. They and their allies in global aid and environmental organizations pushed hard in Paris for a separate section of the agreement dealing with loss and damage. They got one, but it did not put rich countries on the hook for past or future climate change-related destruction in poorer countries. In fact, it explicitly states the opposite, saying, the Agreement does not involve or provide a basis for any liability or compensation. (The liability argument would be that countries that have grown rich from burning fossil fuels are legally responsible for the effects of climate change.) Instead it merely directs a task force to develop recommendations for integrated ap-

proaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change.

**Ambitious abstract goals.** As the Copenhagen Accord did in 2009, the Paris Agreement includes the goal of keeping warming below 2 degrees C. But at the behest of the most vulnerable countries, such as the small island states, it also goes further, calling for efforts to stay below 1.5 C. It even requests that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change produce a report on how we could stay below 1.5 C. But this is all merely theoretical at this point, since the INDCs aren't substantial enough to meet either of those goals.



ADVOCACY IN THE AMAZON TO KEEP THE OIL IN THE GROUND  
<http://amazonwatch.org/news/2015/0929-keep-it-in-the-ground>

## KEEP IT IN THE GROUND

### What got left out of the deal?

The movement to stop fossil fuel extraction has grown dramatically recently, especially in the U.S. It is transforming climate politics, and yet it was not reflected in any way in the Paris Agreement. The U.N. approach has been to get countries to offer cuts in emissions and increases in renewable energy deployment, energy efficiency, or carbon sinks, but it has never called for restraining fossil fuel development. It would be satisfied by a country deploying carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) technology to remove the carbon it emits by burning fossil fuels. But environmental, social justice, and human rights activists would not call that adequate (even if CCS technology were widely

available and affordable, which it isn't). Fossil fuel extraction, transportation, and combustion have a host of negative environmental, human rights, and public health impacts aside from climate change. Perhaps next time activists will persuade countries to include limits on domestic fossil fuel extraction in their INDCs. They certainly will try. But the odds will be stacked against them. Keep it in the ground is the rallying cry of some of the least powerful people in the world, like indigenous communities. On the other side are fossil fuel corporations with more money than God. Then again, if divestment campaigns which got some big new pledges in Paris last week

continue to spread, fossil fuel companies might not be quite so powerful five years from now.

**Indigenous rights.** A close cousin to keep it in the ground language would be language protecting the rights of communities, in particular indigenous communities, from the effects of fossil fuel extraction. Indigenous activists from all over the world came to Paris to advocate for that,

but were unsuccessful. Indigenous rights are mentioned in the preamble, but left out entirely of the operational text.

**Sufficiently ambitious national targets.** It's no surprise that INDCs were weak, since countries announced them long before negotiators arrived in Paris. There had been hope that some countries would strengthen their INDCs as part of negotiations. In particular, there were developing countries that had offered a conditional track of higher ambition in exchange for more climate finance. But rich countries didn't pony up enough money to spur any developing countries onto a faster track to a clean energy economy. Virtually no rich countries are giving anywhere near enough to meet their historical obligations, but the U.S.



comes in for particular blame. It is giving less, relative to the size of its economy, than less populous countries such as Canada and many European nations. And congressional Republicans are trying to prevent payment of even the minimal amount of funding the U.S. has pledged.

**Decarbonization.** The Paris Agreement calls for the world to achieve a balance between anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century. In other words, sometime between 2050 and

2100, we should have net-zero carbon emissions. That's not the same thing as no carbon emissions. It means that we could still be emitting carbon, but that would be balanced by removing carbon from the atmosphere through carbon sinks like forests or through CCS or other yet-to-be-developed technologies. This is theoretically consistent with a 2 C goal, but more hard-core climate hawks wanted a goal of a carbon-free economy by 2050. In other words, they want an end to fossil fuel use entirely, as quickly as possible. But countries that are completely eco-

nomically reliant on oil or gas extraction would not agree to this language for example, Saudi Arabia, which was frequently tagged as the most obstructive country at the talks. And countries with powerful fossil fuel corporations wouldn't get on board with such language either.

For activists all over the world, the Paris Agreement shows there is still hope for maintaining a liveable climate, but there's a lot more work to be done pushing world governments to meet the challenge.



# INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

## ENCOUNTERING JUDAISM

The Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews published a document titled “*The Gifts and the Calling of God are Irrevocable*,” on 10 December 2015, to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the declaration *Nostra Aetate*, of the second Vatican Council, wherein a significant article (no. 4) deals with relations between Catholicism and Judaism. Among other observations, the document states that “testimonies of Divine revelation” underlie the unity and difference between Christianity and Judaism. As a consequence, evangelization of the Jews should be approached differently from evangelization to men and women of other faith traditions. Holding to their faith in Christ should not obstruct Christians from acknowledging that Jews are also the bearers of God’s word. In this regard the visit of the Holy Father to the Jewish Synagogue in Rome on the 17 January 2016 is an invitation to Christians to view inter-religious dialogue as a religious process of encountering the other. In this process, we discover shared values and principles, one of which was highlighted by the Pope, that violence and conflicts, should not be done in the name of religion. He noted that “violence of man against man is in contradiction with



POPE FRANCIS AT THE JEWISH SYNAGOGUE IN ROME

any religion worthy of this name, in particular the three great monotheistic religions” (Judaism, Christianity and Islam). Inter-religious dialogue is a sure method of countering religious extremism and promoting peace and justice. With IRD, we are more equipped to educate and inform those who may be easily recruited by extremists. Kindly visit the link below to read the entire document.

[http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/chrstuni/relations-jews-docs/rc\\_pc\\_chrstuni\\_doc\\_20151210\\_ebraismo-nostra-aetate\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/chrstuni/relations-jews-docs/rc_pc_chrstuni_doc_20151210_ebraismo-nostra-aetate_en.html)

# AEFJN/STAKEHOLDERS RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT LAND GRABBING IN AFRICA



## Continental Conference on Land Grab And Just Governance In Africa



Held at Jumua Conference & Country Home Limuru - Kenya, 22<sup>nd</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2015

JUDE NNOROM, CSSP .

About 150 participants from the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), the Association of Episcopal Conference of Eastern Africa (AMECEA), JPIC desks of religious congregations and dioceses in Africa, Representatives from the government of Kenya, CRS, the Raskob Foundation, Trocaire, Manos Unidas, Misereor and Fastenopper partook in a Pan African conference on land-grabbing and just-governance in Africa. Also in attendance were representatives from Christian denominations, Muslims and adherents of African traditional religion. Discussions focused on the subtle injustice going on in many parts of the continent, where multi-national corporations' in cohort with some African governments disposes and grab

farmlands from people with promises of better living conditions, and the promotion of foreign direct investments. Participants observed that rising food prices, growing demand for biofuels, and increasing scarcity of drinkable water and land resources will be future drivers of conflict in a continent that is experiencing droughts, hunger and war. Whereas for the indigenous people in Africa, land is not a commodity, but a gift received from God, which should be handed over to succeeding generations, their voices are not heard in the capitals of the continent where agreements are reached to displace them from their ancestral lands. It was also interesting to learn from some participants that in some countries in Africa, the Catholic Church

erations, their voices are not heard in the capitals of the continent where agreements are reached to displace them from their ancestral lands. It was also interesting to learn from some participants that in some countries in Africa, the Catholic Church



SPIRITAN PARTICIPANTS AT THE PAN AFRICAN CONFERENCE IN KENYA: PAUL FLAMM (JPIC TANZANIA), CHIKA ONYEJUA (AEFJN BRUSSELS), MARTIN CHEPSAT (JPIC KENYA) AND JUDE NNOROM (JPIC ROME).

owns vast amounts of land, which were grabbed during the colonial period when local inhabitants were displaced. The example of the Catholic Bishops Conference of South Africa which voluntarily gave back the land they acquired during apartheid. This was shown as a good practice, which could be emulated by other church institutions. To combat this injustice, multi-religious collaboration is required. Priests, religious,

traditional rulers, pastors, imams, need to organize and work together to exchange information and collaborate with NGOs on the ground such as Friends of the Earth International, GRAIN and others, to raise awareness about this scourge. Presentations were made on land grabs research in Africa conducted by one of the universities in Africa. Participants resolved and called upon JPIC desks of dioceses and congregations to collab-

orate with men and women of other faith traditions to raise awareness about this issue and to urge local people not to allow themselves to be swayed by the promises of land grabbers. While often men and women of faith traditions respond to post conflict situations, this is an opportunity to be proactive by participating in the campaigns in your local area to stop a future driver of conflict in the continent namely land-grabbing.

## THE VALUE OF ADVOCACY WORK IN GENEVA

EDWARD FLYNN, CSSP.

At the end of August 2009 I began working for VIVAT International as the main representative in Geneva. Arriving in Geneva as a novice in the work of advocacy I had plenty to learn. During the intervening years there have been many opportunities to appreciate the work of the United Nations (UN) and to take initiatives in the area of human rights and to engage in a meaningful way with the UN system. Now, after 6 years it is time to do some evaluating and to put something on paper, about the value of such work and who benefits from it.

Many individual and community benefits can be listed. For instance, all those who have some training in the area of human rights have greatly appreciated their time and experience in Geneva. It has provided them with an additional and particular perspective for their work. This venture for Spiritans has been very much a temporary and ad hoc arrangement. There was limited funding (provided through the generosity of a few confreres) available for this work. Many more confreres could benefit from such short courses if a proper funding structure was put in place.

Individuals and communities that have brought issues to my attention or written reports for one or other human rights mechanism, have bene-

fitted by having their concern aired at the international level and have found support and help in that. Information is the currency of advocacy work. Knowing where, when and how to present that information to the UN system is the task of the rep-



representative in Geneva. A small number of confreres have provided information for the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of a country. But, there are many other fora where information may be submitted, such as: statements at the Human Rights Council, or to the Special Rapporteurs of the Human Rights Council.

For some years now, we Spiritans, at Generalate level and in different provinces, have been promoting a policy of collaboration. Deciding to join VI was already an expression of this policy. There are now twelve Congregations engaged in the work of VIVAT. In itself this will continue to present challenges for the development of the work and for all involved over the coming years. In the day to day work in Geneva there are also

many opportunities for working with other NGOs, either faith-based or not. Involvement in the work of VIVAT International is one very particular way to give practical effect to a policy of collaboration.

Several years ago, Antonio Pernia, SVD (2010 President of VI), said in a letter to the then members of VI: "We anticipate that this will give us the opportunity to witness at what Pope John Paul II has called 'the new Areopagus'. ... We believe that the humanitarian goals of the United Nations are very consistent with our own goals and that collaboration with the United

Nations can be an important way of working for the kingdom. It can also bring us into contact with and allow us to collaborate with a large number of NGOs working for similar goals. ... We have a long-term presence with the poor and the marginalized in many parts of the world, a high level of education and an effective international network. Therefore we have the resources to bring the voice of the poor and marginalized to the decision-making levels of world bodies. To achieve this is the goal of VIVAT International."

This last paragraph coincides very much with my own experience of working for VI in Geneva. Engaging in a dialogue about human rights standards is a central part of discussions in the Palais des Nations.

Through our presence in Geneva we have the opportunity and capacity to bring the voice of those affected by human rights violations to this dialogue and to promote dialogue as the preferred way of resolving disputes.

None of this work in Geneva can take place without our engagement at all levels: local, regional and international. Encouraging our membership to monitor events, keep records and

write reports is a pre-requisite part of this work if we wish to make a positive contribution. In this way the work of our members can contribute to the growth and development of the UN as well as to those living in situations of poverty, discrimination and inequality. This work demands a long term commitment, realizing that there are no quick fixes and that progress is slow.

EDWARD FLYNN IN GENEVA



*The Superior General and his Council, along with the JPIC Office, sincerely thank Edward Flynn for his years of service in Geneva, and we wish him well in his future ministries.*

Kindly join us in welcoming to the Spiritan JPIC team our confrere Andrzej Owca CSSp, from the Province of Poland. Andrzej will continue the ministry begun by Edward Flynn as the representative of VIVAT International in Geneva, Switzerland.

He completed his initial formation in Bydgoszcz in Poland and has been at the service of the Congregation in Croatia, Senegal, Circumscription Europe (Germany) and Ireland. He has a variety of experience in JPIC ministry and has engaged in interreligious and multicultural dialogue.

Based in Geneva, Andrzej will seek to use the United Nations (UN) mechanisms for Human rights to bring to the attention of the international community the human rights violations which confreres encounter in their missions. Through his advocacy - ministry and networking with other religious and civil society organizations, he will advance those issues outlined in the UN's Sustainable Development goals, paying particular attention to poverty-alleviation, protection of the environment, migration, indigenous peoples and a host of other issues. Confreres are invited to collaborate with Andrzej in this ministry. You can reach him at [vig@vivatinternational.org](mailto:vig@vivatinternational.org)



FR ANDRZEJ OWCA, CSSP.

YOUR COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS ARE MOST WELCOME AS TO HOW WE CAN IMPROVE THIS NEWSLETTER ON JPIC/IRD.

WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO INVITE YOU TO SEND US INFORMATION ON ANY INITIATIVE OR ACTIVITY THAT YOU MAY BE ENGAGED IN TO FOSTER OUR SPIRITAN SERVICE IN JPIC/IRD.

CONTACT PERSON: JUDE NNOROM, CSSP, AT [csspjplic@yahoo.it](mailto:csspjplic@yahoo.it)

CONGREGAZIONE DELLO SPIRITO SANTO, CASA GENERALIZIA, CLIVO DI CINNA 195, 00136 ROMA

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