

Catholics for Peace and Justice

July 2009 Newsletter

The dog days of summer are approaching and during that time of July and August, of summer breaks and vacations, we will not be hosting prayer services. **Our next prayer service will take place in September.**

In the mean time, though, the work does not stop. In August, we are asking that you join in collaboration with other justice groups in our area and the nation for an **Immigration Summit** sponsored by MICAH that will take place on **August 6 at Ascension Lutheran Church**. More information on the National Campaign to “Reform Immigration for America” and the Summit are below.

A **renewed effort to hold our legislators accountable** is underway. Many of us sat back while some of the names in office changed and minorities become majority. We now need to ask ourselves, if we do nothing, what will change? It is time to continue the effort to voice our position for change that supports the dignity of all human beings. Go to [“Political Push”](#) below to see how you can get involved.

Finally, we’ve made some changes to our website opening up pages for Immigration and Environment/Cosmology and consolidating Social Teaching documents and resources to a single page. We hope to provide you with links to important resources that support your efforts. Any ideas or input on how we can make our website a more valuable resource are appreciated. Go to www.catholicsforpeaceandjustice.org

As always, blessings on your ministry.



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Delegation to Gwen Moore – A Political Push

From Mary Krolikowski and Mark Peters

Let's visit with Gwen Moore to express our continuing concern for peace in the Middle East and justice at home. Let's ask her to take greater leadership in ending wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, ensuring economic justice in post-crash America, and responding to ecological perils. We hope to broker this meeting in collaboration with other peace groups in the Milwaukee area. Please contact Mark Peters or Mary Krolikowski if you wish to participate. A small group of CPJ members is needed for planning the visit, and others for publicizing it. We will also need some CPJ spokespersons. If you can help, please call or email.

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Veterans For Peace Milwaukee - Homeless Veterans Initiative

From Dennis Johnson

One might expect veterans to have protection against homelessness because of the extensive array of services and benefits offered to all veterans. But the facts are that according to a number of Government Accountability Office (GAO) and VA studies, with the rising number of returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan, the VA is challenged to maintain the capacity to provide timely access to mental health and medical services for veterans at risk for homelessness.

According to the Monday Morning Workload Report (MMWR) of the Veterans' Benefits Administration dated Jan 5, 2009, the backlog for veterans benefits claims stood at 808,607. Report is here...

<http://www.vba.va.gov/REPORTS/mmwr/2009/010509.xls>

The same report for May 11, 2009 shows the backlog at 916,456. That report is here...

<http://www.vba.va.gov/REPORTS/mmwr/2009/051109.xls>

This is an increase in the backlog of nearly 108,000 claims in just over four months.

The issue of homelessness is complex and along with the factors that the general population faces, veterans can have additional factors that put them at risk for homelessness. Please use this link and read this month's newsletter article on some of the reasons why veterans are homeless.

www.milwaukeevfp.org/homeless_information

For more information about **Milwaukee Vets for Peace** visit www.milwaukeevfp.org

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Rethink Afghanistan – Civilian Casualties

Brave New Films offers a glimpse of the “collateral damage” of death, destruction and suffering caused by American foreign policy when we apply a military solution to a political problem. The footage is poignant, heart-wrenching, and often a direct result of U.S. foreign policy. View the films at

http://rethinkafghanistan.com/?utm_source=rqemail#video

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Campaign To Reform Immigration For America – August 6

The Campaign to Reform Immigration for America is a united national effort that brings together individuals and grassroots organizations with the mission to build support for workable comprehensive immigration reform. The campaign connects people from communities across the country who are ready to work together towards achieving the 279 votes needed to win just and humane comprehensive immigration reform legislation: 218 votes in the House of Representatives, 60 votes in the Senate, and one signature from the President.

Catholics for Peace and Justice is supporting advocates and leaders from our community to work toward reforming immigration law in our country. We ask that you read about the national Campaign to Reform Immigration for America at their website www.reformimmigrationforamerica.org.

A statement of their “Principles of Immigration Reform” can be found here

<http://www.immigrationforum.org/images/uploads/Campaign/CAbbott/PrinciplesCampaignLaunchFinal.pdf>

Catholics for Peace and Justice asks that you plan to participate in Micah’s **Immigration Summit on Thursday, August 6 at 7pm at Ascension Lutheran Church** located at 1236 S Layton Blvd in Milwaukee

Go to www.catholicsforpeaceandjustice.org for links to important information about immigration and immigration reform.

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Fair Trade and Sustainability

From Mike Howden

The Southeastern Wisconsin Initiative for Fair Trade (SWIFT) dba Four Corners of the World Fair Trade Store has explored the connection between the concepts and practices of Fair Trade and Sustainability. In doing so, it is our intent to incorporate the language of Sustainability into the language of Fair Trade. It is immediately evident that this is not only a possible but an honest thing to do since sustainable practices are inherent in the practices of Fair Trade. It is important to note that this was true prior to the current new found interest in things “green” and sustainable related to planetary practices of all kinds.

The following will address four threads of Sustainability and Fair Trade: ecological, economic, social, and cultural. In doing so, it will borrow from the Fair Trade Resource Network (FTRN), the educational affiliate of the Fair Trade Federation (FTF), the umbrella organization in the U.S. of companies importing and selling artisan crafts and clothing from developing countries. Four Corners is a member.

The Top 11 Reasons to Support Fair Trade according to the FTRN:

1. Fair Trade means fair pay and working conditions for farmers and producers.
2. Fair Trade products are made in safe and healthy working conditions where farmers and artisans receive a fair price and have a voice in how their workplace is run.
3. Fair Trade is better for the environment. Fair Trade supports sustainable practices that minimize our environmental footprint.
4. Fair Trade means high quality goods. Artisans and farmers take pride in their work. Crafts are often handmade, which translates into closer attention to detail and higher quality products.

5. Fair Trade means better tasting food. Farmers are involved and invested in the entire production process and crops are grown and harvested in smaller quantities. As a result, Fair Trade food is fresher and tastier.
6. Fair Trade farming is safe. Fair Trade actively promotes integrated farm management systems that improve soil fertility and preserve valuable ecosystems and limit the use of harmful agrochemicals that present dangers to farmers' health. That means food that's safer for the consumer and for the people who grow it.
7. Fair Trade supports communities. By working through cooperative business structures, Fair Trade artisans and family farmers are able to invest some of their earnings in their communities by improving housing, healthcare and schools.
8. Fair Trade is trade producers can count on. Fair Trade is committed to strengthening direct partnerships between buyers and producers. These partnerships provide an avenue for buyers to purchase quality products from people they trust, and offer a sustainable and reliable way for farmers, artisans and their families to improve their livelihood.
9. Fair Trade connects you with other cultures. Fair Trade products are unique to the places they come from and the people who make them. Farmers and artisans are involved in the entire process and Fair Trade products reflect the people and cultures they come from.
10. Fair Trade means sustainable local economies. Fair Trade gives farmers and artisans control of their own future. They can build their own businesses rather than working for a middle man and the profits stay in their communities and go back into their businesses.
11. Fair Trade means what you buy matters. By choosing Fair Trade products, you are not only accessing high quality products, you are making a difference in the lives of the people who grow the food you eat and make the goods you use.

The practices implicit in the above principles are followed by the crafts and clothing importers and retailers which are members of the Fair Trade Federation. As you can see in the points above, all aspects of Sustainability are addressed in the process of doing Fair Trade as opposed to the practices of Free Trade neo-liberal capitalism which, despite its proponents' promises, has caused an increase in poverty, massive dislocation of peoples and their respective cultures, extensive exploitation of natural resources, increasingly serious food shortages and an increase in wars and violence.

Although language of sustainability was, and still is for many, relegated to ecology and the environment, it is quite evident that the practices of Fair Trade have been carrying out the core elements of sustainability from the beginning. These are activities and behaviors which make life itself sustainable for those who have access to them. Fair Trade supports social and cultural traditions in community through activities which are ecologically and economically sustainable.

A printable copy of the above information can be found at

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Selling Our Water

By Carol Waskovich

Many of you who attended the June Prayer Service around water requested a copy of Carol's article. The full article can be retrieved by clicking on the following link

Milwaukee's Common Council has been debating about selling off the city's water. \$550 to \$600 million for a 99-year lease of Milwaukee's drinking water system looks like a good deal in these economic hard times when money is short. Right now, discussion is tabled but, unfortunately, not dismissed. State Law requires that in order to make this sale, it has to go to a referendum, so the people of Milwaukee will have their say.

According to Food and Water Watch, a nonprofit consumer organization based in Washington, D.C., "studies show that customers of privatized water systems in Wisconsin pay as much as \$150 dollars more a month for service than those who receive their water from a public entity and are more likely to encounter water quality and service problems."

Can Milwaukee politicians seriously be considering leasing the most precious commodity on Earth for the next 100 years? Who owns the water? Isn't water a natural resource available to (and needed) by all people? With two-thirds of the world's population expected to run short of fresh drinking water by 2025, water is being referred to as "the oil of the 21st century." Is water a commodity like oil or peanut butter?

Around the world, multinational corporations are buying water rights because cities and communities need money. But it is the stockholders and executives of companies like Coke-a-Cola, Pepsi, and Nestles that are raking in the profits while often providing poor service at a higher cost. And, as usual, it is the poor who suffer most as the rates for safe drinking water are raised.

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Read the Rest of Carol's Article at http://www.catholicsforpeaceandjustice.org/environment_34.html

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Waukesha County Environmental Group – July 13

From Debra Schneider

Do you live in Waukesha County? Are you interested in participating with a group of like minded individuals from across the County who are moving to promote sustainable practices here in our County? We welcome you to join in on the action.

On Monday, July 13 from 6 to 8pm, Beth Gehred from Town and Country will be presenting The Natural Step for Communities. The Natural Step is a model for sustainable practices used by countries, communities and businesses in developing policies and practices towards sustainability. Well over a dozen communities in Wisconsin have adopted The Natural Step as their model. Come hear about The Natural Step and about what other grassroots organizations are doing in nearby counties, towns and villages to promote sustainable practices.

Coming up on August 3rd Bob Pavlik, Associate Professor of Transitional Learning at Marquette, will be working with our group to envision our strategy for the future, and in September we will be hosting a Natural Step Discussion Group.

Contact Debra Schneider at djschneider@wi.rr.com for more information on participation in one or more of the above programs.

Recycling in Waukesha County – Go to

<http://www.waukeshacounty.gov/page.aspx?SetupMetalId=11042&id=11112> for information on recycling options including electronics, medical items, and construction materials.

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Amnesty International Report 2009 State of the World's Human Rights

Link to Amnesty International's annual report on the State of the Worlds Human Rights.

<http://thereport.amnesty.org/>

From the Forward:

Many experts point to the millions lifted out of poverty by economic growth, but the truth is that many more have been left behind, the gains have been far too fragile – as the recent economic crisis shows – and the human rights costs too high. Human rights were too often relegated to the backseat as the juggernaut of unregulated globalization swept the world into a frenzy of growth in recent years. The consequences are clear: growing inequality, deprivation, marginalization and insecurity; voices of people protesting suppressed with

audacity and impunity; and those responsible for the abuses – governments, big business and international financial institutions – largely unrepentant and unaccountable. There are growing signs of political unrest and violence, adding to the global insecurity that already exists because of deadly conflicts which the international community seems unable or unwilling to resolve. In other words: we are sitting on a powder keg of inequality, injustice and insecurity, and it is about to explode.

Despite sustained economic growth in many parts of Africa, millions of people remain below the poverty line, struggling to meet their basic needs. Latin America is possibly the most unequal region in the world, with Indigenous and other marginalized communities in rural and urban areas denied their right to health care, clean water, education and adequate housing despite the impressive growth of their national economies. India is emerging as an Asian powerhouse giant but has yet to address the deprivation of its urban poor or marginalized communities in rural areas, while in China the gap in living standards between rural and migrant workers and affluent urban classes is becoming even starker.

Read the Report <http://thereport.amnesty.org/>

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Exploring the Power of Nonviolence Conference – October 8-10

Exploring the Power of Nonviolence, the 7th Annual Conference of the Peace and Justice Studies Association, will be held October 8-10, 2009 at Marquette University/ Keynote speakers include Helen Prejean, Robert Enright, Jonathan Schell, James Douglas, Will Allen, and Janine Geske. On Friday night, October 9, 2009 at 8:00 p.m. there will be a concert-Emma's Revolution. This year's conference theme is "Exploring the Power of Nonviolence," and it will be on October 8-10, 2009 to mark the 140th anniversary of Gandhi's birth.

For more information go to: <http://www.peacejusticestudies.org/conference/call.php> or

Jointly sponsored by the Peace and Justice Studies Association (PJSA), the Wisconsin Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies (WISPG), and the Marquette University Center for Peacemaking.

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Voices of the Faithful hosts Dr. Daniel Maquire – July 21

Voices of the Faithful is hosting Dr. Daniel Maquire on Wednesday, July 21 at 7pm at Calvary Methodist Church located at 3177 S. 107th Street, West Allis. For more information contact Thelma Walker at DWATWA7224@cs.com

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Children of the Atomic Bomb - WebSite

Dr. James N. Yamazaki, at the age of 33 in 1949, was the lead physician of the U.S. Atomic Bomb Medical Team assigned to Nagasaki to survey the effects of the bomb. This bomb was a deliberate act of destruction that destroyed human bodies, brains, and genes for generations. From that time onwards, Dr. Yamazaki, a Japanese American physician who fought in the U.S. Army during World War II, a UCLA professor emeritus of pediatrics, an anti-nuclear war activist, and a speaker throughout the United States and Asia has charted the effects of the atomic bomb on three generations of Japanese children, women, and men. He has shared his knowledge, experience, and insights on other nuclear explosions in the Marshall and Bikini Islands, and elsewhere in the world.

The human and physical toll, for all mankind, speaks for itself. Yet, in the 21st century, nations continue to jockey for the control and manufacture of even more nuclear weapons.

Dr. Yamazaki's website includes ground zero 1945 pictures by atomic bomb survivors, a complete copy of his book "Children of the Atomic Bomb" and links to anti-nuclear war action groups.

<http://www.aasc.ucla.edu/cab/index.html>

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Call to Action National Conference - Nov 6 - 8, 2009

For those who want to plan ahead and mark their calendar the Call to Action National Conference: "Everyone at the Table: Rejoicing as People of God!" will be held Nov 6 - 8, 2009, in Milwaukee. Go to <http://www.cta-usa.org/> for more information on the conference.

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Prayer Reflection

Jesus Suffers Again

by S. Lillia Langreck

Abu GHRAIB! Calvary!

O Mary, help me stand with you
Beneath the cross of Jesus, your Son.
You see his pain, you feel his pain.
And with it all
You feel his tremendous love.

How Jesus loved each person.
How he longed to make all one.
How he longed to make the love
Of our compassionate, gracious God
A truly human experience.

Jesus knew and you knew
That if a human person
Could know, even dimly,
The love of our God
That love would overflow
And that love would
Elevate the human person
To be what our loving creator designed
The human person to be.
What your Son so longs
For the world of today to be.

Mary, stand with me now
At Guantanamo, at Abu Ghraib
As your Son suffers again
In these our brothers and sisters
As they suffer the terrible inhumane
Physical and psychological pain!
Help me to know what to do.

Mary, my heart hurts
Because I love America.
And I cannot bear to see her
Cause such pain.
Help me to know the words to say
Help me to have the courage

To speak out against such pain
To speak out against the evils
Of preemptive wars
And clandestine torture.

Help me to know the way
To make our world understand
The unconditional love of our God.
Help me to view this pain
And yet like Jesus,
Know how to forgive.
Help me to know
How to transform myself,
How to transform my beloved America,
So that such great evils
May never happen again.
Give me courage to speak!
Give me courage to love!
I know we are all kin!
Amen! Amen!

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